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Views and Opinions.

A New Year's Motto.

One of the few writers of European celebrity who has kept a level head during the last two-and-a-half years, Romain Rolland, has suggested that in the New Year all writers should adopt as their motto, "An end to lying." We must, he said, "rid our social conscience of the lies which education, the State, the vested interests of tradition, the habit of indolent pride, the fear of trouble or of effort, are stifling modern life." And for himself M. Rolland adds, "I desire nothing more than the right to think freely." Nothing more than that! But that is everything! Given that, and all else follows. It is the supreme gift which Nature, the State, Society can bestow on mankind. To paraphrase an old saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of mental freedom, and all other things shall be added unto you."

* * *

A Gigantic Revolution.

An army of Knights of the Pen sworn to write nothing but the truth! What a revolution that would mean in the world's affairs! The proposed League of Nations—after the War—would be nothing in comparison therewith. It would mean the creation of the greatest revolutionary force known to history. It is nothing to the point that the difficulty of ascertaining what is truth would still remain; it would be enough if all wrote nothing but the truth as they saw it. It would mean an end to the journalist who, with his finger on the pulse of popular passion or prejudice, spends his life pandering to the one and hardening the other. Consider the effect on life if politicians, diplomats, and parsons—the three classes which cultivate falsification with the greatest assiduity—were to resolve that henceforth they would write and speak nothing but the truth! Half the pulpits would be empty to-morrow. The present generation of European diplomatists and politicians would, for the greater part, have to relearn their trade. Newspapers that thrive by the exploitation of ignorance would suspend publication. An end to lying would mean an end to so much—and to so many. It is too much to expect. The disruption would be too great. M. Rolland presents the world with a high explosive bomb as though it were a harmless New Year's card. A German submarine sinking a hospital ship is nothing compared with this attempt to wreck so many of our cherished institutions with a motto.

* * *

Other Need for Clear Thinking.

Mark the phrase, "I desire nothing more than to think freely." But freethinking, if it is to be profitable, means clear thinking; and that is of all things the most difficult, and, therefore, the least practised. For two years and a half this country has been at war, and the mind of the people is as much muddled as ever; is, as much as ever, at the mercy of any catchpenny phrase that happens to be current. Only the other day we were reading an article in one of the papers to the effect that this War had shown the ineffectiveness of Internationalism. The War has shown exactly the contrary. It has demonstrated that the only way to end war is by the cultivation of a genuine spirit of Internationalism. To what else is the War due but to that exaggerated Nationalism which believes it to be the "destiny" of this or that nation to impose its culture, or its institutions, or its rule upon the rest of the earth? Germany, it is said, began the War because it suffered from the mania of desiring to impose German rule upon the European world. And what is that but Nationalism run mad? And have we not had in this country much talk for years about Britain's destiny to cultivate the waste, but profitable, parts of the earth? Have we not seen, since the War started, the creation of a sixpenny weekly with the object of obtaining "British supremacy on the sea, in the air, on the land, and in the markets of the world"? Supremacy, mark. Not the need for Britain to play its part in the development of the earth, but our supremacy—with all the rest of the earth, of necessity, playing second fiddle. Wars will never be stopped by that ambition. It is the seed-plot of all militarism—past, present, and future. The world does not need the supremacy of this nation or of that. It needs the co-operation of all—the cultivation of a wise Nationalism, purified and kept within the bounds of reasonable service by the ideal of international help and brotherhood.

* * *

Way for the Young.

"An end to lying" as a New Year's motto is excellent, and to rid ourselves of the lies with which education and tradition have saddled us is an essential to any useful social reorganization. Last week we suggested, in a paragraph in another part of this journal, that since our wars—whether they be justifiable or no—are made by old men, it might be as well if the age for military service were fixed at fifty and upwards. And the fact of the control of the world's affairs being in the hands of old men is a consideration of the gravest import. Consider the position of affairs. In this country—the same truth, it may be remarked, holds equally well of other countries—the control of affairs lies in the hands of the old men. Not only that, but in the political

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world this power runs very largely in families. Consequently, on both the personal and the family side, we have largely government by tradition; not by the needs of time, but by the more or less questionable wisdom of the past. It is notoriously difficult to get new ideas considered in governmental circles—as difficult almost as to introduce new ideas into the Church. And a very powerful cause of this is the fact that our rulers come to their task with formed ideas of what is to be done, and how it is to be done, and at an age when it is a matter of the utmost difficulty to get them to take new views. The result of all this is that just as in all the Churches we have a priesthood which lives to perpetuate ideas that ought to have died out several centuries ago, so in the State we have a Secular priesthood which habitually lives and thinks in an intellectual atmosphere of four or five generations ago. Between these rulers of the various peoples relations are created which have no organic connection with the vital life of the present. It would be a wise plan, therefore, to raise the age limit in one direction, and lower it in another. Make it lower for the direction of the world's affairs, make it higher for military service, if we must have war. Let it be the work of the old to advise, but let it be the work of the young to direct. They at least belong to the present, and are far more likely to feel its needs and pay regard to its real demands.

* * *

An Experiment Worth Trying.

What a world this might be if only it would take for its motto "an end to lying," and acted upon it. And not only an end to the small and petty lying of everyday life, but to the lies that are embodied in institutions and elaborated in codes. Education should be a preparation for *life*, real life; but only too often it is little more than a preparation for carrying over to the next generation ideas that have outworn their utility, even if they ever possessed any. The aim of the statesman should be to adapt existing institutions to new needs, and to guide public thought along progressive channels. Instead of that, he is often little more than one who seeks to stem development, and preserve the power of the few by directing the energies of the many into unproductive channels. And was ever there a phrase more finely descriptive of established religion than the "vested interests of tradition"? That is almost the sole function of our numerous priesthoods—Jewish and Christian, Catholic and Protestant, established or disestablished. One and all of these are little better than organized falsehoods. The ideas upon which they are based are false, the teachings they exist to disseminate are discredited. Every educated man is more or less aware of these things. A large proportion of the clergy are equally alive to the truth. By all means let us adopt Romain Rolland's motto, "an end to lying," and let us also bear in mind that when the lie of religion goes, other lies will find it exceedingly difficult to maintain their existence.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Religion in West Wales.

IT has been the boast of Wales for many generations that she is the most religious country under the sun, and there is a sense in which the boast is perfectly justified. It must be borne in mind, however, that only two hundred years ago the Welsh people had scarcely any religion at all, and were intellectually at an extremely low level. Dr. Erasmus Saunders, writing in 1721, states that the Church in Wales was in a deplorable condition, both materially and spiritually, many places of worship serving only as "the solitary habitations of owls and jackdaws." Some years later, Wesley says that "the people were as ignorant as the Creek or Cherokee Indians." Indeed, "it is probable that the Welsh farmers and their families had hardly progressed intellectually as a class from the time of the Conquest. Every indication that we possess shows that hardly any of them could read or write, and it is clear that the provision for education was of the scantiest possible description" (*The Welsh People*, by John Rhys and D. Brynmor-Jones, pp. 470-1). But about the middle of the eighteenth century the Methodist revival occurred and, in a wonderfully short time, transformed the whole country. As the authors of *The Welsh People* (p. 472) put it: "In 1730 the Welsh-speaking people were probably as a whole the least religious and most intellectually backward in England and Wales. By 1830 they had become the most earnest and religious people in the whole kingdom." In connection with that revival are closely associated the names of Griffith Jones, of Llandowror, Howell Harries, and Rowlands, of Llangeitho, by whose instrumentality religion became a tremendous power in the land. Whether this mighty wave of religious interest was of any real service to the nation or not is a problem differently solved by different people. It is noteworthy that in *The Welsh People* (p. 475) the result of the movement is summed up thus:—

> First, it was the chief agent in the preservation of the Welsh language. It is probable that but for the immense impetus given to the study and use of the Welsh language by reading the Welsh Bible and by listening to pulpit oratory it would have tended more and more to die out as the habitual language of the majority of the inhabitants of the whole of Wales. Secondly, it led to general and greater literary activity. This is shown by the increase, gradual but certain, of the number of books, in the early days chiefly of a religious character, published from time to time, and by the rise of Welsh periodical literature and Welsh journalism. Thirdly, it stimulated a demand for education.....Fourthly, it operated continually in the direction of improved morality.

Now, of those four results of the Methodist revival, two are of an exceedingly doubtful value. There are those who believe that the preservation of the Welsh vernacular and the increased literary activity have not contributed to the welfare of the people, and others are equally confident that religious revivals do not "operate continually in the direction of improved morality."

Let it be clearly understood, then, that for a hundred and fifty years Wales has been by far the most religious country in the world. Religion has been her one subject of absorbing interest, her solace in sorrow, and her strength in weakness. Whenever two Welshmen meet on the road, some debatable point in theology monopolizes their attention. At the smithy, the mill, the chapel house, and even the tavern, the relative merits of different preachers, the soundness or heterodoxy of certain recent sermons, or the quality of the last article or book on the Atonement,—to some such topic the conversation always turns. In the agricultural districts, specially, numerous meetings are held for the study of the Bible or of some recent work dealing with God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit. The religious life consists almost exclusively of Sabbath observance, abstention from all forms of carnal pleasure, and participation in religious exercises of all sorts. The Welsh people have been more puritanical than the Puritans, and greater lovers of rites and ceremonies than the Pharisees. Their Puritanism is, perhaps, their most prominent characteristic. Unfortunately, the most religious country under the sun is by no means the most moral. In Wales Christianity is not a system of morality, but a scheme of reconciliation between God and man, or a way of

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escape from the wrath to come, and a guarantee to believers of endless felicity in the world to come. Consequently, the contemplation of it is an emotional luxury in which the redeemed love to indulge.

Recently two books of extraordinary vividness and power have appeared, dealing with the religious life among the peasantry of West Wales. They are *My People* and *Capel Sion*, by Caradoc Evans, containing fifteen stories each. Caradoc Evans describes what he has experienced and seen among his own people, and the description is so truthful that it has made his countrymen furiously angry with him. A well-known Welsh bard once said to a friend, "If you wish to know the meaning of the word 'repentance,' publish a volume of Welsh poetry." The publication of these two volumes on Welsh religion has taught the author the true signification of the term "persecution." The Welsh people can never forgive a man for holding their religion up to ridicule. It matters not that he is pronounced "a very fine artist" by no less an authority than H. G. Wells, and that in literary circles his books have been hailed as works of genius, the accuracy of his narratives has driven his countrymen mad with indignation. They curse and swear at him, denouncing him as an Atheist and a liar. Dozens of sermons have been preached in which the volumes were fiercely attacked, and the Cardiff police went to the absurd length of forbidding the sale of *My People*. The result of such foolish opposition is that the book is now in its fourth edition. Most of the people described are farmers in Cardiganshire and members of Capel Sion (Sion Chapel). They call God "The Big Man," heaven "The Palace of White Shirts," and hell "The Fiery Pool," and these figure largely in almost every story. Sadrach of Danyrefail was a father in Sion, "whose thoughts were continually employed upon sacred subjects," and who "began the day and ended the day with the words of a chapter" from the Book and a prayer on his lips. The Sabbath he observed from first to last; he neither laboured himself nor allowed any in his household to labour. He married a woman ten years his senior, and "six months after the wedding Sadrach the Small was born and tongues wagged that the boy was a child of sin." Poor Achsah lost her reason, and was confined in a loft. Three months later Sadrach went to Aberystwith and returned with "a strange woman beside him in the horse car; and the coming of this strange woman made life different in Danyrefail." People whispered evil things, predicted his dismissal from "among the First Men of the Big Seat," but he justified himself by saying, "Martha is a gift from the Big Man. She has been sent to comfort me in my tribulation, and to mother you, my children." His daughter Rachel "knew that Martha was more than a servant," and rebuked her father for his sinful conduct. The truth is that Sadrach was a bad man, devoid of conjugal and parental affection, and capable of most cruel deeds under the cloak of religion.

The first story in *Capel Sion* is entitled "Redemption," and opens thus:—

> There was a young man whose piety was an adage, for his heart was filled with the glory of Sion. His manner was humble; on the Sabbath his face was habited in a religious smile and his lips framed the words "Big Man," or "White Jesus bach." Once in the Seiet the Ruler of the Pulpit said to him: "Eevan Rhos, man, mouth your experience." He answered: "Not saintly enough is my voice to be raised." Of him this was spoken; "He breathes to the Big Man."

This exceptionally pious young man, being a rich farmer, engaged a domestic servant named Hannah Harelip, who was from the workhouse at Castellybryn. Hannah was ambitious and covetous, aspiring to be mistress over all that Evan had; but the "Big Man" freed Evan and joined him and Jane Pant in marriage. Hannah Harelip was jealous of Jane Pant, "and she set her affection to Evan." She resolved to ensnare him [illegible]h the result that he said to her, "Come you, small [illegible], and I will fondle you."

> Hannah, who knew a little of the [illegible] of man, ran from Evan as one alarmed, and as s[illegible] moved her petticoats fell upon the ground, and she pretended to be greatly ashamed. "O Mishter bach," she cried, "here's dishonour. Bare as a bald pate am I." While she bent to settle her garments, Evan seized her, and whispered: "Wench, very all right you are."
>
> "Eevan Rhos," said Hannah, "frisky you feel, man."
>
> After many days were passed, Hannah spoke to her master: "Well, well—mishtress of Rhos I shall be, for sure."
>
> Her saying did not please Evan because she was become odious in his eyes. "What iobishness you speech, you bad boar! Go you about your business in a great haste, you adder."
>
> But Hannah neither departed nor remained silent "Have I not served you as a woman?"
>
> "Iss, indeed, laboured very well you have on my land. Don't you blobber old things, good maid. Off you, then."
>
> "Lively are things in me, Mishter bach. Better now that I sit in your pew in Sion."
>
> "Go away, female," Evan rebuked Hannah. "An hireling you are. Born you were in sin. Has not the Big Man put a heated poker on your lips? Dirty smell of a mule, pray for forgiveness for your awful act. High Father, an innocent boy bach was the male o Rhos until I was provoked by Satan's daughter."

Poor Hannah was with child by her master, and her master knew it; but this is what he said to her:—

> Listen you, now, wench: if persons inquire of you by whom you are big, say you by a boy of a weaver from Drefach. A religious sampler am I in Sion. Do you act then as I say.

This God-fearing young farmer attempted to get rid of pregnant Hannah in various ways. "Am I not of great regard in Sion?" he said, and tried to turn the wretched girl to her death by making her walk over a concealed well. This was the man of whom people said, "Too religious was poor Evan to know what to do; he breathes to the Big Man."

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be concluded.)

Christian Cacophony.

> Talk about it as we like, a man's breeding shows itself nowhere more than in his religion.—*O. W. Holmes.*

WE are told by a distinguished metaphysician that literature is but a branch of social science, that he is greatest among authors who appeals to the widest circle of readers. If this were true, then were the hymn-writers the princes of poets. Is there a church or chapel where their effusions are not sung? Is there a tin-tabernacle from John o' Groats to Land's End but derives morality and intelligence from the lilt of the hymns? We trow not! Recognizing that all who run can read, the Christian Churches have circulated a poetic literature, and provided nothing to read which is beyond the understanding of the stupidest of their congregations. We raise our hats to the clergy as astute men of business; but our admiration is diluted by the thought that, after all, they have "collared" their congregations because they have never been able to rise above their level of intelligence. Clerical culture is largely taken for granted, whereas the truth is that the people in the pews are often better informed than the men in the

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pulpits. *Punch*, some years ago, hit this off in an excellent picture, which depicted the Rev. Robert Elsmere on his knees before the sceptical squire, saying, "Pray, pray, don't mention the name of another foreign author, or I shall have to resign my living."

It is very doubtful if the average hymn of to-day has any more claim to be considered as real literature than the usual music-hall song, about which the clergy are so indignant. This may well appear a grave indictment, but the hymns which are regarded as being eminently suited for public worship are far too frequently antiquated, unrhythmical, and nonsensical. Under the soporific influence of religion, the public has been far too ready to accept bombast and bleat as the fine gold of poetry, and has hailed hysteria in adjectives as the quintessence of reverence.

The hymns used by Churchmen and Nonconformists alike are not really much better than those painfully familiar and disgraceful compositions which are used by Salvationists, Revivalists, and other howling Dervishes of our streets and open spaces, and which make educated people almost ashamed of their own species. The charge of sentimentalism is not the only one that can be brought. Some hymns are brutal in tone and language, written in the worst possible taste, and are full of sanguinary details and a glowing satisfaction which is repulsive. Here are some samples:—

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emanuel's veins.

Come, let us stand beneath Thy cross;
So may the blood from out His side
Fall gently on us drop by drop;
Jesus, our Lord is crucified.

Here I rest, for ever viewing
Mercy poured in streams of blood.

By thy red wounds streaming
With thy life-blood gleaming.

Lift up Thy bleeding hand, O Lord,
Unseal that cleansing tide.

O those limbs, how gaunt their leanness,
Tortured, torn from our uncleanness,
On these stiff branches weltering.

If we turn to the purely literary aspect of those hymns, we find some of them bad enough to break a critic's heart. For sheer, downright bathos this triplet is worth noting:—

Upon the Crucified One look
And thou shalt read, as in a book,
What well is worth thy learning.

The solitary attempt at rhyme in the following is sufficient to disqualify an amateur in a limerick competition:—

Mercy, good Lord, mercy I ask,
This is the total sum:
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit,
Then let Thy mercy come.

The author's reason must have been tottering on its throne when he penned this pious outburst:—

Faithful Cross, above all other
One and only Noble Tree,
None in foliage, none in blossom,
None in fruit thy peer may be:
Sweetest wood and sweetest iron,
Sweetest weight is hung on Thee.

But the most nonsensical couplet of all occurs in the following:—

May all these our spirits sate,
And with love inebriate.

"These," as a reference to the preceding lines in the masterpiece show, refer to nails, wounds, vinegar, thorns, and other articles associated with the crucifixion. Toplady's "Rock of Ages" is a perfect medley of irrational images and misapplied metaphors. "Cleft rock," "riven side," "to Thy cross I cling," and "to the fountain fly" are examples. The confused imagery drowns the sense in the veriest verbiage.

Another popular favourite, "Hark! Hark! my Soul," has upset even the Christians. Bishop Alexander, who knew something of literature, has said of this gem that "it combines every conceivable violation of every conceivable rule with every conceivable beauty." "Onward, Christian Soldiers!" which is more popular than "Keep the Home Fires Burning," is by no means above criticism. The last line of the chorus is commonplace in expression, and atrocious in rhyme.

There is a frankness of Materialism in some of these so-called "spiritual" hymns, which is sufficient to make an undertaker smile.

Lord, I believe, Thou hast prepared,
Unworthy though I be,
For me a blood-bought free reward,
A golden harp for me.

And, again:—

Oh! for the pearly gates of heaven,
Oh! for the golden floor.

Plummet cannot sound the depths of feeble-mindedness revealed in some of these effusions. The bewildered reader feels that he has glanced at an album of an asylum of idiots, so painful and so obvious is the comparison.

These quotations, be it remembered, are from the most distinguished Christian collections, and they are by no means the worst of their class. If any reader wishes his raven hair turned white, let him turn to the pages of the *War Cry*, where he will find the work of bold versifiers, weak in their mother-tongue, and yet unaffrighted by the awful spectacle of their first "General" in the robes of Oxford University.

As miracles do not happen, a literary standard in hymns is more than we hope for. The Church is notoriously weak among the upper and working-classes, and especially among men. Hence we are not surprised at the inclusion of some appeals to the British workingman. Listen to the dulcet tones of the clerical syren:—

Sons of Labour think of Jesus
As you rest your homes within,
Think of that sweet Babe of Mary
In the stable of the inn.
Think, now, in the sacred story
Jesus took a humble grade.
And the Lord of Life and Glory
Worked with Joseph at his trade.

The enormous popularity of certain hymns is due to the music.

As long as the tune has a right good swing,
It doesn't much matter what trash you sing.

And Lewis Carroll's advice to speakers, "Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves," is commonly inverted when applied to hymn-writing. Such hymns as have a slight claim to literary merit are little esteemed by the public mind compared with "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," "The Glory Song," "Tell Mother I'll be There," and "The Bells of Hell go Ting-a-ling."

To an outsider, hymns would suggest restraint, sobriety, the dignity of reverence; but the Torrey and Alexander Mission, like the Moody and Sankey crusade, and the Billy Sunday revivals, amply prove the association of Christianity with hysteria and theatricality. What is worse, these evangelists gauged their public to a nicety. Their audiences were, perhaps, better dressed and better schooled than those who listen spellbound to the trombones and tambourines of the Church and Salvation Armies, yet they sing hymns of the most rank and fulsome sentimentality. Christian congregations seem unable to distinguish between poetry and doggerel, pathos and bathos. Singing their delirious rhymes, they are intellectually on a level with bar-

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barians. Savages do this one way, and the countrymen of Gipsy Smith and the Bishop of London another, but the nature of the act, and the results, are much the same.

MIMNERMUS.

Thomas Paine's International Influence.

THAT very much overrated monarchist, Edmund Burke, did a great service by his pamphlet against the French Revolution. For if it had not been for Burke's pamphlet, we should not have Paine's *Rights of Man*. It is safe to predict that when Burke the sentimentalist is quite forgotten, the name of Thomas Paine, the world citizen, will be remembered and enshrined in the hearts of grateful millions. As yet we are too near Paine in point of time. The great apostle of Reason will not come fully into his own until superstition is dead.

But we do get on—however small the advance rational thinkers may help us to make. At last, for example, Great Britain has adopted in principle Paine's scheme of Old Age Pensions. People of ignorance (and you meet them every day in every street—particularly people who are ignorant of history) generally imagine that Joseph Chamberlain was the first to advocate Old Age Pensions. Even more educated people think that Ruskin was the first to suggest them.

And the profound ignorance of some prominent men is amazing. Thus Roosevelt—that violent jingoistic swashbuckler—once described Paine as a "dirty little Atheist." Three lies in three words. Paine was not dirty—either in body or mind. He was nearly six feet high. And he was not an Atheist, but a Theist. Suffice it to say that he did not get his God from the Bible. He saw him reflected in the wonders of Nature.

Roosevelt's ignorance is all the more incomprehensible and unpardonable when one reads the cordial letters exchanged between George Washington and Paine. In a letter dated September 10, 1783, Washington, inviting Paine to Rocky Hill, wrote:—

> Your presence may remind Congress of your past services to this country, and if it is in my power to impress them, command my best exertions with freedom, as they will be rendered cheerfully by one who entertains a lively sense of the importance of your works, and who with much pleasure subscribes himself your sincere friend.—G. WASHINGTON.

Paine, dedicating *The Rights of Man* to Washington, wrote: "I present you with a small treatise in defence of those principles of freedom which your exemplary virtue hath so eminently contributed to establish." The Americans of a century ago had some of the enthusiasm for liberty. It is a big drop from Washington to Roosevelt. Paine is far more highly esteemed in France than he is in America or England even yet. France did him honour. We threw mud at him, and canonized the conventional Burke with his stupid reverence for the divine right of kings. John Stuart Mill got his first posthumous public honour not in his own country, but in France. We are grateful people—we and our Yankee cousins—to our deliverers. France has ever honoured hers—and other people's too.

Paine helped very materially in the Republican Movement in France and in directing the enthusiasm of the rebel colonists in America, whose cause Lord Chatham championed in the House of Lords. As to France, there would not have been such long fruitless and profitless enmity between her and England had it not been for the swallowing of the teaching of false prophets like Burke. A careful study of history shows that rationalistic France has ever been in the van of Freedom and Progress. By her sufferings and self-sacrifice the rest of mankind have benefited.

Burke was not consistent in his adhesion to the constitution of his own country. He bitterly attacked the French Revolutionists, and did more than anyone else to stir up bad blood between France and ourselves. Yet he was with the American Revolutionists. And what is more remarkable historically is the fact that the French pioneers were fighting a battle for the whole civilized world. They were supplanting an old monarchy—buttressed by an ancient and wealthy Church—with its roots deep in the past. The American colonists, in a sense, could only be said to be fighting their own battle. They were new settlers in a new land. They were not in close proximity to the clashing and divisive political and ecclesiastical intrigues of Europe. Still, they are deserving of honourable recognition. They had their own difficulties in all conscience, not least of which was the stupid brutality of British "Statesmen." They, too, stood for the ideal of liberty.

Paine gets in some home-thrusts in his *Rights of Man* by means of which he—as the Scot would say—"flypes," that is, turns inside out, the egregious Burke as one would skin a rabbit. Of the idol of "Divine Right," he says this: "The key of St. Peter and the key of the Treasury became quartered on one another, and the wondering cheated multitude worshipped the invention." As to the making of governments, he writes:—

> The fact therefore must be that the *individuals themselves*, each in his own personal and sovereign right, *entered into a compact with each other* to produce a Government; and this is the only mode in which governments have a right to arise, and the only principle on which they have a right to exist.

But he is probably at his best in his comments upon the ludicrous vanity attaching to titles and artificial dignities. He says:—

> Titles are but nicknames, and every nickname is a title. The thing is perfectly harmless in itself, but it makes a sort of foppery in the human character which degrades it. It reduces man into the diminutive of man in things which are great; and the counterfeit of women in things which are little. It talks about its fine *blue ribbon* like a girl, and shows its new *garter* like a child. A certain writer of some antiquity says: "When I was a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

France, he says, has not levelled, it has exalted.

> It has put down the dwarf to set up the man. The punyism of a senseless word like Duke, Count, or Earl has ceased to please. Even those who possessed them have disowned the gibberish, and as they outgrew the rickets have despised the rattle.

Writing of hereditary aristocrats as legislators, he asks:—

> With what ideas of justice or honour can that man enter a house of legislation who absorbs in his own person the inheritance of a whole family of children, or doles out to them some pitiful portion with the insolence of a gift?

It is this idea of patriarchal autocracy which the pioneer of Freedom has to fight most against. *Not Charity, but Justice*, is the demand of the social regenerator. We boast of our British Constitution; but, as Paine points out, "The House of Commons did not originate as a matter of right *in the people* to delegate or elect, but as a grant or boon." He also later on says, "The President of the National Assembly of France does not ask the King to grant to the Assembly liberty of speech, as is the case with the English House of Commons."

But to what purpose should I proceed farther when *The Rights of Man* is happily now procurable for the

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modest sum of sixpence, and there may be perused within its covers the noble "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens, by the National Assembly of France," with Paine's observations thereon? What I have written may send others to that notable book—a fitting companion to Paine's other great work, *The Age of Reason.*

IGNOTUS.

The Picnic.

Of these am I, Coila my name.
—*Burns, "The Vision"*

1796.—JANUARY 25, 1917.—1759.

IN winter, too, amidst the bare trees in the glen, the wind sounding aloft, silence below, save for the babble of the stream, the prattle of the weans; music, peace, happiness, freedom—freedom of the rough blast, breathing its robust philosophy; something to remember, something being written on the plastic mind; and even the mind, set and matured with the monotony of repetition, loosening its crust of winter, betraying leaf and bud of latent spring. Such is the spell of the woodland. Here and there a late campion; here and there, flattened on the green moss, the rough green under-leaves of the primrose past, cradle of those to come, and everywhere the ivy—lusty, lustrous, evergreen, beautiful parasite. Here, in winter, we dream of spring, or the winter of our discontent is made glorious summer by the flowers of Freethought. Here, in the cold, the heart is warm, and the mind basks in fecund rays of truth, wisdom, joy, hope, memory, and anticipation. Call this religion if you will; to us it is mere humanism, and is no relation of your upstart "skies."

The father and his four boys, all eager, interested, content with simple joy and frugal fare, or in their proper selves the very epitomes of happiness. Our worst of griefs, our greatest fears, are largely artificial and avoidable; we need bow only to essential facts, and let childhood cherish each wholesome and inevitable illusion, the moths and butterflies of fancy. Do not break the spell. Nature, life, experience, reason, the logic of events, these in due season will do it in their own way—as trees bud, as leaves decay, beautiful through all, tranquil to the end.

The grandfather was there with his daughter's child, another boy, no "blood" relation of the rest, but kin enough in the universal consanguinity of man. The tinker's and the gipsy's boy might have—

Claimed kindred there, and had their claims allowed.

Such kinship as denies and disdains "divine right" and "royal blood," and proves one pedigree for prince and peasant. Remembering this, a man, when he knows he is a man, and that a monarch is no more, can stand unabashed before kings. Only knowledge is power, and love casteth out fear.

The old man was the "youngest" of the party. His smile was beautiful, habitual, and serene; his voice like the sound of the waters amongst the pebbles, or now strident and growling like boulder-impeded flood, as, with clouded brow, contracted lip, and stabbing fingers, he declaimed against the evils of society. Amused at but admiring his vehemence, and not forgetful in momentary superiority of outbursts of his own, the other waited till the sky was clear again and the music returned; for, why, it was the hour of joy, not the Day of Judgment; and the trees, the children, and the brook were non-offenders. And, indeed, the *better* must ever be the criterion of the *worse*; and that there is a better no student of comparative psychology will deny, and emulation, however mistaken in its objective, is always towards the best. The waves of thought cannot for ever beat upon even dull craniums in vain. Experience is destructive and creative. Like the slow glacier or the sudden avalanche, it rends its way, leaving faint but unequivocal and lasting traces on the rocks of the actual and eternal; it is substance and consequence, cause and effect, force and matter, not the impalpable and traceless passage of a dream. Thus morality may ultimately take care of itself.

The alfresco feed, the concrete gastronomic fact, may be taken as read; it passed merrily enough, and was gone like the reek of our great fire among the wintry trees. There was the green and spongy moss, the wet litter of leaves—copper and gold and common brown—the noisy waterfall, and the still and solemn further reaches of the stream stealing away under the chequered glade, tarrying dreamily, reluctant to depart, muttering its wayward fancies, the pilgrim of eternity.....The ideal, the abstract, survives. The picnic never happened, and it never will; but in the subtle alchemy of thought and feeling, in shadows and dreams of memory and anticipation, it is "told o'er a thousand times." The real can never attain to the ideal; the latter, like the rainbow, flits with each remove, or is shattered and broken, to be remoulded in the heart's desire; or we have outpaced it, and it is behind us in the mist of years, in the moonlight of memory chaste and still. It is all around, and mundane and temporal; not "an heavenly," but of the dear old earth. For the true native of earth sighs not for mansions in the skies. Whatever heaven exists is made up of just such half-fact, half-fancy of human life. Do not deceive yourself, says the wise man, with the hope of perfect happiness; there is no such thing in the world. For why? Perfection is a mere paradox, a poetical superlative, as when, in the ear of Robert Burns,—

Perfection whispered, passing by,
Behold the Lass o' Ballochmyle!

Such song and the subject of it is Nature's, and the nearest we may come to perfection. With that immortal apostrophe of those memorable words on this famous anniversary we may fitly close. The feast is ended, and the fragments remaining are much more than two basketsful; and yet it is no miracle.

COILA.

Apprehension.

Circumstances are like clouds, continually gathering and bursting; while we are laughing, the seed of trouble is put into the wide arable land of events.—*Keats.*

STAY thy hand, Avenger, stay,
We would live our little day,
And as ripely fall as those
Leaves autumnal at the close.

What Avenger? wherefore wreak
On those ignorant and weak
Death untimely, senseless, dire?
Whence the sin, and what the ire?

"Sin" of man, and "wrath" of God,
But qualities of earthly clod;
Glib, we call it accident,
But each hap is consequent.

Certain cause, if hid the cure,
For each ill man may endure.
Stay thy hand, Avenger, stay!
Hush thy clamour; *watch*, not pray.

But, oh, list! I pray thee, list!
Though I am no fatalist,
Still I dread the unforeseen,
That may be that once has been.

A. M.

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Acid Drops.

A telling *Punch* cartoon—telling, that is for *Punch*, which has for some considerable time been chiefly noticeable for the lack of courage and "bite" in its drawings—represents the Kaiser dressed *a la* Chadband, singing a "Hymn to Humanity," and saying to the angry women and children around him "Stop that screaming! I can't hear myself sing." The cartoon, as we have said, is a good one, but a really striking thing about it is the commentary it forms to the claims of Christianity as a moralizing force. Quite naturally the satirist when he writes to depict a thorough going hypocrisy, dresses his character in a Christian garb. And this could not be unless long experience had habituated the public mind to the combination of the two. And when the combination is effected, as in the cartoon before us, everyone—Christian and non-Christian alike—recognizes its appropriateness. The unconscious testimony of so instinctive a delineation far outweighs the elaborate apologies of the pulpit. The logic of fact is greater than the theory of religion.

The late Mr. Harry Marks, M.P. for Thanet, was very popular with his constituents, and on one occasion he gave a handsome donation towards a church, and it was suggested that the new building should bear the title of "St. Mark's" Doubtless, the subscribers thought that as the Christian religion was founded by a Jew, there was little harm in naming a church after another.

Although Mr. H. G. Wells, like Mr. Bottomley and the late-lamented "Spring" Onions, is credited with having found "God," his conversion is not so complete as pious folk would wish. Writing of Christian Conscientious Objectors, he remarks that these people "do not hold any life sacred but their own."

A correspondent of the *Record* writes suggesting that doctors might give a hint to clergymen of the sick people in their care whom they (the clergy) might visit. We cannot imagine any self-respecting medical man doing anything of the kind. Probably a hint has been taken from the Defence of the Realm Act which converts every employer into a kind of military policeman over those whom he employs, but a doctor in a house is a confidential adviser, and they have a higher sense of professional honour than this pious person seems to cultivate.

The editor of the *British Weekly* says that many are now passing through a period of doubt in religion, but they will not be able to abide in it. We quite agree. They must either go backward or forward. If they go backward, they will revert to their earlier Christianity. If they go forward, they will throw off Christianity altogether. And for one who goes back there will be two go forward.

Railway officials declare that the number of people attempting to travel free on pretence of holding a season ticket has greatly increased during the past twelve months. It is evident that the "moral uplift," consequent on the War, has not been so thorough as the clergy would have us believe.

The *Daily Chronicle* describes "Saint Thomas" as the "first Agnostic." Our contemporary had better read the Gospel stories again. We fancy "Saint Joseph" was earlier with his scepticism, and on a more vital question.

How tenderly the journalists treat the Christian superstition. A Sunday paper, in a Christmas editorial, says the present world-conflict "has torn Christendom asunder and seems to mock the message of the Nativity." The spectacle of thirty millions of Christians trying to murder one another ought to leave very little room for doubt.

The Rev. F. J. Miles, a chaplain with the Australian Force, writing in a Sunday paper, says he distributed "a consignment of Bibles and tracts. The former were very welcome the latter had a cool reception." Cans, containing confectionery and useful gifts, were also given to each man. It seems to us that with such bribes the chaplain could have induced the men to take almost any number of Bibles and tracts.

"A sad Chaplain to the Forces" voices his sorrow in the *Church Times*. His sadness is due to the fact that while in charge of a military hospital he "did not give Holy Communion to ten women in four months, and amongst the 'boys,' there is no need to say, very few." Which, being interpreted, means that unless religion is forced on soldiers and nurses, they care very little about it. And that casts a bright light on the stories still being circulated about the demand for religion in the Army.

Very frankly this "sad chaplain" says that this neglect of religion by the nurses and sisters "has caused me to sever my interest in the woman's cause." That interest, it is quite clear, was only a professional *quid pro quo*. If the nurses would help him to force religion on the soldiers—and in this connection a wounded soldier would not reject religious ministrations unless he had a very strong objection to it—the chaplain would in turn help the "woman's cause." If not they must get along without his help. But help given in such a spirit would not be worth much.

Dr. Aked explains in the *Christian Commonwealth* that his statement that he was "a fugitive on the face of the earth" does not imply that he was a pauper. On the contrary, the real danger for the minister of the Gospel is that he will become "wickedly rich." Curiously, so many parsons seem quite willing to risk their "immortal souls" in amassing wealth.

Canon Carnegie, preaching at St Margaret's Westminster, said that Pacifism was inconsistent. It certainly is within the Churches, for the clergy worship the Prince of Peace and christen battleships.

A Trafalgar Square demonstration, at which prayers were to have been offered on behalf of peace, was broken up on a recent Sunday by a hostile crowd, who sang "God Save the King."

A new publication bears the happy title, *A Glimmering of Goddesses*. It should attract pious folk, for the gods are played out.

The Dean of Rochester is going to Egypt in connection with the National Mission. Many people wish that all the clergy would go to Jericho.

In a list of Sunday services in a London paper, appeared the following notice: "Druid Temple. At 7 p.m. Cavendish Road, Clapham. Chief Druid on Christ-Mass, Its Meaning. All welcome." This suggests an unexpected revival of religion.

Mr. Bottomley assures the readers of a Sunday newspaper that "the Star of Bethlehem still shines in the sky." In the primers of astronomy this star is conspicuous by its absence.

Dr. Saleeby describes Christmas as the celebration of "a helpless infant in its mother's arms as the hope of the world." He might have added that the child was two thousand years old.

A daily paper had a Christmas article entitled, "New Ghosts for Old." Are Christians getting weary of the Jerusalem Ghost?

The Press is devoting much space to the discussion of the question of "Work For All." This should interest the clergy, so many of whom only work one day weekly.

There is only one religion, but there are many forms. In the same way there is only one priesthood, but there are

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many varieties. Catholic or Protestant, Christian or Jew, they are alike in their attitude towards, and in their reasoning on behalf, of religion. Thus, the *Daily Telegraph* reproduced the other day the report of a sermon by a Jewish Rabbi which might as well have been preached by a Christian parson. It said the old things in the same way, and if it had been intended to show that the synagogue can cherish the same fallacies as the Church, everyone would have to compliment the preacher upon its success.

This Jewish Rabbi notes "the wonderful and unprecedented way.....in which Jews and Christians are learning to know one another (in the trenches) as they never did before." This may be quite true; but what was it that prevented Jews and Christians knowing each other before the War? Quite clearly, nothing but religion. The gulf between these people was created and sustained by religion. Abolish this, and the cause of the division disappears. It has been to some extent abolished by life at the Front, because the conditions there drive men from the unessential to the essential, and in such circumstances Christianity gets left behind. And it is worth noting that even war can do more than religion has ever been able to accomplish. It can teach men to appreciate one another upon purely moral or human grounds; that religion never has and never will do.

Curiously enough, Mr. Simmons, the Rabbi in question, illustrates what has been said in his immediately following remarks. People of different religious views will mingle more freely after the War than before. And, therefore, the problem will be how to admit this "without encouraging the tendency to assimilation." There is the whole problem in a nutshell. If people are to be kept religious, they must be kept separate. If they mingle freely together, the tendency is to weaken religion. This is a question that faces Judaism with peculiar force, but it also confronts Catholicism, Protestantism, and all forms of religious belief. How can a Catholic keep alive a fitting hatred of Protestantism if he mixes with Protestants and sees that in all the business of life they are as good as he is? How can a Christian regard a Freethinker with the proper degree of Christian hatred if he makes a similar discovery? The vitality of religion depends upon isolation. It is kept vigorous by the maintenance of artificial boundaries which serve to keep people of different beliefs from knowing and appreciating one another. And when the realities of life drive people of different religious views into association, then there occurs what both Christian priest and Jewish Rabbi dread—association. A good result for humanity, a bad one for religion.

We are told that Jesus declared "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Of course it isn't true, and nobody believes it, least of all professing Christians; but the Rev. E. J. R. Briggs, formerly curate of Christ Church, Crouch End, has been killed at the Front. Against the advice and command of the ecclesiastical authorities he gave up his position and joined the Army as a combatant. This is one of the exceptions to the rule followed by the clergy, and shames the body to which he previously belonged. That is from a patriotic point of view, but of course his original professions may have been only "make-believe."

A Sunday paper asks "Why is the Church throughout England not that effective force and moral witness that she is meant to be?" Well, without cavilling as to what she was, or was not, "meant to be," and which is open to much doubt, the answer is plain to all who have found out the Church professions. The question can best be answered by a quotation from their own and special book; "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?"

Rev. Professor Cooper, during the delivery of the Croal Lecture, said that the doctrine of the Trinity was a possession of the Christian Church all over the world before any of the four Gospels were in existence. He might have added that the doctrine of the Trinity was as widely spread before anyone heard of the Christian Church. But that would have let people into a little of the truth, and that was not the purpose of the Croal Lecture.

One of the contributors to the *Tatler*, Richard King, writes as follows:—

> From the average sermon—good Lord deliver us! When I listen to the dreary "bosh" which comes from the pulpit—"bosh" which no modern or even human appeal, "bosh" which, were it delivered in the market-place, would not collect a handful of mental weaklings to listen to it—when I listen to those preachers who know neither what life is nor what are the needs of humanity struggling blindly towards Beauty and Peace, I feel inclined to stand up and say, "Good heavens, man! Have you never read the works of the great thinkers, the great poets, the writers who have influenced and are influencing men's thoughts? And if you *have*—in the name of heaven read them to us in the place of these blind-alley dissertations, which have long since ceased to have any human, and never had any divine, appeal."

The pious myth-makers are at it again. At the beginning of the War they fabricated in this country the absurd story of "The Angels of Mons," which has been pretty well laid to rest now, no doubt. In Germany the mythologists are now at work, with Hindenburg as the hero of their attentions. In the *Sunday Times* of December 30 the following particulars, under a column of News from Germany, appeared. They are worth putting on record in the *Freethinker* in case someone should be looking for material to bring the story of superstition down to date.

> During a certain battle Hindenburg said to the Kaiser: "Your Majesty, at ten o'clock the victory is ours." When ten o'clock came, the Emperor pulled his watch out of his pocket and said: "Hindenburg, it is two minutes past ten!" In the same moment a staff officer rode up with the report that the Russians were giving way on all sides. Whereupon Hindenburg: "Your Majesty, I crave leave to withdraw myself from your presence for a few minutes." To which the Kaiser replied: "Hindenburg, I know what you wish to do—you are going to pray. That is also my desire. Come, we will go and pray together." And that is what actually happened.
>
> The story, which is said to have spread a "sweet religious feeling" throughout Germany, is now categorically denied by several papers, apparently inspired. It is pointed out that the Kaiser has never been with Hindenburg during the progress of a battle; that the Marshal, if he is a religious man, has never been known to make any reference to the subject at any time; that the story of a staff officer riding up with the report of the enemy giving way everywhere belongs to war of the past, and is absurd under present conditions.

This is a pretty good denial, anyhow; but if the German will-to-believe is as strong as the British, the story will take some killing.

Canon Carnegie says that "fealty to Christ" forced English Christians into the War. We believe German Christians make the same claim. We prefer the attitude of the French, who find honour and love of country enough.

From Darkness Into Light.

AWAY with superstition, let the light
Of clear-eyed reason shine, and chase away
The night of useless myths. To keep at bay
Whatever fetters human thought, to fight
Untruthful creeds which blind the sight,
Are duties nobly done. Soon will the day
Of mental freedom dawn, if all essay
To strike the stubborn foe with power and might.
Can we forget the strife of bygone days,
The martyrdom of those who for us won
The liberty of thought? For them, the ways
Were trackless and unmade, yet pressed they on
To make a level pathway through the maze
Of doubt and error, truest work, well done.

L.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 14, Nottingham; January 28, Swansea; February 4, Abertillery; February 11, Liverpool; February 25, Brixton; March 11 Birmingham; March 18, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 14, Leicester.

OUR warmest appreciations to all of our readers who have sent us so many seasonable good wishes. They will, we are sure, excuse us answering each one individually.

H. ROBERTS (Christchurch, N.Z.).—Glad to have your appreciation of what you call "the high standard of excellence" maintained by the *Freethinker*.

W. G. BRUCE.—The English translations of Eugene Brieux's plays are published by Fifield at 5s., and by Jenkins at 6s.

J. G. FINLAY.—We are pleased to see the lines from Lucretius. There is a very powerful rendering by Dryden of the part dealing with death—if you are not already acquainted with it, which has often made us regret that he did not translate the whole of the poem.

F. S. K.—The *Freethinker* is taken in a number of public libraries, and fresh efforts are constantly being made to introduce it into new ones. We are always ready to supply it free for such a purpose.

R. OGDEN.—Far from being "bored," your letter has been most interesting. But you set us a hard problem, and we can only say here, and now, that you appear to have acted with the utmost consideration. Had as much consideration been shown for your opinions, it would have raised one's opinion of the influence of religious belief on character. And we do not see how anyone can blame you for withdrawing support which was being used in the way you indicate. Thanks for printed matter.

TURPENTINE.—There are a number of translations of the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, ranging from the seventeenth century onward. A very handy one is issued in Dent's "Everyman" series. There is also one in Routledge's "People's Library" (1s.), by George Long.

J. B. MIDDLETON.—We do not think the curate who tried to induce your newsagent to cease displaying the *Freethinker* will relish a talk with an avowed "infidel." If this reverend person's blood boils whenever he sees the *Freethinker*, the only remedy we can suggest is that he should look the other way. But it is like his impudence, anyway. Thanks for your interest in the paper.

S. G. HARRIS.—Isn't it a bit of a trick to ask for a detailed application of Secularism to "everyday domestic, business, and recreative life"? Naturally, every complete philosophy and every religion is meant to apply to all these things; but their particular application must always be determined by existing circumstances. When Secularism says that the happiness of human society is the supreme test of morality, it is laying down a general rule, and it is intended to apply it to "domestic, business, and recreative life." But its application must depend upon the amount of common sense available with those who put the rule into practice. And this last circumstance is as true of Christianity as it is of Secularism.

G. BEDBOROUGH.—Thanks for New Year's booklet and inscription. The thoughts are indeed subtly simple. Their subtlety lies in their simplicity, and many a reader will find himself embarked on a voyage of philosophy before he is aware of it.

J. BLACKHALL.—Your letter is receiving attention.

M. R.—We can only hope we deserve something of the praise you give. Anyway, you make us feel prouder than ever of our women readers.

L. L. BROOME (U.S.A.).—You quite convince us of your own sincerity—that is all.

CASUAL READER.—"How can a man get along without God?" you ask. Well, we manage fairly well, and so do millions of others.

T. GAUNT.—Pleased to hear that *War and Civilization* is doing its intended work so effectively.

F. WYKES.—Thanks for very pretty Omar Calendar, and for New Year good wishes. The latter we cordially reciprocate.

O. EVANS.—The statement referring to the salaries of Welsh Baptist ministers was based upon information given in one of the religious papers, but we cannot now say which.

J. DE B. (South Africa).—Received with thanks. We are always pleased to send copies of the paper, and will see that it is done in this case. Pleased to have your tribute to the "sustained excellence" of the *Freethinker*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Our Sustentation Fund.

THE object of this Fund is to make good the loss on the *Freethinker*—entirely due to increased cost of materials, etc.—from October, 1915, to October, 1916, and to provide against the inevitable further losses during the continuation of the War. This Fund will close on January 14.

LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Previously acknowledged, £228 5s. 9d.—Joshua Ratcliff, £1; W. L. and J. S. W., 10s.; Postman, 2s. 6d.; F. S. Keeble, 2s; Rosa Ogden, 2s. 6d.; Dr. R. T. Nichols, 10s.; E. Simpson, 2s. 6d.; J. F. Aust, 5s.; M. Beale, 5s.; W. Wright, 2s. 6d.; D. Wright, 5s.; F. Wykes, 2s. 6d.; G. Gee, 2s. 6d.; C. D. Weston, £1 1s.; J. W. Hill, 1s. 6d.; R. Ogden (second sub.), 2s. 6d.; John Robinson, 2s.; D. S., £2; J. De B. and Wife, £2. *Per Miss Vance:* Walter Stewart, 1s.; E. A. Reynolds, 5s.; Miss Harriet Baker, 5s.

Sugar Plums.

A Happy New Year to all our readers. And as the best gift that 1917 can bestow is Peace, let us hope that this year will see the end of a war which, while it lasts, is a constant menace to the security of Western civilization.

Although 1916 has not presented the most favourable of conditions for Freethought propaganda, the work has been more vigorously pursued than has been the case for some years past. Thanks to the Special Propaganda Fund, which was raised in the earlier part of the year, courses of lectures have been arranged in London, and provincial places visited in which Freethought has been long quiescent. Provincial Societies have also been financially assisted, and the Executive of the Society helped in the same manner. That Fund, as we said at the time, came at a very opportune moment, and those who subscribed will, we think, feel satisfied when they reflect upon the general activity that has been maintained. The Fund is being expended in the most economical manner, and no opportunity of breaking new ground, or of helping old centres, is being neglected. As one result of the year's activity, we can say with the utmost sincerity that a new feeling of confidence and endeavour has been revived in the ranks of fighting Freethought.

The great difficulty, as we said a week or two back, lies in securing halls for meetings. Many of these are now taken for military purposes, and will remain out of the market until the end of the War. But there *must* be others available, and our readers would be giving a very real help if they would make it their business to inquire and inform either ourselves or the General Secretary of the N. S. S., Miss Vance, of the result. We had hoped to have seen work recommenced at Manchester, for example, but inability to secure a suitable hall

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has prevented it. That difficulty we hope to overcome in the near future. And there are other places to which the same remark applies. So we shall be pleased to see local friends giving what aid they can in this matter. There are, of course, other difficulties in the way of propaganda—increased railway fares, for example. But as we did not stop work on account of the European War, we have no intention of suspending propaganda because of dearer railway travelling. That we must manage as we best can.

We feel quite convinced that the present is the "psychological moment" for vigorous Freethought work. Many thousands have been awakened by the War to a sense of their mental attitude towards religion, with the result that they have become more pronounced in their hostility to Christianity, and more alive to the necessity of some active help on their part. Our correspondence from all parts of the world is quite enough to prove this, and there has been, in addition, a larger number of applications for membership to the N. S. S. than for a number of years. That influx we should like to see more than maintained in 1917. And if we are to utilize this awakened and liberated thought *after* the War, we must lay our plans now. It will be too late to start *then*. All the Churches are laying plans for the time when peace is declared, and it will not be well for Freethinkers to be "too late."

With regard to the *Freethinker*. Those who wrote us so anxiously, directly after Mr. Foote's death, concerning the future of the paper, will by now have realized that we were not speaking wildly when we assured them that the *Freethinker* would continue. We had the situation well in hand, although we must confess that the financial difficulties turned out to be more serious than we had anticipated. Had we realized these at the time, we might have been a little less confident in our prediction. But no one could have foreseen the very expensive price of paper; and there is now another dark time ahead. Still, we have taken all reasonable precautions, and we are as hopeful as ever of pulling through all right.

Our success would have been impossible but for the hearty and loyal support of friends all over the country. And for that we thank them most cordially. The response to the Sustentation Fund was prompt and generous. The deficit of last year has been cleared, and something done towards meeting the weekly deficit which one must take as settled until normal conditions again exist. We believe there are still a large number of readers who intend to subscribe, and we would remind them that this is the last opportunity we shall have of formally bringing the matter before them. The Fund closes on January 14, and we should like to see a really good rally for the last week. If *all* interested subscribed, there would be quite enough forthcoming to remove every anxiety. And every week's deficit that is met makes the task so much easier.

Last January we asked the help of our readers in securing a thousand new readers. We can assure them that their help was most effective. Some helped by personally getting new readers. Others induced their newsagents to display copies of the paper, making themselves personally responsible for the sales, and also persuaded shopkeepers to display *Freethinker* posters. As a result of this, we more than made good the loss of readers from enlistments in the Army and Navy, and actually improved our circulation. May we, therefore, repeat last year's request, and ask for the continued help of all our readers in getting new readers? A new reader often means a new worker, and the Cause benefits all round. And as we have often said, once we get readers, we keep them. The only trouble is bringing the paper before their notice.

Two other matters may be mentioned before we close these New Year Notes. We have been asked many times lately concerning the Bowman Bequest litigation. There is really nothing to be said about it further than has been said. The appeal is still down for hearing in the House of Lords, and may come on any day. The Board of the Secular Society, Limited, has done what could be done; solicitors have been instructed and counsel engaged. And the battle will be fought along the right lines. Apart from this, the matter is really out of the hands of the Board. It can only await the pleasure of the law—and that is never noted for its lightning-like speed.

The quarrel with the London County Council also looks like coming to a head shortly. It is probable that summonses will shortly be issued against those who have sold literature in the Parks; but a most curious letter has been received from the Council's solicitor, and on that we prefer to say nothing for the moment. In a war of wits, the N. S. S. is not likely to be left behind. But the unprovoked attack on the sale of literature has called forth a very widespread protest, and if the case does come before the Courts there is all the material prepared for an effective fight. A long-standing liberty, which some members of the Council hoped to extinguish while public opinion was diverted elsewhere, has met with—to these gentlemen—unexpected opposition, and, thanks to the initiative of the N. S. S., a large number of organizations are ready to assist in maintaining for the people of London a privilege which existed long before the County Council came into existence. At any rate, one way and another, 1917 will not be lacking in interest for the Freethought Party.

Next Sunday (January 14) Mr. Cohen lectures twice at Nottingham. In the afternoon he will speak before the Cosmopolitan Debating Society on "Determinism," and in the evening will lecture on "Christianity and the Logic of Life." It is many years since Freethought lectures were delivered at Nottingham, and it is hoped that Mr. Cohen's visit will pave the way for more work in the future.

The North London Branch will resume operations at the St. Pancras Reform Club, Victoria Road, off the Kentish Town Road, N.W., on Sunday evening, January 7. The subject for discussion will be "Is Science Superior to Revelation?" Our contributor, Mr. T. F. Palmer, will take the affirmative, while that excellent Catholic speaker and debater, Mr. Stephen Fry, will strenuously uphold the negative. A general discussion will follow. Chair taken at 7.30.

Miss E. M. Vance, the General Secretary of the National Secular Society, asks us to remind the members that by a resolution passed at the Annual Conference in June, 1916, all future subscriptions become due on January 1. Subscriptions of members who have joined since September, 1916, date as from January 1, 1917. Members who accept this as a polite reminder, and send on their subscriptions to Miss Vance without further notice, will help her to economize materially in both printing and postage.

Too late for insertion last week, we were asked to inform those interested that the Discussion Class directed by Mr. A. D. Howell Smith resumes its meetings at 62 Farringdon Street on Thursday, January 4 at 7.30 p.m. This notice may be still in time to catch the eye of some of our London readers. We are glad to learn that these meetings are well appreciated by all who take part therein.

We are pleased to learn that, in spite of bad weather, Mr. Lloyd had two excellent meetings at Abertillery on Sunday last. Freethought is making good headway in this part of Monmouthshire, and we should like to see similar activity over the whole of South Wales. The field is quite ripe.

Robespierre had the typic sacerdotal temperament, its sense of personal importance, its thin unction, its private leanings to the stake and the cord; and he had one of those deplorable natures that seem as if they had never in their lives known the careless joys of a springtime. By and by, from mere priest he developed into the deadlier carnivora, the Inquisitor.—*Lord Morley*.

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For the New Year.

IF all calendars were destroyed, the first day of the new year would arrive as usual. We apologize for this statement; but Christianity is not the only form of superstition that prevents man from becoming like a god. Clocks, trains, moving staircases, and newspapers are the minor devils lurking behind the bushes on the wayside of human life, and we must beware of becoming mechanical.

Pope, one of Nature's artistic Christians, said all there was to be said about hope in one line:—

Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

It is with the same feelings that we see the first faint flushes of the new year; to take any other view would be to say "Nay" to life; and, although we are reminded by musical Jeremiahs that brief life is here our portion, our song about it shall not be pitched in a minor key. Therefore, with this aspiration, we stand on the threshold of 1917, the songs of peace and goodwill having dwindled to a calm. Shall we mock the singers of those songs? We cannot; rather let us pity them, for pity is akin to contempt. They, in their strength, were not content to play the fool in their own house; a mightier force than dogmatism has crowned their stupendous folly. Three anniversaries of the birth of the Prince of Peace have come and gone to the sound of the clang of battle, and although his votaries say one thing with their lips, hideous facts thrust forward their ugly faces and say another. This, we fear, will not prevent a repetition of the cant of Christian brotherhood. Let that pass; turn we now to matters more attractive.

The Book of Job was the first great drama. It is significant that the first signs of Freethought are to be found in a drama. Matter so dynamic as emphatic questioning could not emerge from any other source, least of all from the light comedy which is now once-a-week piety. Scepticism is a quality as positive as belief, and those responsible for the creation of the factors which make for the latter could easily prevent the birth of the former. In bodily form are we here, dissatisfied with the paltry rubbish hidden beneath such words as transubstantiation, ultramontanism, and many other high-sounding names which the reader will readily call to mind. In a dead language, most fitting for practices of an anthropomorphic character, do these retrogressive high priests couch their terms; and man, with his faculty for being deceived, falls a victim. We count it as nothing to rejoice about, this deception of the ignorant.

As we look forward into the future, what can we see? Black as the outlook may be, we can surely discern a few rays of light. If we read these signs aright, we interpret them as a terrible judgment on the pretensions of Christian religion. They pronounce a final doom to the claim of Christianity as a religion of love. With what words shall the heathen greet the missionary? With what scales will all sensible people weigh this Christian claim against international chaos. Chaos and Hatred, Love and Unity, this pair of opposites, as simple to understand as the antagonism between fire and water is beyond and above the ethical grasp of a religion not yet out of its swaddling clothes. Love—yes, say they, as far as our parish extends; as wide as the young curate's, whose vine being affected with the blight, devoutly reasoned that God must be angry with the world. Unity—yes, as embracing as twenty sects in one small area will permit. If we exaggerate, then we shall be pleased to be proved in error; if we underestimate the aims and endeavours of the truly enlightened, then our only answer is Europe. Like a bent tin sword in their hands do we see the Atheism of the enemy; the first flash of reality revealed the failure of *that* as a weapon. Nor must we forget the efforts of one whom we should like to esteem—we mean Mr. G. K. Chesterton—in his desire to be on the side of the angels. Not even this master of paradox can prove the enemy to be irreligious.

With these considerations in view, it may be well to look round our own armoury. Reason, as opposed to faith, has not failed us; common sense against superstition is our best weapon; and toleration of all plain and fancy religions which are *not aggressive* is thoroughly consonant with our ideas. Logically, with good precedent too, we are entitled to persecute believing unbelievers, thus proving that imitation is not the sincerest form of flattery. With this form of retaliation we have no concern; let us rather turn our thoughts towards the betterment of society, each in the best manner possible under individual circumstances. The world of thought is in a state of flux. Time will finish the drama at present being enacted, and official religion has nearly run its course. Such a gigantic imposture as organized religion cannot withstand the battering by facts which cannot be avoided, and, above all, a terrific reaction is bound to follow on the cessation of hostilities. To this, Freethinkers may calmly look, with the assurance that, if they had no heaven to attract and no hell to frighten, they remained steadfast in their opinions, which have never been enforced by fire or the sword. If that was our history, then the world would be a still greater menagerie, and it would rather tend to complicate the problem of the Prince of Peace; this, of course, would be absurd.

WILLIAM REPTON.

The Passing of Helen.

HELEN LINDSAY lay on the edge of Eternity. Beaten, exhausted, weary, and careless, she waited the end; gazing with dull eyes at vacancy; only vaguely conscious of a hand slipping into and fondling hers.

Her husband sat at the bedside, dumbly watching his wife's eyes. A half-suppressed moan occasionally escaped him—suggesting some wounded dog suffering agonies in the darkness of night. Steeped to the lips in sorrow, John Lindsay was oblivious of everything but the twitching of his wife's features. And his two little ones—who were twittering with excitement over the discovery of a nest of kittens in the kitchen dresser—unable to engage their father's attention, and still more unable to account for his strange neglect of them, gave up all attempts to attract his notice, and returned to the field of their discovery.

From the dim recesses of the kitchen dresser weird and wonderful sounds soon arose. Alarums and excursions! Feline feelings were violated. Blind and sleepy kittens protested bitterly against midnight attacks and foreign invasions. And the joyous prattle of children chimed merrily. Helen's eyes turned towards the kitchen door; and John's senses stirred. Thoughts slowly shaped themselves in his stupefied mind and fluttered lazily through the corridors of his brain, beating their soft wings in aimless flight until the rising of the Morning Star of Memory. John looked down the past.

How happy he had been with her those eight years! How sweet and thoughful she was always! How shy in the early days of their wedded life, but how confident in their future! When the young came into being, and the future loomed in view, what plans they had laid, what schemes they had made together! The bairns had ever been in her thoughts. As she dreamed and talked, in the long evenings by the fire, of her ideals and ambitions,

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how her grey eyes, filled with happiness and beaming with hope, could inspire a man! She was the best and bravest chum in the world. One could always reach out without fear to touch the future in Helen's company. And now the end had come. So soon! Oh, how blank life would be when she was gone! Dull, colourless, trailing years dragging their empty days and lonely nights from gloom to gloom. It was hard. And John could catch hold of no comforting thought. Philosophy? Poor broken-backed philosophy—a plaything for fools sporting in the sun. Religion? Religion mocked at human suffering; and the professional prating of its ministers was worse than an insult. He was glad no clergyman had called to repeat his cheap chatter at Helen's bedside, as if the empty twaddle uttered at every death-bed were fitting comment on his separation from *her*. Oh, if he could have but one more smile of recognition! If she could but know him for a little longer!

A few yards from the house seven-year-old Johnnie was discussing the situation with Andy Broon. The friends were gathering dandelions for Johnnie's rabbits.

"An' will ye nae greet when she dees, Johnnie?" asked Andy.

"No," said Johnnie, with a confident shake of the head. "My father hasna grutten yet; nor yet 'll I. The lassies 'll greet I suppose," he added; "but, of coorse, they're just lassies, an' canna help it."

"Man, what did she say when she gied ye chairge o' them?" questioned Andy; the light of his admiring eyes caressing the sober face of his companion. He had heard the story three times already, but could not get enough of such a rare experience, even if it were only by proxy. He envied Johnnie his coming responsibilities, and was almost prepared to sacrifice his own mother if she would but leave to him the care of the family when she died. "What did she say, Johnnie, man?"

"Oh, she didna say awfu' muckle," said Johnnie, placing his gathered dandelions in a heap. "Ye see, it was i' the deid o' the nicht on Thursday last, an' I was sleepin' soun' when my father waukened me. He was awfu' queer an' quate, an' glum, an' I couldna stop lookin' at him as he lifted the lassies in his airms an' cairried them ben the hoose——"

"But what did *she* say?" Andy never had had "a death i' the hoose," and he wanted to hear of the "deein' woman," and smacked his lips over the anticipated "last words" like any hired mourner. "What did *she* say, man?"

"She said terrible little to the bairns." (Johnnie was three years older than his twin-sisters.) "She just took them in her airms, an' kissed them, an' cuddled them, an' grat ower them a whilie, an' lookit at them as gin she'd never seen them afore, until my father took them frae her an' bedded them again. Syne she held oot her airms to me an' said, 'Johnnie!'" And the little prig paused for effect.

"Ay?" encouraged Andy.

"Johnnie," says she——

"An' did ye think she was deein' at the time?" interrupted Andy.

"Weel, I wadna say. She was sair awa' wi't that nicht, but we thocht she wad maybe see the mornin'," replied the mannikin, with the air of having had a world's experience in such matters. "It was hersel' that believed she was slippin' awa'; an' that's what garred her want to speak to me an' the bairns."

"An' ye didna greet ava?"

"The never a greet," assured the young stoic. And he proceeded again to relate what had passed in the night, enlarging on every point that would add to his own importance in the eyes of his friend.

But as he described how his mother had "spoken till him an' lippen't till him as gin he'd been a man," how she had charged him to look after his two little sisters all his life, always to be gentle and helpful to them, keeping ever in his mind how she would like him to act towards them—as Johnnie described this, the scene took shape in the mind's eye of the little chap; his father standing in the light of the shaded lamp, with that doomed expression which had settled on his face; himself lying on the breast of his mother, hugged closer and closer to her bosom, white and soft as sun-kissed snow, and now almost as cold; her hands pushing back his shaggy hair from his forehead, and her eyes glaring at him—gorging themselves with the sight of her boy before they closed in eternal darkness. Johnnie imagined he felt himself cuddling in her arms again, and the poor little fellow's stoicism gave way. His eyes filled. A fact Andy Broon was not slow to observe.

"Man, ye're greetin'!" he exclaimed in disgust.

"I'm nae!" Johnnie protested, winking hard.

"Ye are, man. Ye canna deny 't. Yer e'en's watterin' like onything." And he shouted in derision.

"I am *not*, Andra Broon," reiterated Johnnie, as the tears began to trickle. "I'm nae greetin'.....an'—an'—an' ye needna m-mind gatherin' ony m-mair meat for my rabbits. I can feed them mysel'."

"Ye shouldna pretend ye're a man, then. Ye're naething but a littlin, aifter a'!" mocked Andy, as Johnnie marched down the road. Sluggishly ebbed the crimson element of life in Helen's veins, but Johnnie's tears flowed fast and free as the rabbits were fed that afternoon.....

Mrs. Brown offered to "sit up" that night with John Lindsay, and Johnnie slept with Andy—their quarrel of the afternoon forgotten.

Next morning, as the boys were inspecting Andy's doe's, Rob Smith, the carpenter's son, hailed them from the road. "Hullo, Johnnie, yer mither's deid!"

"Ye're a leear, Rob Smith," exclaimed Johnnie. "She couldna dee withoot me kennin'."

"She *is* deid. My father's makin' the coffin for her. Man, I was haudin' the nails mysel'."

"She's nae. She canna be. She wasna deid yesterday," insisted Johnnie. And turning with an appealing look to his friend, he said, "*You* dinna believe 't, Andy. Dae ye, Andy?"

"No, I dinna," replied Andy, stoutly. "Rob Smith was aye kent for a big leear."

"I tell ye my father's workin' at her coffin the noo. Wad he be makin' a coffin for a woman that wasna deid, think ye?" observed the joiner's son.

Johnnie's lips were trembling. He stared wildly at Rob.

"Fecht him for 't, Johnnie," suggested Andy, in hot anger at the pain Rob was causing his chum. "Fecht the devil for 't. That'll settle 't."

"I will!" howled Johnnie, throwing off his jacket, his teeth set hard. "Come on to the mill-course wi' ye, Rob Smith. Na!" He paused as a sudden thought struck him. "Na, nae there. They can see the mill-course frae oor windows, Andy, an' I wadna like them to see me fechtin' an' *her* lyin' there."

"Roond i' the corn-yaird, then," proposed Andy. "Will the corn-yaird suit ye, Rob?"

"Onywe ye like," assented Bob, sullenly. He felt himself hardly used for no reason. "It doesna mak' whaur we hae 't. His mither's deid whatever."

"Shut up, Rob Smith!" shouted Johnnie, his eyes smarting with the effort of keeping back those tears which would come in spite of him. "Shut up, man! That's nae settled yet, my mannie. There's the coordie-

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lick. Gin ye beat me she's deid, an' gin I beat you she's nae deid."

"Ay, an' gin *ye* gie him his licks, Johnnie," added Andy, "I'll gie him anither hidin' for sayin' she was deid. An' that'll maybe ser' him for a while."

The combatants faced each other.

"Johnnie Lindsay," cried Mrs. Brown, appearing on the scene at this moment, "what in the world are ye daein?"

"He's fechtin' for 's mither," explained Andy.

Mrs. Brown turned aside. "Ye'd better rin awa' hame, Johnnie, lad. Ye'll need to fecht for yer sisters in a whilie."

"My sisters?" faltered Johnnie. Then he understood.

"I telled ye," said Rob. F. L. B. G.

Skeleton Sermons.

"Shindikits!"

JUST now the air is full of rings and corners and monopolies, notwithstanding the great War. Syndicates are being formed to annex the South Pole, while the British Government intends establishing on a colossal scale a State beer monopoly, and people seem to think they are a novelty evolved out of the teeming brain of the twentieth century speculator. No such thing! Monopolies have existed from the creation of the world. Didn't Adam have a monopoly in garden produce? Yes, and he was able to monopolize the cider business, having a corner in apples. Noah had a monoply in the carrying trade during at least forty days and forty nights, enabling him to plant a vineyard with the proceeds and embark in the native wine business, monopolizing that for a time. Job worked up a corner in boils very successfully, and Lot's wife put everything she had into chloride of sodium. Goliath carried everything with a high hand until David introduced him to a sling, of which he had the monopoly, that went to his head and floored him. Methuselah had a monopoly in the oldest inhabitant business, and Samson monopolized the hair trade, until a woman named Delilah cut him out. He was the first to go into the stencil business, stamping foxes tails with brands of fire.

Solomon monopolized nearly all the wisdom and a good proportion of the women in his time, though he could not have done it had Brigham Young been alive. Pharaoh's daughter may not have had a monopoly in the milk business, though it is on record that she got a great "prophet" out of water. St. Paul had a monopoly in many things, until Minneapolis started up—and so it goes.

It will be seen that the monopolist is by no means of modern origin, but I hope the above samples will be enough to swear by or swear at. There is scarcely a commodity that can be mentioned but what is run by some "corner" or other. Take politicians for example. My advice is to avoid, as far as possible, breeding politicians. Strive only for patriots. Keep on trying, and also set higher standards and ideals before them. A few stuffed specimens of our present-day politicians might be kept in the museums, and their portraits in the National Gallery, their statues in the parks and public places, all labelled, "Stumbling-blocks to human progress in the dark ages of the twentieth century."

As to millionaires, if Carnegie, Rockefeller, Jay Gould, and a few others want the earth, they have one distinguished character — a prototype — in the New Testament, who, being on a high mountain, thought he owned it, but he found out his mistake; and those who try to get up "corners" ought to be put in that place of infantile punishment themselves. THE OWL.

Correspondence.

FOOD PRODUCTION AND THE BIRTH-RATE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I should like to thank Mr. E. Egerton Stafford for his article maintaining that war, owing to excessive birth-rates, has often been a biologic and economic necessity. His conclusion, however, that "when nations realize that the true way to solve all economic problems is to exploit the earth for the benefit of all, and to colonize unoccupied parts of the earth on international lines, then war will cease to be a biologic and economic necessity," will make some of his readers feel that even more European wars are inevitable as the nations will not agree on the foregoing. Therefore I greatly regret the implication in his conclusion that the birth-rate factor, which he rightly contends has been so important in the past, can now be ignored.

But can this factor now be ignored? The world's birth-rate before the War was at least 35 per thousand per annum; so if everyone had sufficient food the death-rate would at most be 10, as in New Zealand, and the population would increase by at least 25 per thousand per annum. It was, however, only increasing at a fifth of that rate! Is it conceivable that even if the whole world were voluntarily to come under one ideal Socialist government, the rate of increase of the earth's food supply could be accelerated five-fold? Or consider Russia and the Balkan States. Before the War they still had birth-rates of over 40 per thousand, and dearh-rates of about 30. Is it conceivable that anything but a big reduction of their savage birth-rates could eliminate their dangerous pressure of population? Or take the United Kingdom. Thanks to Bradlaugh, her birth-rate had fallen from 34 per thousand per annum in 1876 to 24 in 1913, and her death-rate from about 20 to 14. But had everyone been adequately fed, her death-rate would not have been more than 10. Thus even a birth-rate of only 24 ought to give us a rate of natural increase of population of 14 per thousand per annum. Is it likely that any social reform, especially after this terribly impoverishing War, could enable our population to increase by about half again of her pre-War rapid rate?

But in addition to communal exploiting of the earth for the benefit of all, Mr. Stafford mentions colonization. This suggests keeping the population stationary by emigrating each year's increase. Emigration, however, practically means emigration of able-bodied childless adults, which means diminishing the food-growing and food-buying powers of the Mother Country and aggravating any poverty existing here. Naturally, the colonies specially want adults, and not children, just as we should prefer to emigrate children and retain the far more useful men whom we have also had the burden of bringing up and training. Thus emigration would increase poverty, and would prove to be no safety-valve for the high birth-rates that tend to produce wars.

So on both counts I most earnestly beg Mr. Stafford to make his conclusion the freethinking one which his article was so well leading up to, namely, that when the nations realize that the quickest way to solve all economic problems is to encourage the poor to have only two children per family, then war will cease to be a biologic and economic necessity.

B. DUNLOP, M.B.

Miscarried.

HUMANITY'S a letter
Addressed to heaven by God;
But the postman knew no better,
A different path he trod.

He could not read the writing,
'Twas fearful scrawl, he said;
His comments were most biting,
So it went to hell instead.

A. F. T.

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Where to Obtain the "Freethinker."

The following is not a complete list of newsagents who supply the "Freethinker," and we shall be obliged for other addresses for publication. The "Freethinker" may be obtained on order from any newsagent or railway bookstall.

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E.—E. T. Pendrill, 26 Bushfield Street, Bishopsgate, M. Papier, 86 Commercial Street. B. Ruderman, 71 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields J. Knight & Co., 3 Ripple Road, Barking. Messrs. Duncumb & Sons, 287 High Street, Stratford.

E.C.—W. S. Dexter, 6, Byward Street. Rose & Co., 133 Clerkenwell Road. Mr. Siveridge, 88 Fenchurch Street. J. J. Joques, 191 Old Street. Mr. Henderson, 66 Charing Cross Road.

N.—C. Walker & Son, 84 Grove Road, Holloway. Mr. Keogh, Seven Sisters Road (near Finsbury Park). Mr. West, New Road, Lower Edmonton. T. Perry, 17 Fore Street, Edmonton. H. Hampton, 80 Holloway Road. E. S. Smith, 7 Turnpike Lane, Hornsey.

N.W.—W. I. Tarbart, 316 Kentish Town Road. W. Lloyd, 5 Falkland Road, Kentish Town.

S.E.—J. H. Killick, 1 Tyler Street, East Greenwich. Mr. Clayton, High Street, Woodside, South Norwood. W. T. Andrews, 35 Meetinghouse Lane, Peckham. B. Dean, Southwark Bridge.

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Falkirk.—James Wilson, 76 Graham's Road.

Glasgow.—David Baxter, 32 Brunswick Street.

Gravesend.—Mrs. Troke, 10 Passock Street. Mr. Love, Gassick Street. Mr. Gould, Milton Road. Mr. Troke, Clarence Place.

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Yarmouth.—C. H. Knights, 87 & 88 Northgate Street. H. Bird, 19 Howard Street South. J. M. Headley, North Howard Street.

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, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "Is Science Superior to Revelation?" Opener, Mr. T. F. Palmer; Opposer, Mr. Stephen Fry —Thursday, Jan. 11, at N. S. S. Offices, at 7.30, Mr. A. D. Howell Smith's Discussion Class.

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Kells, "The Why and the Wherefore"; 6.30, Messrs. Kells, Saphin, and Yates.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street); 7, J. Hammond, "Sir Oliver Lodge and the Spirits."

Population Question and Birth-Control.

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Views and Opinions.

A Challenge to the Churches.

We said last week that if there were an epidemic of truth-telling, and the clergy fell victims to its ravages, half the pulpits would be empty. A few days after we had written this, a Church newspaper, the *Challenge*, substantially endorsed the truth of what was said by publishing the following in its leading article:—

> We challenge the Church to proclaim aloud the ascertained results and the prevailing tendencies alike of science and of Biblical criticism. Often the clergy do not speak for fear of shocking the laity, and the laity conceal their views from the clergy for fear of shocking them. There is a conspiracy of silence where silence means deception.

The editor is quite safe in issuing this challenge, for none of the clergy are likely to accept it. And this, we fancy, he knows as well as we do. For it is not the appointed and historic task of the clergy to either discover the truth or to proclaim it. Their function is to teach specific doctrines, to maintain them in face of all opposition, to keep from their congregations all knowledge likely to disturb their faith, and, if some knowledge cannot be kept from them, to harmonize it with established teaching, so that it becomes quite innocuous.

* * *

Reciprocal Hypocrisy.

Apart from this, there is no doubt whatever that the *Challenge* is proclaiming a vital truth of the religious situation. And the picture of the laity refraining from saying what they think about current religion for fear of shocking the poor clergy is not without piquancy. "Poor fellow," they say in effect of their parson, "we must humour him as far as we can. If he knew what we know about religion, he would be made quite miserable, and would have to leave the pulpit. So we must keep up the pretence that he is our guide and instructor. We must pity his weakness, and have compassion on his ignorance." And things go their way; the pulpit pretending for the sake of the pew, the pew pretending for the sake of the pulpit. Nor does the game stop at the church doors; it extends to the outside world. What the *Challenge* pictures as the relation between the clergy and the laity exists also as between large sections of the laity itself. Smith professes to believe in Christianity so that he may not shock Jones. Jones *says* he is a Christian so that he may set a good example to Smith. The "upper classes" patronize religion so that the "common" people may be kept in order. The "common" people pretend to believe so that the "superior" classes may not be offended. Robinson won't allow his children to play in the garden on Sunday because it would shock his neighbour Jones; and Jones keeps his youngsters indoors for the sake of Robinson's feelings. Each plays the hypocrite for the moral improvement of the other. Half the world is engaged in inoculating the other half with insincerity, to encourage straightforwardness. What a revelation there would be if the world were stricken with honesty for only twenty-four hours!

* * *

Our Greatest Need.

The longer one lives, the more one reflects, the stronger becomes one's conviction that the world's greatest needs lie in the cultivation of clear thinking and of moral courage. Both are among the rarest qualities possessed by human beings. Clear thinking means ultimately a trained and informed thinking, and there are comparatively few whose intelligence is either one or the other. Of how many people can we say that they have earned the right to express an opinion on any subject whatever? Usually you will catch the echo of the last morning's or evening's paper, or of some inanity they have been accustomed to repeat from childhood. Of an independent and informed opinion not a trace. Look at the kind of reading provided for popular consumption, and you will see evidence to the same end. We were looking recently over a whole batch of illustrated newspapers, and it was enough to make one despair of human nature. A picture of Lady —— watching soldiers play billiards, King —— walking down the street, Lord —— entering his motor car, and so on through an unending series of similar inanities. What kind of intelligence is it to which such things appeal? And yet such productions are circulated literally by the million! It may safely be said that among a people who did any real thinking there would be no demand for puerilities of this kind.

* * *

The Herd Mind.

But there is more in the hesitancy of people to speak out on matters of religion than is glimpsed by the *Challenge*. At the root of the matter lies a lack of moral courage. People are mentally gregarious to a frightful degree. They cannot think with comfort save in a crowd. Analyse the majority of the apologies put forward on behalf of a rationalized religion or a rationalized Christianity, and we must come to this conclusion. They talk glibly enough of "essential Christianity" and "pure religion," but what is meant by either phrase? Essential Christianity should mean Christianity untouched by modern thought, and that leads us straight in the demonism and crass supernaturalism of the New Testa-

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ment and of the Apostolic period. And "pure religion," again, is religion as it exists with the primitive savage. Neither modern Christianity nor modern religion are "pure." They are highly impure—adulterated with the refinements and humanitarian impulses of a more civilized age. There is only one reason for this cant of a purified or a rationalized religion, and that is the fear of standing alone without a religion in a world where it is accepted as a badge of respectability.

* * *

The Dangers of Independent Thought.

The mass of people do not think clearly. But why should they? No one can say that thinking is encouraged or that the thinker is held in high honour. In our national economy the thinker receives the smallest consideration. In our State functions it is the Soldier and the Priest who figures, the Scientist and the Philosopher and the Man of Letters are left on one side. Under prevailing conditions we have no right to expect a real honesty of expression. In the mass mankind will always seek to get through life as comfortably as they can. And so long as independent thinking involves severe discomfort, so long will it remain a rarity. This is not so much the fault of the individual as it is the fault of society as a whole. In the very nature of the case the martyr—upon even the smallest scale—must be an exception. Exceptional virtues will only be practised by exceptional people; it is the commoner ones that will be exercised by humanity at large. And when society offers the same inducements to moral courage and independent thinking that it now offers to mental sluggishness and hypocrisy, it will have made the honest thinker a far commoner phenomenon than he is at present.

* * *

Christianity's Capital Crime.

We are the product of our tradition and training here as elsewhere. For over fifteen centuries the peoples of Europe have been under the influence of Christianity, and the one thing on which the Churches have agreed has been hatred of nonconformity, a desire to press all minds into one mould, a determination to suppress freedom of thought and speech. Generation after generation, heretics have been punished, the truth hidden, questions suppressed, critics damned. People have been made to feel that the one thing a Christian community cannot tolerate, and rarely forgives, is freedom of thought and plainness of speech. And this, as a matter of fact, is Christianity's capital crime against the race. Other offences have a more dramatic aspect. The myriads of people put to death in the name of the religion of peace and brotherhood, the lingering martyrdom of brave men and women in Christian prisons, may make more moving reading, but these things are as nothing compared with the influence of Christianity on race development. The constant elimination of a strong mental type, the preservation of a type unthinking, credulous, and sheepish, have combined to keep the race at a low level of development. Every generation is moulded by the beliefs, the customs, the institutions by which it is surrounded, and we have been moulded by ours. To rail against the individual is useless; it is the whole social tone that needs modification. Christianity has worked hard to create a race of moral cowards and mental hypocrites, and its efforts have been all but completely successful. It is something to the good to find a religious paper challenging the Churches to speak the truth, even though one is without hope of the challenge being accepted. And it is just possible that the challenge may be boldly offered because it is felt there is not the least danger of its being acted on.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Religion in West Wales.

II.

(Concluded from p. 3.)

IT cannot be repeated too often that Christianity is a religion not for time but for eternity, and that its primary object is to set a man right, not with his fellow beings, but with God. To be saved signifies to be "delivered from the wrath to come," to become a citizen of heaven. Neither in the New Testament nor in the creeds of the Church do we find any allusion whatever to the reorganization of society. The ransomed of the Lord are but strangers and pilgrims on the earth, constantly looking for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. The Christian life is, therefore, a life devoted to the pursuit of heavenly ideals. The apostolic admonition is, "Seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 1, 2). This world is not a permissible object of love, and the saints are solemnly warned against being *of* it while passing through it to the next. In the "Seiet," as Caradoc Evans calls the meeting at which church members relate their experiences, the subjects talked about are God, Christ, salvation, and the glory that awaits the faithful in heaven; and the complaint oftenest heard is that the earth and its things prove too attractive, or that the Devil succeeds too well in drawing the mind away from spiritual realities. To be religious, then, means to occupy the mind with supernatural concerns, to attend church or chapel, to read the Bible and sing hymns, to pray, and to converse as frequently as possible about the unseen world and its denizens. In Wales, especially in the agricultural districts, religion is a source of unspeakable joy to those who possess it, owing chiefly to the sense of eternal safety which it affords them. All their sins are blotted out, and they can read their title clear to mansions in the skies.

Now, it is quite possible to be sincerely and profoundly religious without being morally upright and honourable. There are, alas, many people to whom religion is an emotional luxury of the most ardent kind. The Big Man is on their side; they are accepted in the Beloved; they are free from condemnation; no matter what happens, hell's door is closed against them for ever, and heaven's ineffable bliss awaits them. They may do wrong on a large scale, but Christ has purchased full forgiveness for them, and all they have to do is to ask for it. Caradoc Evans tells us that Lias Carpenter was "a mighty man in Sion," his piety entitling him to sit in the Big Seat. Yet his being "full of the White Jesus bach" did not prevent him from going to Tycornel and deliberately robbing Ellen Pugh of her chastity.

> Thereafter, Lias frequented Tycornel whither he arrived and quitted in darkness and away from the common track.
>
> It came to be that Ellen said to him, "Boy bach ("bach" being a term of endearment) wed me you must."
>
> "Speak will I to mam," answered Lias.
>
> "Iss, do you in a haste."
>
> "Indeed, speak will I. Fair day for now."
>
> Ellen was troubled that Lias did not come any more to Tycornel, and she contrived that men and women should not discover her plight. She drew in her clothes, and as her size increased she eased them; her contrivings, did not withhold her state. Folk said to her, "Many handfuls of gravel have been thrown at your window. Whisper the name of the thrower" (*Capel Sion*, p. 123.)

Lias not only refused to marry her, but flatly denied that he was the father of the child. Ellen "pleaded in

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the hearing of Lias's mother, Shanni: 'Woman bach without wickedness, make your son verify his pledge.' Old Shanni laughed in the girl's face and spoke rudely. 'Don't laugh, foolish Shanni,' Ellen retorted, 'Serious is affairs.'"

> Old Shanni tightened her lips and called to her Lias, who had kept himself close: "The strumpet of Tycornel says you are the father."
>
> Lias opened his mouth, and a frothy spittle fell therefrom upon his beard. "Dear me," he said. "Bad lies you talk."
>
> Ellen bare a child and she named him "Lias," and after she was recovered fury possessed her; she cried, as a peevish child cries, on the Tramping road, and in shop Rhys, and at the Gates of Sion that Lias Carpenter was the father of her infant (*Ibid*, p. 124).

Lias was terribly vexed, and he shammed innocence before the minister of Sion Chapel, "to whom he sacrificed a hen." Poor Ellen was ordered to attend the Seiet and to stand in the Big Seat, in the face of all the people. The wily men of the High Places showered questions on her, and lastly the Rev. Bern Davydd lifted his voice:—

> "Name the man bach you tempted." Truly Ellen answered.
>
> "Sparrow of a pig, no-no. A liar you are. Very religious is Lias. Is he not in the Big Seat?"
>
> "He was bad with me," Ellen said. Bern Davydd interrupted her: "Shut your head, you bull. Your bastard is by old Satan. Congregation, here's a sin. Shaking and redding you are. Good that I am here, for am I not the Big Man's son?" (*Ibid*, pp. 125-6).

Having refused to listen to the woman's story, this man of God requested Lias Carpenter to state his case, which he did thus:—

> "Dear people, shedding tears am I, and they are salter than the weepings of Mishtress Lot. Evil was she, but very, very pious was Lot. Changed was she into a rock of salt; a rock bigger than the biggest in shop Rhys. Let out tears will I this minute." Lias wept. "Look you on the marks of the tears on my whiskers. So-ho, the wench says: 'Lias Carpenter was naughty with me.' No, dear me. Am I not full of the white Jesus bach? A carpenter was the Big Jesus. He made coffins. Iss, people bach, religious is the male that makes coffins" (*Ibid*, p. 126).

Lias was very religious, and he boldly stood in the Big Seat, lying in the face of the Big Man himself. He pretended to be on the friendliest terms possible with the Lord; but his saintliness was no barrier to his wrongdoing and lying.

Dan, a farm servant, "assumed that he was above all the religious men in Capel Sion, and in the Seiet he rose and exclaimed: 'Boys bach, a photograph of the Big Man am I.'" The minister laughed his claim to scorn, saying, "The fool is lame in the foot: old club is at the bottom of his leg, and light is the weight of his sense." Shan, his mother, adored him, and muttered: "Murmurirg, dear congregation, is always the boy bach to the One in the sky. Large joy he makes of his religion." Bern Davydd scolded her: "Serious to goodness, off is your temper. Lunatic is Dan. Boys Capel Sion laugh provokingly at Dan Groesfordd. Know you all that I am the Big Man's photograph." Dan professed to be the Big Man's most highly valued servant, to whom he once said: "Dan bach, Jesus is on my right hand, and you are on my left hand." While he was preaching one day, a strange woman asked, "What does the boy bach say?" She was a rich widow, called Sali Blaenpant, her husband having gone to the palace of White Shirts.

> "Dear me," said Dan. "Dear me. Abide do I with the Big Man. Not anything concerns me but him." Then sang Dan Groesfordd: "Sali Blaenpant, is not the Big Man the landlord of all the fields? Even the land under the old potators he owns. Good he is to ones religious and bad to unbelievers. He did say to me: 'Dan bach, don't you now let an old razor touch the hairs of your face, because I will make you a photograph of the White Jesus bach'" (*Ibid*, p. 196).

Sali took him at his own valuation, saying, "The second Jesus is Dan Groesfordd." She wrote him a letter, in which she described him as "greater than all the rulers." She loved him with all her heart, and supplied him with plenty of money. The farm of ninety acres was her own property. On hearing this, Dan said:—

> "Well and well, an old bother is a mortgage."
>
> "Iss, boy bach. But there's no mortgage on Blaenpant."
>
> "Happy you are in your offences," said Dan. "What will Blaenpant profit you in the Palace of White Shirts? Give did I all to the Big Man. Speechify religion will I now. This is what the Angel said to me the first night: 'Grand for you to preach preaches in a Capel.'"
>
> "Wise was the Angel," said Sali.
>
> "Poor am I in silver and gold," said Dan, "and rich in religion. How say you to a Capel Sink? White will be your Shirt."

Dan did not rest until he had swindled Sali out of her farm, which he sold for five hundred and fifty pounds. Besides, Sali gave birth to a boy of whom he was the father, but he declined to marry the mother. Afterwards—

> Dan wept in the Seiet that women had caused him to meddle with them to his hurt, and he glorified God that his hand had been stayed from marrying Sali Blaenpant (*Ibid*, p. 207).

In all the stories told in *My People* and *Capel Sion* religious humbug plays a prominent part, vice finds even the clerical profession a useful medium through which to work, and covetousness thrives in the guise of giving to the Lord for the carrying on of his work in the world.

Mr. Evans' two books, *My People* and *Capel Sion*, are distinguished by two great qualities. In the first place, they represent the first successful attempt to give in English a literal translation of the popular idioms of the Welsh language. Of course, the success is only partial, because idioms are really untranslatable. "Big Man" does not by any means convey the Welsh idea of God contained in the term "Gwr Mawr," nor is "White Shirts" an equivalent of the Welsh "gynau gwynion"; but there are no English equivalents to such idiomatic Welsh expressions. On the whole, however, these volumes afford English readers an accurate idea of the idiomatic manner in which the Welsh people talk about religion. But their most characteristic feature is the accuracy with which they represent the influence of chapel religion upon the Welsh character. We do not know what Caradoc Evans' attitude to supernatural religion is, but it is incontrovertible that the Welsh people do things in the name of God which, as members of society, they would never dream of doing. Like Joshua of old, they hold the Supreme Being responsible for their evil deeds. The sooner they get rid of Christianity the better it will be for the land of song.

J. T. Lloyd.

"The War and Religion."

> We were all brothers, because we had one work, and one hope, and one All-Father.—*Henry Kingsley*.

The European War has disturbed the Churches. Already the theological literature of the War comprises a library, and there is every prospect that before Armageddon has died down, the load of books and pamphlets it has occasioned will be as prodigious as itself. The large majority are ephemeral, mere dust and bluff

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driven on the breath of the storm; but some have a passing interest.

Anyone who reads the utterances of the clergy, and their apologists, in periodical literature will perceive that they are conscious of the reproach which this present War implies. It had been the clerical boast that the Christian religion had civilized Europe, and none, except the Kaiser and his obsequious Lutheran pastors, have the courage to claim that such a war is in harmony with the principles and ideals of the Christian religion. The clergy of all denominations have preached brotherhood and peace for centuries, and this present War means that the big stick of brute force has been thrust suddenly into the mechanism of religion. The wheels cease turning, and the familiar hymn-tunes die into a silence, broken by the clangour of guns, the groans of the dying, and the noise of falling thrones. Not only religion, but philosophy, literature, science, and art, are suddenly arrested. At one terrible stroke we are back in the times of barbarism and savagery, and millions of dead men are shovelled under crimson soil. The pre-war conditions were the fruit of centuries of evolution, centuries of moral and intellectual advance; a labour not of yesterday, but very many yesteryears of European civilization. Humanity has been hoodwinked, and just too late the clergy discover the state of affairs, and apologize for them.

One of the most remarkable of these orthodox deliverances is a pamphlet, entitled *The War and Religion*, printed as a supplement to the *Athenæum*, a paper that has concerned itself with weighty and serious matters for over eighty years. For this reason we give it prominence. That the writer's pen is pointed with pious bias is natural enough; his bias does not, however, degenerate into the gross unfairness and hysterical emotionalism that usually distinguishes soulful utterances on religion. Here are his comments on the boasted revival of religion:—

> The revival of interest in religion has not so far issued in a revival of positive religious faith. The first broad effect of the War has been to stimulate criticism of the Churches and to raise doubts as to the truth of Christianity itself. "The failure of the Churches," "the failure of Christianity," are phrases in constant use at the present time. Surely professing Christians ought to have done more. They ought to have been able to prevent this War. A widespread popular sentiment harps on the degradation of Europe in coming to this pass after two thousand years of Christianity. The responsibility of the failure is laid at the doors of the Churches. In some quarters this means despair of organized Christianity. The complicity of the Churches with the existing social order precludes any hope for their future. The Church is indeed the captive city of God, and not a few doubt the possibility of her recovery.

Nor is this all, for the writer carries his argument further:—

> The critical processes initiated by the War is by no means confined to dissatisfaction with the Churches. Observers at the Front report that soldiers feel themselves to be in the grip of an evil fate whose very existence contradicts the Christian's faith in a God of love. The problem of evil is accentuated. How can God be good when he permits such a catastrophe to overtake mankind and inflict untold suffering on the innocent? The fundamental article of the Christian creed is thus called in question, and relegated to the land of dreams.

The effect of the War, he admits, is felt by the Churches, like all other institutions:—

> The churches are understaffed. There is a prospect of a shortage of ministers as of doctors. The churches at home are often hard put to it to keep things going. Sunday-school work, especially on the boys' side, suffers from lack of workers. Indeed, all the activities of the churches are crippled not only by enlistment, but also by perpetual overtime and the strain of daily business. The problem of finance is an additional embarrassment in many instances.

Equally plain-spoken are his remarks on the usual pulpit-talk concerning the "supreme sacrifice" of the troops:—

> Eagerly, and sometimes perhaps too easily, the sacrifice of the soldier has been associated with the Cross of Christ, usually along the line of the passage, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." But this does not really carry thought beyond Thermopylæ.

The writer is not on such firm ground in his remarks on Protestant theology:—

> The Protestant used to be content with heaven and hell, but he now finds he needs something like purgatory, and there are some signs of a return to the use of prayers for the dead. The cause of such a change is simple. No one is willing to believe that a man who dies for his country is eternally lost. Yet it is not easy to believe that soldiers pass at once into heaven in virtue of their self-sacrifice. Such a belief seems more Mohammedan than Christian, and there is some doubt whether all soldiers pass from earth in a state of salvation. Consequently, it seems that the conception of that other world needs to be completed by the restoration of the idea of purgatory.

This extraordinary conclusion, together with an insistence on the value of the purely Secularistic work of the Young Men's Christian Association, and kindred organizations, appears to be all of value in his apologetics. The young soldiers of Europe, who have died in millions, are the very flower of our civilization, and to the orthodox mind their fate only suggests the necessity of "the restoration of the idea of purgatory." Not a word of pity for the destruction of brains which might have carried on the intellectual traditions of ages; not a tear for the killing of men who might have enlarged the boundaries of knowledge, or have discovered easements for human pain, and solutions for social danger. These splendid youths were destroyed, apparently, to quicken our senses for the rehabilitation of a church dogma.

O, most impotent conclusion! If this is all a Christian apologist can get from his creed, small wonder that it has failed, and failed utterly. So long as men's theological conceptions remain radically unchanged, so long as no new Humanism flames into being with a passionate sense of brotherhood, and a new scale of human values, so long will men seek peace in vain. Christianity is a great illusion, and the clergy fail invariably to get to grips with vital affairs. In this nightmare of civilization the comforting theory that purgatory should be restored is uttered to eager ears. The War has produced horrors and evil enough, but there is a silver lining to the blackest of clouds if this European outbreak but shows clearly and unmistakably that Christianity is but a superstition, and that the Gospel of Christ is of the things that perish. The failure of Christianity is too complete to be glossed over by the glamour of false sentiment and false heroics. Christians are so immersed in their own dogmas that they cannot see that Brute Force has usurped the seat of Reason. We, whose fathers built up in generations of suffering and toil, this fair fabric of Western civilization, can no longer rely on an outworn superstition. Let the clergy leave the peoples of Europe free to work out their Secular salvation, without the fears and trembling of a foolish faith. Humanity has outgrown the dogmas of Oriental creeds, and civilized man is better than the deities of decadent superstitions.

MIMNERMUS.

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A Scientific and Sceptical Saint.

THE biography of Lord Avebury, better known as St. Lubbock, the creator of the August Bank Holiday, is distinctly readable and informative. Considering Lubbock's standing in business and in social circles, the reticence of his biographer, Mr. Horace G. Hutchinson, concerning his subject's religious beliefs need awaken no surprise. Extremely reticent himself, Lubbock did, however, on one occasion, when delivering the Huxley Lecture, avow himself "a reverent Agnostic"; a position he shared, he said, with many of his scientific and philosophical friends. As these included Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and Herbert Spencer, this declaration of his own Agnosticism is worthy of note. No discerning reader of Lubbock's more important scientific works, such as *Prehistoric Times*, *The Origin of Civilization*, and other evolutionary writings, not to mention his *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion*, published as late as 1911, could possibly have entertained the slightest doubt as to what his religious views really were.

After showing that Lubbock was a good fighter on the side of science in its conflict with clericalism, Mr. Hutchinson states, quite truly, that Sir John outwardly conformed to the religious demands of the day, although several of his very intimate friends were determined antagonists of any spiritual explanation of the universe. Nevertheless, the following passage may perhaps be regarded as a sop to Cerberus, as Mr. Hutchinson appears by no means orthodox in his own theological beliefs. When Darwin died, scientific Materialism was supreme; but, we are told,—

> In the midst of that extreme materialism we find Sir John, though many of his best friends were among the extremists, surprisingly moderate in his attitude. He was ever reticent as to his mental outlook on the great mysteries, but I believe he had arrived at the conclusion.....that there was some room, after all, among the atoms for the spirits; that the human intellect did rightly and according to the intention of its Maker in reading as accurately as may be the story which Lyell found in the rocks, and Wallace and Darwin in the whole life history of the globe; but that besides these records there was, as man's special gift, through his evolutionary development, that religious sense or intuition, or whatever term you choose to give it, which was of other stuff than to be subject to the test of human reason. That I believe to have been his attitude, though I do not claim to have heard him explicit in regard to it (vol. i., pp. 186, 187).

Of ancient lineage, the pedigree of his family extending back to the fifteenth century in the county of Norfolk, Sir John Lubbock was the eldest son of Sir John William Lubbock, third baronet, banker, astronomer, author, among other works, of the *Theory of Probabilities*, and Treasurer to the Royal Society. The son first saw the light in London, where he was born in April, 1834, and the boy's natural bent was shown at the age of eight, when, at the coronation of Queen Victoria, he watched with interest "a large insect under a glass." When the child was only four years' old, his mother, who seems to have been an exceptional woman, noted in her diary: "His great delight is in Insects. Butterflies, Caterpillars, or Beetles, are great treasures, and he is watching a large Spider outside my window most anxiously."

That pioneer of photography, Daguerre, forwarded the first of his newly invented appliances that crossed the Channel to the elder Lubbock, and the boy was present when the first picture recorded by the sun was taken in our Isles.

Like most born sceptics, young Lubbock early displayed a propensity for putting inconvenient questions concerning religion. "We were talking," testifies Lady Lubbock,—

> about resisting the Devil, and what that meant, and John said, "Mama, do you think it's right in us to hate the Devil? I don't. I thought we ought to hate no one?" I said, "Very true, my dear; but the Devil is the personification of Sin, and we must hate sin." "True, mama; but the Devil was once an Angel; so I think we ought to wish that he may some day grow good again, instead of hating him."

Sound sense and excellent ethics neatly combined by a small boy!

From a private school at Abingdon Abbey he proceeded to Eton, where he remained until, at the early age of fourteen, his "educational" days ended, and he entered into the busy banking world. Lubbock was thus one of those numerous instances of men destined to obtain world-wide celebrity in the realm of mental achievement who were without that university training which many still imagine to be indispensable to the complete culture of the intellect. In 1849 he joined the banking firm of Lubbock, Forster & Co., as it then was. This step was decided upon owing to the declining health of his father's two partners, in addition to the circumstance that there were several brothers and sisters to be provided for.

When Lubbock was seven years old, as he himself records,—

> My father came home one evening in 1841, quite excited, and said he had a great piece of news for me. He made us guess what it was, and I suggested that he was going to give me a pony. "Oh," he said, "it is much better than that. Mr. Darwin is coming to live at Down."

Quite naturally, the boy's countenance fell, and little could he suspect the potent part that the immortal evolutionist was to play in shaping the current of his maturer thoughts.

Despite the demands of the bank, in which young Lubbock practically occupied the position of a partner, in his seventeenth year he delivered his maiden address. This lecture was given, he narrates,—

> at Down on the wireworm, and was well attended by the villagers. Now I began to realize how right my father was in saying that Mr. Darwin's coming to live at Down was an immense advantage to me. He induced my father to give me a microscope, he let me do drawings for some of his books, and I greatly enjoyed my walks and talks with him. My first scientific original work was on some of his collections, and appeared in the *Natural History Magazine* for January, 1853. In 1849 I was elected a member of the Royal Institution, and in 1853 I attended my first meeting of the British Association. In 1854 I was introduced to Sir C. Lyell and Sir Joseph Hooker, in 1855 to Kingsley, Prestwich, and Sir John Evans, and joined the Geological Society. In 1856 I met George Busk, Huxley, and Tyndall, and the following year was elected a member of the Royal Society. It would be impossible for me to express how much of my real education I owe to the advice, the sympathy, and the example of these kind friends.

What a group of eminent men for a lad to number among his guides, philosophers, and friends.

Residing at High Elms, a beautiful place in Kent, it was necessary to travel daily by road and rail to the City and back; and the facility with which he studied books in crowded trains in later life, becoming, indeed, in such circumstances, unconscious of his fellow-passengers, indicates that he acquired this habit in his youth. He also possessed a wonderful aptitude for moving easily from one theme to another. In mentioning this, Mr. Hutchinson remarks that—

> it was always a surprise to me to note how instantly, and without any apparent effort, he could switch off his mind,

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> as it were, from the discussion of some intricate point of finance—say the involved fortunes of the Peruvian bondholders—and discuss such a problem of biology as parthenogenesis.

Having turned twenty or so, Lubbock elaborated a scheme, which he submitted to the London Bankers, for the purpose of economizing time and money. Up to the time of the eighteen-fifties, metropolitan bankers accepted for collection from their customers cheques drawn on provincial banks and sent them by post to the country banks on which they were drawn. These banks then authorized payment, frequently less a commission. Lubbock now suggested that the London Bankers "should hold a 'clearing' and present to one another all the cheques on the Country Banks for which each London Banker was agent, and that Country Banks should send up all such cheques to London to be dealt with in the same way." Many of the City Bankers shook their heads over this novel proposal, but they were wise enough to consider it, and even to adopt it, and it has been in operation ever since.

In 1859 *The Origin of Species* startled the world, and Lubbock eagerly embraced the new gospel. And, at the famous gathering of the British Association at Oxford in 1860, when Bishop Wilberforce's ignorance and arrogance were so scathingly rebuked by Huxley, the young convert instanced the testimony so strikingly afforded by embryology in favour of evolution.

There is a capital story relating to Mrs. Lowe, the wife of Robert Lowe, of Match Tax renown. Busk and Lowe were staying at High Elms, and,—

> on Saturday evening Mrs. Lowe was between young Lubbock and Mr. Busk (President of the College of Surgeons), and the conversation turned on the great book. Mrs. Lowe asked Mr. Busk "just to explain' why one germ should develop into a man and another into a kangaroo. He suggested that she should read the book, and she took it upstairs. Next day she sat in the drawing-room with it, and finished it about 4.30, shutting it up with a clap, and saying; "Well, I don't see much in your Mr. Darwin after all; if I had had his facts I should have come to the same conclusion myself."

Yet people still linger in the world who fail to grasp the simple truth which this sharp lady seized nearly sixty years ago. What a difference it *would* make if the general public only understood the facts!

In 1860 appeared the once execrated *Essays and Reviews*, and the uproar this publication occasioned appears extraordinary in the days of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. But in the far-off 'sixties the sacerdotal and lay obscurantists who so furiously assailed the volume, and those who contributed to it, made themselves the objects of scorn and amusement to intellectual England.

The writers, among whom were scholars so distinguished as Dr. Jowett and Mark Pattison, had dared to state in the most temperate terms the truth in relation to theology, as revealed by modern science and criticism. Yet they were denounced with unmitigated bitterness, and the palpable earnestness and sincerity of several of the leading orthodox religionists in their stern antagonism to the truth, proved most painfully how utterly unaware they were of the fully demonstrated scientific discoveries of their time. Men of letters and of science were not merely amused and amazed by the display of clerical ignorance, but became alarmed at the sinister spirit of persecution manifested by the men of God. A committee was therefore formed, of which Spottiswoode and Lubbock became secretaries, and an address was despatched to Dr. Temple, whose essay occupied the place of honour in the offending volume, in which the contributors were warmly thanked for their valued services to honesty and truth. This address was signed by many of the leading writers and thinkers of the period, the signatures including those of Darwin and Lyell, Graham the great chemist, Airy the celebrated astronomer and mathematician, and Bentham the eminent botanist.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Another New Hymn.

Dedicated to the "National Mission."

LET the gladsome joy-bells ring,
Let the little children sing,
Christ is here!
Let the Guardians raise their voice,
Let the Government rejoice,
Let all sinners take their choice.
Christ is here!

Let the Army raise a cheer.
Let the Rank and File adhere
To the truth that Christ is here,
Oh, so near!
Let the nations fight it out,
Put the enemy to rout,
Christian soldiers have no doubt,
Christ is here!

See, the Saviour lifts his hand,
And the soldiers take their stand.
Christ their own!
See the heroes of the War,
Wiping blood from many a sore.
Wondering what their guns are for.
At his throne!

Let the buglers sound "retreat,"
While they lie at Jesu's feet,
Peace at last!
See the clergy standing by,
Meet their God with flashing eye,
Never having told a lie,
Safe at last!

Let the gladsome joy-bells ring,
Let the little children sing,
Christ is here!
Let the soldiers raise their voice,
Let civilians, too, rejoice,
Let all sinners take their choice,
Christ is here!

ARTHUR F. THORN.

WHY VOLTAIRE FOUGHT CHRISTIANITY.

Men spoke to Voltaire of the mild beams of Christian charity, and where they pointed he saw only the yellow glare of the stake; they talked of the gentle solace of Christian faith, and he heard only the shrieks of the thousands and tens of thousands whom faithful Christian persecutors had racked, strangled, gibbeted, burnt, broken on the wheel. Through the stream of innocent blood which Christians, for the honour of their belief, had spilt in every quarter of the known world, the blood of Jews, Moors, Indians, and all the vast holocausts of heretical sects, and people in eastern and western Europe, he saw only dismal tracts of intellectual darkness, and heard only the humming of the doctors, as they served forth to congregations of poor men hungering for spiritual sustenance the draff of theological superstition.—*Lord Morley.*

MISSIONARIES.

The missionaries who teach and insist on clothing amongst races accustomed to nudity by heredity are responsible for three evils; firstly, the appearances of lung diseases amongst them; secondly, the spread of vermin amongst them; and thirdly, the disappearance from amongst them of inherent and natural modesty.—*J. Theodore Bent, "Nineteenth Century,"* November, 1894.

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Acid Drops.

Dr. Gilbert Murray, in his address as President of the Teachers' Union, said that "a great hindrance to educational reform is the venomous religious difficulty. The *Church Times* quite agrees with the epithet "venomous," but says the solution is perfectly simple. "Nothing more is needed than the mutual recognition of each other's rights. We all pay the Education Rate, and are all equally entitled to the benefits for which we all alike pay. It has been proved over and over again that Church people will not submit to being deprived of their rights." This is very specious. We agree that so long as religion is included in State Education, something is to be said on behalf of the *Church Times*' case. But the whole question really turns upon whether religious instruction should remain a part of the school curriculum. And it is quite clear that it cannot so remain without inflicting injustice on some people, and doing injury to the cause of education.

It is not only Christians who pay an Education Rate. Non-Christians of all kinds pay also. And if justice demands that teachers shall instruct children in the religion of their parents, will the *Church Times* hold that teachers should also be appointed to instruct children in Mohammedanism, and Buddhism, and Judaism, and Positivism, and Atheism? If not, what becomes of *their* rights? Of course, the *Church Times* has in mind Christians only, and how they can be satisfied. Or, if the various creeds—Christian and non-Christian—were allowed to be taught, what effect would that have upon the children generally? A State Education teaching all religions must refrain from expressing an opinion in favour of any, and the religious lessons would be reduced to a "you—pay—your—money—and—you—take—your—choice" kind of an affair. There is only one way out. Let the State leave religion alone. No one is then defrauded of any "right." Everybody gets what they pay for, and all they pay for. They pay for education, and that the children receive. Anything a parent wishes above that he must provide himself in his own way, and at his own expense.

Now we may sleep in comfort. Not alone have we the great Lloyd-George at the head of affairs—with Mr. Bottomley and *his* God supporting, but a correspondent of the *British Weekly* says that as Mr. Lloyd-George has been "very faithful to the Little Bethel," so he may rest assured that he has behind him the support of the "men of God" of his native land, who are "praying that he may prevail." It is quite evident, therefore, that a triumphant peace *is* at hand.

The *Daily News* claims that John Wesley was the inventor of Watch Night services. Surely pious men and maidens met oft in the stilly night before Wesley's time.

Articles of luxury have been prohibited in Russia, says a daily newspaper. This should cause a slump in ikons and sacred images, and cause Biblical language among the dealers.

A new book bears the arresting title, *Much Ado About Peter*. We wonder if it refers to the loquacious apostle who made a cock crow with his terminological inexactitudes?

In their New Year Letters, the Bishops of Chelmsford and Bristol deal with the War and National Service. Neither of the bishops suggest the conscription of able-bodied clergymen of military age.

Farmers are not the only ones who benefit by the high price of corn. It will also benefit the Church; though whether that will compensate for the increased cost of bread is doubtful. But a tithe rent charge of £70 value before the War is now £83. Whereat the hearts of the parsons rejoice.

"Thank God that the War has come!" says Pastor Phillipps, of Berlin. We do not question the sincerity of the preacher; it is merely a sample of the kind of idiocy that flourishes in the pulpit.

Is it not time, by the way, that our newspapers left off treating expressions of this kind, when made by Germans, from the Kaiser downwards, as proofs of hypocrisy? They are nothing of the kind. If the history of man proves anything at all, it proves that intense and sincere religious conviction is perfectly consonant with the most stupid and the most villainous of sentiments. It will be remembered that the notorious Charles Peace hurried away from a prayer-meeting to commit a burglary; and if there is one thing certain about the Kaiser, for instance, it is the sincerity of his religious convictions. And before the War there was not a Christian in England who doubted it.

The *Weekly Dispatch* is responsible for a story that a child-dancer was refused admission to appear at a Christmas entertainment at the Y.M.C.A., Tottenham Court Road, on account of the scantiness of her clothing. We should like to know the precise association between Christianity and calisthenics.

From the *Globe* of January 3:—

> We have no wish to be hypercritical, but it is the plain fact that the Anglican clergy know less about their work on its intellectual side than the members of any other learned profession, and that the majority of them are entirely oblivious of what has been accomplished in other spheres of thought. We say it with deep regret, but no thoughtful man who forces himself to listen to the average sermon will deny it—least of all the best among the clergy themselves. The people are no longer ignorant, and if the Church is to regain her influence over the masses, her clergy must be educated to deal honestly and competently with the tremendous problems presented by the Higher Criticism and by Science in general. That is not the case at present.

It is only what we have said over and over again, but we are pleased to have it repeated elsewhere.

According to the Bishop of Lichfield, Christianity is *the* religion of progress. We do not wish to retort, "Look at the War," although that retort is obvious, and quite justifiable. But when and where is it that Christianity has made progress? It inherited Greek and Roman culture. What became of that culture under Christian control? Surely the rule of the monk was a sorry exchange for the intellectual dominance of the Greek and Latin thinkers, and the rule of the Church a poor substitute for that of the Roman State. Look at the Dark and Middle Ages that were Christian, or nothing. Compare the modern Greek with the ancient Greek, the modern Roman with the ancient Roman! Look at Abyssinia, one of the oldest of Christian countries! Look at Christianity in the East! What kind of progress was that which had witch hunts, Jew baitings, miracle cures, and heretic burnings? Where nations have advanced it is not because of Christianity, but because of other forces which Christianity has been unable to crush or control.

One day it will be recognized that, even religiously, Christianity spelt retrogression. Superstitions were current in Greece and Rome as crude as anything that flourished in the Dark Ages. But there was a steady development in a higher direction. With the conquest of Christianity the higher lost its power, the lower gained strength. The triumph of Christianity involved a revival of demonism, of miracle working, of supernaturalism generally. Compare the Middle Ages—even religiously—with Greece and Rome at their best, and we do not hesitate to say that one moves on an altogether lower plane. Christian leaders of the Middle Ages would have felt quite at home with the most ignorant of the Pagan believers. The educated Pagans would have been horrified could they have returned and seen the gross superstitions of leaders of mediæval Christian thought.

There is a chance for a new miracle at the famous St. Winifred's Well, Holywell. The spring has been running—longer than Charlie's Aunt—for centuries in fact, but it has now ceased to flow, and unless the monks discover some

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substitute miracle there will be a grievous falling off in revenue. Like Lourdes, thousands of people have professed a cure as a result of using the miraculous water, and, provided faith was strong enough, we quite believe many have really benefited. Anything else would have done quite as well.

"A Week of Prayer" was held at the Queen's Hall and King George's Hall, London, and the meetings were advertised as being "in touch with Christians of all communions throughout the civilized world." Apart from the comment that the prayerful folk might as well try to tempt an earthquake with a penny bun, we wonder what the Abyssinian Christians think about it.

Sir Oliver Lodge's spiritualistic book, *Raymond*, has attracted considerable notice in the press. Mr. Clement Shorter, writing in the *Sphere*, says that "most spiritually minded people in the Christian world have thought otherwise" than Sir Oliver, and he characterizes Raymond's post-mortem messages as "feeble and futile."

An evening paper announces that the clergy are to assist the mass levy. This probably means that the parsons will see the boys off at the railway stations—and afterwards console the girls left behind.

Providence watches the sparrows fall, but did not prevent the deaths of forty-one persons who lost their lives in fires in London during December. The majority of the victims were women.

A Catholic critic in the *Dublin Review* has been attacking the veracity of Gibbon, the historian of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. The critic might have remembered the striking tribute of Cardinal Newman, "It is melancholy to say it, but the chief, perhaps the only, English writer who has any claim to be considered an ecclesiastical historian, is the unbeliever, Gibbon."

We pointed out some weeks ago that the clergy made a fatal blunder when they played so energetically the part of recruiting sergeants. It disgusted many of their followers, and made a much larger number feel uneasy. It was not that either of these classes were out of sympathy with the War; they were not; but they felt that it was not quite the business of the clergy, with their talk of love and brotherhood, etc., and their claim to rank as ethical teachers, to encourage war even when the War was defensible. It might be the business of the soldier, the politician, or the layman; the clergyman's business was of a quite different character. The net result is that the clergy have lost caste heavily. Their influence to-day is weaker than it was when the War opened. We think it will be weaker before the War ends.

We find this view of the matter endorsed by Mr. James Douglas in an article in the *Star*, the other evening. He says, in reply to an attack made upon him by the Vicar of St. Luke's, Camberwell:—

> I do not claim the right to interpret either the Old Testament or the New. My attitude towards the soldier-parson is instinctive. I think he ought to stick to his parsonship. As to the Christian layman, the problem is different. I decline to dogmatise about it. But I feel that the less we mix up religion with war the better. The Kaiser is an awful warning. He also holds just war to be a Christian duty. His theologians back him up. There's the rub. There are Christians on both sides. Each set claims that its cause is just. If, as we believe, our cause is just, what about the Christians in Germany who hold that their cause is just? If the good Vicar of St. Luke's were the Vicar of Potsdam, he might hold that it is a Christian duty to murder Belgians.

That is a neat satire on the Christian conscience. It is determined by the country in which the Christian happens to dwell. For ourselves, we haven't much doubt that, if many of our bellicose parsons were in Germany, they would be just as bellicose—on the other side.

How these Christians love one another! The Catholic *Tablet* points out that "Mr. Lloyd George, who is a devout Baptist, will now have the appointment of the Bishops of the Establishment in his hands." Just so! And his predecessor, Mr. Asquith, is an unattached Nonconformist, and an earlier Premier was Lord Beaconsfield, whose "Christianity" was more remarkable than his successors' Nonconformity.

A musical comedy star appearing in "High Jinks" has presented a war-shrine to her native town. There will be "high jinks" in the church as well as the theatre.

The Bishops of Lichfield and Stafford state that a vast number of Church people do not even attempt to understand the aspirations of labour, and that the Church has not taken an active part in fighting social ills. A striking commentary on this statement is contained in the newspaper paragraph stating that at Exhall, Warwickshire, an eighteen year old youth is discharging the duties of parish clerk and verger. He is a printer, also a bell-ringer and organ-blower at the parish church. This gifted youth ought to enjoy the salary of a bishop.

"Does the Providence of God make it certain that the right must always win?" This is the question put by the editor of the *British Weekly*, and the proper reply would be, If it doesn't, what's the good of it? Sir Robertson Nicol answers the question in another way. He says, "Yes, if we hold fast to the truth of another life." We may be defeated here, but we shall conquer somewhere else. But if the right *is* defeated here, what is the use of the "Providence of God"? So far as we can see, so far as we know, it simply doesn't act. And unless "Providence" acts every time, no one can be certain that it acts at any time.

Putting it off to the next world won't do. In the first place, we have no proof that there is a next world. And even if there were, we have no reasonable grounds for assuming that things will be any better there than here. A "Providence" that allows itself to be defeated here may get defeated elsewhere also. And at most it is only giving "Providence" another chance to retrieve its character. It is a case of the First Offenders' Act applied to Deity. And what kind of gratification is it to learn that right *will* triumph? How many Belgians who have seen their homes destroyed, or their relatives killed, will feel it enough to learn that all will be put right in the next world? How can it be put right in the next world? It won't do, Men found God in *this* world; the parsons declare it is *his* world; and he must be judged by the course of affairs in this world alone.

There is nothing very unusual in the case of Thomas Coleman, of Chester, who was charged with breaking into a shop and stealing groceries. Nor is the fact that for a "long period," while "posing" as a religious man and acting as a local preacher, Coleman had been robbing the same stores. But why does the newspaper say he was "posing" as a religious man? Being religious is not incompatible with stealing. Being moral is; but there have been religious thieves in plenty at all times. Mental derangement was suggested as a defence, but without avail. Really, that might have been associated with greater reason with his zeal as a preacher. Those two things have often gone together; but between stealing and insanity there is no very close connection.

A paragraph in the press, probably inspired, states that during the twenty-eight months of the War, the British and Foreign Bible Society has sent out 5,000,000 Bibles and Testaments to the troops, and suggests that the sacred volume may be the favourite literature of the soldiers. As this modest figure is exclusive of all Bibles sent out by rival organizations, we wonder the troops find any time to read the millions of magazines, books, and periodicals.

Some time ago, a silk undervest, worn by Charles the First on the scaffold, was sold for two hundred guineas. This was a genuine relic. Priests must have laughed at such a small return. At Treves they have made many thousands of pounds out of a curious coat of a man who never lived.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 14, Nottingham; January 28, Swansea; February 4, Abertillery; February 11, Liverpool; February 25, Clapham; March 11 Birmingham; March 18, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 14, Leicester; February 11, Walsall.

S. L.—Charles Bradlaugh never called himself anything but an Atheist, and would have repudiated any other title. Naturally, many timid persons thought it indiscreet, but a real leader's first concern is to get his own position correctly described. That was all Bradlaugh cared about.

W. T. HOLMES.—It would be necessary to get the author's or publisher's permission before reprinting. Thanks for sending.

J. BEATON (Alexandria).—We shall have much pleasure in sending you a free parcel of *Freethinkers*, etc., for distribution, and hope it will do good.

E. CLARK.—We are quite willing to accept your word that the meeting was not broken up by a hostile crowd. Our comment was based upon a newspaper paragraph. Probably the paper had some purpose to serve in misrepresenting.

T. SINCLAIR.—We have no intention of reprinting as a leaflet our "Views and Opinions" of last week's issue, but we have no objection to anyone else doing so who may feel inclined.

W. MATHER.—Pleased to have so cheerful a letter concerning both yourself and your friend. Our best wishes for the New Year to you both.

W. DODD.—We are obliged for your further subscription to the Sustentation Fund. We knew we had your good wishes and hearty support.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges J. Pendlebury, £2 10s.

E. MORRISON.—Quite willing to take the will for the deed. Thanks.

D. CORNOCK.—No apology is necessary. We recognize that people have all sorts of calls upon them. So long as each does his, or her, best, that is all we ask or expect.

H. MARVIN.—In the course of a month, we hope. As you will see from the advertisement, *War and Civilization*, or *Religion and the Child*, will be sent at 6s. per 100.

S. SCOTT.—We are not at all surprised at the nature of your confession, and are pleased at its happy ending. We note your suggestion *re* "Acid Drops," with which we quite agree.

W. WILMER.—The support of one who was a subscriber to the first issue of the *Freethinker* is very gratifying. Shall be glad to have your aid in any way. Posters are being sent.

R. WILSON.—Membership subscription to N. S. S. has been handed to N. S. S. Secretary. We agree with you that "after the War is over our strides will be rapid." That is why we are so anxious to get the Movement into as good a fighting trim as is possible.

T. S. NEWALL writes:—"Good luck to you in your plucky swim against the tide; and congratulations on your maintenance of the editorial high-level of the fearless and peerless little journal."

F. W. LLOYD.—Mr. Mann's articles may be reprinted. The chief difficulty in the way at present is the excessive price of paper.

L. MARSHALL.—We are much obliged for your efforts in securing new subscribers.

T. E. STAFFORD.—Mr. Cohen is writing you.

F. R. GLOVER.—We hope that Mr. Cohen's visit to Nottingham will have the effect of stirring up interest in Freethought.

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., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

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.

Our Sustentation Fund.

THE object of this Fund is to make good the loss on the *Freethinker*—entirely due to increased cost of materials, etc.—from October, 1915, to October, 1916, and to provide against the inevitable further losses during the continuation of the War. This Fund will close on Jan. 14.

LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Previously acknowledged, £236 14s. 9d.—A. Johnson, £1 V. M. Phelips, 10s. 6d.; H. J. Slack, 4s.; D. Cornock, 2s.; J. Murphy, 2s. 6d.; E. Morrison, 5s.; W. Dodd, 10s. 6d.; W. Mather, £1; J. W. Arnott, 10s. 6d.; R. Allen (N.Z.), £1; Debtor, 5s.; S. Scott, 10s.; J. J. B., 3s.; F. W. S. (Portsmouth), 10s.; S. Wilcomer, 2s. 6d.; Ormyc, 10s.; A. H. Smith, £1; T. J. W. (Pontypridd), 2s. 6d.; R. Wilson, £1; F. S. Newall, 4s.; P. M. McDermott, £2 2s.; E. Poynton, 4s.; Marshall and Friend (Tottenham), 5s. *Per Miss Vance*; W. Wilmer, 10s.; W. Newman, 2s.; Mrs. Helena Parsons, £1 1s.; Mr. Hinley, 2s.; Richard Moore, 2s. 6d.; W. Barton, 1s.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (January 14) Mr. Cohen visits Nottingham. The afternoon lecture will be given on "Determinism" before the Cosmopolitan Debating Society, and it is expected that a good discussion will follow the address. The evening meeting is independently arranged by Mr. Cohen, and his subject will be "Christianity and the Logic of Life." This *ought* also to lead to a good discussion. Whether it will or not remains to be seen. Both meetings will be held in the hall of the Mechanic's Institute.

At the close of the evening meeting Mr. Cohen will be pleased to meet local Freethinkers who are interested in future propaganda in Nottingham. It is many years since Freethought lectures were delivered there, and it is high time the town received attention.

There is something about the following expression of opinion which induces us to suppress our blushes and publish it. In sending subscription to Sustentation Fund Mr. S. Scott writes:—

> And now shall I make you a confession? When Mr. Foote died I had fears—grave fears—for the future of my favourite paper. Mr. Foote's genius, ability, and loyalty to "the best of causes" had been for so many years tried and proved, and the paper had been so powerful and successful under his guidance, that I dreaded once his personality was removed the *Freethinker* might deteriorate, and eventually perish. But I am more delighted than I can tell you to find that all my fears were vain, and that our dear old "guide, companion, and friend" is as good as ever, if not better. I congratulate you, Sir, on its improved appearance, and on the sustained brilliancy of its articles—articles equal to any that have ever appeared in it—and that is saying a great deal. If it is any satisfaction to you, be assured that one constant reader and admirer, at any rate, thoroughly approves of and is thankful for the new editorship of the *Freethinker*.

We feel that our readers will pardon the publication of the above, in the circumstances. No one can appreciate more than ourselves the difficulty of stepping into the editorial shoes of a writer like G. W. Foote. And for the *Freethinker* to have maintained its position and its hold on the affections of its readers is a reward for the anxiety and worry of the past year and a half.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (Jan. 14) at the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. We have no doubt there will be the usual good audience—the usual good lecture is certain.

The death of Dr. E. B. Tylor, on January 2, has removed a great figure from the world of anthropology and comparative mythology. Born in 1832, the son of a brassfounder, he retired from his father's business because he was threatened with

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consumption. A visit to Mexico created an interest in anthropology, of which science he may truly be said to be one of the great lawgivers—if not the lawgiver. Certainly his principal work, *Primitive Culture*, published in 1871, reduced chaos to order, and anthropologists have been compelled to very largely work along the lines laid down therein. In 1907 a sense of the debt due to his labours was marked by a collection of essays that were dedicated and presented to him And whatever the corrections or modifications made necessary by the labours of later workers, it may be safely said that no more stimulative work has ever been published on the subject with which it deals.

While stopping short of a direct and detailed application of his theories to current religious beliefs, Dr. Tylor left every intelligent reader in no doubt as to his belief that he regarded these as the direct descendants of primitive savage beliefs, and resting on no other or better foundations. In saying "Animism is, in fact, the groundwork of the philosophy of religion, from that of savages up to that of civilized men," he reduced all religious beliefs to their proper level. And to his credit, be it noted, there was with him little or none of that coquetting with the word religion—which is usually an indication of a timid nature or confused thought. So, again, in the expression, "The animism of savages stands by itself; it explains its own origin," we have an illuminating expression for those who grasp its full significance. And at the close of the first volume of his greatest work, we have the following:—

> It is evident that, notwithstanding all this profound change, the conception of the human soul is, as to its most essential nature, continuous from the philosophy of the savage thinker to that of the modern professor of theology. The definition has remained from the first that of an animating, separable, surviving entity, the vehicle of individual personal existence. The theory of the soul is one principal part of a system of religious philosophy, which unites, in an unbroken line of mental connexion, the savage fetish worshipper and the civilized Christian.

No one could have said much more plainly that the true parent of the Christian theology is the primitive savage. When that is realized, all the stupid chatter about "essential Christianity," "a purified religion," etc., will cease to be heard because it will appeal to none worth appealing to.

There is one point in connection with Dr. Tylor on which we have long waited for information. In 1888 he delivered the Gifford Lectures in Aberdeen. His subject was "Natural Religion," and the publication of these lectures was expected. But they never appeared, and one would like to know why. Was the fault Dr. Tylor's or that of the Gifford Trustees? It is a point on which we should appreciate enlightenment.

The following experience of a young soldier, just arrived at military age, and handed to us by the young man's father, will be of interest to our readers:—

> I am glad you sent me down the *Freethinker*. The last one I gave to a man who went out in the first draft. He was a fine man. I think he was past forty. He was like a father to us all, and would help us in any way, and he was always sorry for us young chaps—not like the usual run who are always shouting "single men first." He never thought of himself; it was the hardest job out to treat him, and yet if he knew you wanted anything, he would be the first to help you. One night we had an argument on religion, and he told us then that he was an Atheist. When we saw the draft off I gave him the *Freethinker*, and it would have done your eyesight good to see how he thanked me for it. We all liked him, and he is missed by everyone.

The boyish frankness of the letter is delightful. We hope he will return from the War with the same boyish nature unspoiled.

Fear not the tyrants shall live for ever,
Or the priests of the bloody faith;
They stand on the brink of that mighty river,
Whose waves they have tainted with death:
It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
Like wrecks, in the surge of eternity. —*Shelley.*

"Free Will."

THE average person unskilled in debate, and intent on earning his daily bread, is frequently apathetic towards hundreds of questions which excite keen controversy among thinkers. For thinkers are not always inclined to accept trite commonplaces as truth without further inquiry. Such a trite commonplace is the doctrine of Free Will. The former, therefore, receives something of a shock when the other denies pointblank that Free Will exists at all. He is prone to become furiously indignant when it is pointed out that this doctrine can no longer find lodgment in rationalistic minds; that, indeed, it has been a homeless wanderer for many years, in so far as the latter type is concerned. Doubtless the doctrine has served a useful purpose. Almost any evil can serve thus under certain circumstances. The spilled ink which obliterates the falsified entries of the dishonest bank clerk is an evil serving a useful end—to the evildoer. In a precisely similar fashion, the Free Will doctrine has cemented theological fatuities in behalf of the vested interests which theology as a whole subserves. But if the will were free, it would be the only phenomenon in the cosmos, standing alone, and unconditioned. It would thus come under the category of an absolute. Even were it true, it would remain unknown and unknowable, for any means by which it reached man's consciousness would to that extent condition it. Its absolutism would instantly cease. It seems clear that the mere assertion, "I know the will is free," negatives its own predicate.

Let us now examine the position in more detail.

What does Free Will mean? We often hear some such remark as this, "A has murdered X. He is condemned to death, and he deserves his fate. Having a Free Will, he could have refused to kill him." Thus, here Free Will could have led—by implication—to what jurists call an "act of commission." Again, "B sees W running towards the edge of a cliff. B could stop him, but does not do so. Having 'Free Will,' he could have saved a life. He is guilty of W's death by an act of omission." "Believers," in their strictures against "sin," almost always argue that Free Will can lead to right action, either by commission or omission. The point we would emphasize is, that action, or some phase of physical activity, is implied in their use of the term "Free Will." From these examples we can deduce the definition as Religionists view it. For them "Free Will" is the faculty in man whereby he can either act or remain passive, undetermined by any factor save that same "will." Let us classify this as the theological definition. We may do this the more reasonably since the argument expressed, or implied, is that God gave man a Free Will, or the faculty so described, to avoid the alternative of man's being something akin to an automatic machine.

There is another aspect of Free Will. An Agnostic—supposedly—hears a discourse on the "truths" taught by the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church, from the lips of a Roman Catholic. He remains an Agnostic. The Roman Catholic may, and frequently does, argue "this man has heard the truth; he is obdurate, and hence sinful. He has a Free Will, and could for that reason accept what an infallible Church teaches. He wilfully prefers darkness and infidelity to light and belief." This view leads to another definition, *i.e.*, "Free Will is the faculty by which a man can accept and believe as true that which he knows to be false." We might label this the fanatic definition.

Again, a man hears shots in a neighbouring street. It

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is said that possessing a Free Will, he can either go to the spot and ascertain the cause, or he can remain where he is.

Before dealing with each case in turn, we must dispose of one pitfall, due to theological-minded tricksters. It is this: "The will is, of course, partly determined by physical circumstances, it is all the same Free Will." This is proceeding too fast. "Partly determined" is not reconcilable with freedom. Free Will means exactly what it says. Free admits of no degree. "The eagle is freer than the caged linnet," is quite allowable in ordinary conversation, but in critical dialectics "free" ceases to be susceptible of graduated degree. In this latter, neither eagle nor linnet is free. A simpler example is the adjective "dead." If one asserts "My cat died yesterday, and his last month, hence his is deader than mine," the absurdity is plainly visible to anyone. "Dead," "free," "crystallized," "bisected," and many other qualifying terms, are inherently devoid of comparative or superlative degree.

Now for the case where A killed X. Before doing it, he made up his mind to do it. This is true even in the so-called "impulsive act," which Statute Law recognizes as a mitigation of the offence. But criticism takes the matter in hand, and deems the impulsive act equally as "willed," or as the result of making up his mind to do it. In the latter case the process of decision was exceedingly rapid. Thus, before killing X, A desired to do it. He willed it. If he did not desire to kill him, but yet did it, then he was impelled by a power innocent of desire. He was in the position of a ton of coal falling on a child, due to a breaking chain. There was no will in it. It was a circumstantial impulsion. Such a man is insane, hence has no conscious will, and that which is not cannot have any qualification attached to it. *No*, will cannot be said to be free or coerced. As well say, "Was no horse white or roan?"

An insane man, at any rate, cannot have Free Will. If he was sane, he willed or desired to kill X. He had a motive. A motiveless act in a sane man is unthinkable. What was the motive? Revenge, greed, anger, lust, hate.

Could he have willed *not to feel revengeful?* No. The victim had wronged him twenty times. It was a natural emotion. Could he have willed *not* to feel greedy, angry, lustful, hating? No. He might be starving and the victim rich; he had been insulted grossly; or he had been robbed of the woman he loved, and the victim had won her by poisoned tales told falsely against the lover. Every emotion was natural and inevitable, given the circumstances. We see that his mental attitude towards his enemy was the direct result of his enemy's actions towards him. His act of will was the lineal, and as it were, instant, descendant in his consciousness of sensations produced by the enemy acts towards him. A man has no control whatever over a sensation. He is insulted; anger wells up inevitably. He cannot will to be devoid of anger; as well expect one to be devoid of pain when a hot metal presses against his flesh. Anger is the reciprocal emotion to insult, as pain is the reciprocal sensation to the touch of hot iron. The will cannot refuse to allow this sequence of phenomena. If it cannot, it is not free; it is determined, hedged in, or controlled.

Having appreciated the lack of control over the emotion by the will at the moment preceding the possible act of murder, let us advance the argument a step further. Impelled by a mental attitude, by a *willing* not free, but most undoubtedly held in the grip of determining factors, he now kills or he does not. He is now about to be faced with the problem of choosing between them. One set of factors comprises tendency to savagery, love of conquest, desire to balance wrongs received, by retaliation, as against restraint from former teaching, self-conquest in loyal adherence to a moral code, desires towards right doing, pathetic reference introspectively to noble precepts inculcated by some early friend—a mother, perchance—and perhaps fear of consequences or a passionate disregard of them. If the balance lies with the former, he slays his man; if the latter, he refrains. But is it not plain that in either case the act—or its omission—is determined, is controlled, is driven, is dominated?

Thus the will, whether regarded as conforming to the "theological" or "fanatic" definition is not free. The mental make-up determines it. This mental equipment is the result, and indeed total, of education, surroundings, former associates, previous sensations, habits of thought and cogitation, inherited tendencies, transmitted taints or blemishes, a host of factors ontogenetic and phylogenetic, possible to grasp only under the comprehensive terms, "heredity" and "environment." These two, and these only, determine the will; hence the will is not free, *i.e.*, there is no Free Will.

Perchance the protagonists of Free Will are dissatisfied with the definitions of will which we ascribe to them as theirs. Is will simply a mental attitude, or is it of necessity this attitude *plus* its translation, or shall we say fruition, into activity? We care not which they claim; we shall prove still further it is not free. Consider these examples. A woman in a factory has her hair, by accident, caught in some machinery. She is in imminent danger of being scalped. Does any man doubt that she *wills* to be released? that a passionate and overwhelming desire to extricate herself floods the totality of her consciousness? Is this overmastering desire will, or is it not? If it is, who dare assert that it is free? Can she help willing her release? Is it not the inevitable outcome of pain, danger, fear, love of life, self-preservative instinct? Here, then, if will is the mental attitude, it is not free.

But, on the other definition, will must be followed by the act desired or willed. Since she cannot, and does not extricate herself, but is maimed or killed, will is again controlled, and hence not free.

In the last case, will is controlled by the exigencies of physical happenings.

JERL. NIRRA.

(To be concluded.)

"Christian Evidence."

He who will not reason is a bigot,
He who cannot is a fool,
And he who dares not is a slave.

IT is a fact that Freethinkers study the Bible more thoroughly than Christians; consequently, a Freethinker is often privileged to correct Biblical quotations and to give Scripture-knowledge lessons to an opponent.

A case in point occurred when the Cambridge University Press declared the Bible "correct." Their attention was respectfully directed to Acts xvii., verse 18: "And some said, What would this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods."

The phrase "*other some*" is wrong, nonsensical; and the publishers, together with others responsible for the production of the Revised Version, were told so. And here is their reply: "Compare your own Bible with some other or others of a different size, and if the reading is the same in them all, you may depend upon it that it is correct."

Correct, indeed! Why, the *Revised* Version, "the pure Word of God in the purest English," contains hundreds

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of errors against truth and morals; and an office-boy knows grammar better than the whole company of over a hundred "learned divines," who resorted to voting in order to determine right from wrong. Consequently, "37,000" renderings were decided differently, but all of them printed as "*correct*." Those figures are given by one of the revising company, the Rev. Professor Moulton, D.D., sometime Master of the Leys School, Cambridge, and *he* ought to be "correct."

With such information, we understand now why there is so little of that precious faculty of the mind, *common sense*.

It is because "this well of *pure* English," with its thirty-seven thousand muddling renderings and hundreds of other pernicious teachings, contaminates both parent and child. But the sign of the Cross is always the sign of an ignoramus.

Fraud, cowardice, vice, and ignorance are grave charges. These are deliberately levelled at "the right reverends" and their puny progeny. The Right Rev. Samuel Thornton, D.D., Assistant Bishop of Manchester, deliberately stated that men of letters have "access to the original"; as if its existence were a verity. Why, of the sixty-six books constituting the Bible, there is not one "original." The earliest MS. of the Old Testament of which the age is certainly known, is dated A.D. 916, and no "copies" agree.

In the Authorised Version we read that a man was born two years before his father (2 Chron. xxi. 20 and xii. 2), but the revisers had not the courage to expunge this monstrosity. The clergy also condone their predecessors' disgusting teaching (1 Cor. vii. 36), which actually advocates incest; adding, *it is not a sin* to practise a most degrading obscenity. This revolting and "inspired" vice is placed indiscriminately in the hands of youths and maidens by clergymen whom the nation tolerate and the State encourage with payments!

With regard to ignorance, university prelates have yet to learn that pronouns in the English language refer to nouns nearest to them of the same number and person; this is very elementary grammar, but they do not know it.

In John i. 6 we read: "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John." That sentence gives God a new name—JOHN GOD! Again, "Jesus answered..... he that delivered me hath greater sin" (John xix. 10-11). Now, remembering that Jesus was *delivered up by God* (Acts ii. 23), Jesus therefore not only declares that act as a sin, but deliberately charges God as the great sinner. Also, according to Acts xii. 21-23, God was eaten by worms: "He gave not God the glory, and he [*i.e.*, God] was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." "What blasphemy!" exclaims the man who puts his collar on backwards. Maybe, Christian, but these are evidences from your own "blessed" book, which also states that *God has a big brother!* Such is the rendering of 1 John iv. 21, and it necessarily follows as a duty binding all Christians who loveth God to love God's brother also.

The Bible expressly states these ideas with utmost clearness. They could not possibly be rendered in plainer language, as the "learned" revisers declare in the preface: "As to pronouns and the place they occupy in the sentence, we have been particularly careful."

Consider one proof in 1 Tim. iii. 2, and in conjunction with it 1 Tim. iii. 12. In verse 2 of the Revised Version a definite article, "the," is inserted before the word "husband." The bishops thereby are prevented from having a licence for whoredom. But in the twelfth verse no such alteration has been made; therefore, permission for unlawful sexual intercourse is given to the deacons.

Upon this statement relative to bishops, the Rev. A. Edgar, D.D., remarks:—

> Such a rendering (*i.e.*, with an "a" instead of "the") would present unutterable horror to the episcopal mind: for, while forbidding the bishop to indulge in polygamy, it would give Scripture sanction for his wife's luxuriating in barbaric dignity of polyandrism. Therefore, for the bishops' sake, the "Revisers" did *not* revise the passage, but continue to make the rules of grammar succumb to the dictates of sober theology.

But why attempt to preserve the bishops and wholly neglect a poor deacon? This is clearly a case of bless the bishops and damn the deacons. And the evidence is quite lucid. The Bible states that the "one wife" is to be the common property of "deacons" who are to be her "husbands" and she their prostitute. And this is what the Right Rev. Samuel Thornton, D.D., Assistant Bishop, calls "light in all its purity and clearness"!

Poor old Job is made to swallow his riches and vomit them up *again* (Job xx. 15). In explanation, before anything can be *vomited up again*—but, verily, verily, it is too sickly; so we leave the full explanation to the "revisers." Moreover, this is a gratuitously foul simile, because a Freethinker—Mr. E. J. Dillon, Professor of Oriental Languages—is privileged to convey a cleaner and more sensible meaning in his *Poem of Job* than that repulsive translation of the "learned revisers," who know little Hebrew and less English.

Similar offensive expressions—*e.g.*, filthiness of a woman's latter end (Lam. i. 9)—are gratuitous insults to both sexes. "Light in all its purity," indeed!

A specimen of "particular carefulness" is offered in Mark vi. 16—"him that was possessed with devils, and concerning the *swine*. And *they* began to beseech him." What extraordinary swine! and the more so since they had previously been drowned (Mark v. 13).

Truly the "learned" divines have well said: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. x. 22).

W. A. V.

A Hasty Judgment.

IT has always seemed to me that the punishment meted out to Ananias and his good lady was a trifle severe. His case stands out as a tremendous warning against landed proprietors who may intend to make a little out of a sound business transaction. Of course, neither of them should have fabricated that little fib about the price of their freehold. Still, they might have argued that, even if their statements did not quite accord with the whole truth, yet their slip was "only a little one." They might have alleged that even amongst the apostles themselves were to be found small attempts at "terminological inexactitudes." They might have mentioned Peter, who, at a very critical moment, deliberately said the thing that was not. Or, if they cared to ransack Bible history, they could have found many instances of religious prevarication without being attended with fatal results. Why, then, was this worthy couple brought to an untimely end in their prime, just when the new commonwealth was about to be successfully established?

Firstly, I think their "story" must have lacked artistic quality. Though they had evidently rehearsed the part they each had to play, yet in the telling of it there must have been absent that polished verisimilitude which is so necessary to the stamina of a healthy religious lie. One must admit—we all admit—that if lying is imperative, it ought to be done, especially if it be for the glory of God, with some concern for artistic effect. No mere tyro should be allowed to bungle this business; it should be left to the adept at romancing; one who is glib at

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tongue-twisters, one who can easily persuade you that black is white and that scarlet is no colour at all. It requires a proficient mathematician, who not only knows how many beans make five, but who can add two and two together and secure the wished-for result. If we had the documents at hand, I think it would be found that the pair had blundered, and blundered badly, as they very soon found to their cost. They received a lesson which lasted the rest of their lives.

Secondly, the tragic affair of the property-vendors was an example of the swiftness of Nemesis. As our rector says, he was judged on the spot. We must all agree to that. Though we have certain differences of opinion—the rector and I—yet we agree to his verdict in this case. It makes one happy to find oneself in harmony with our rector. How many Freethought lecturers have been struck down dead! but it was generally after the lapse of five minutes. Though they tempted Providence too rashly, yet they chose the time for their exit, and they probably could have escaped had they so wished. But here our landed speculator and his wife had no choice. Like Hamlet's father, they were—

> Cut off even in the blossom of their sin,
> Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd.

The retribution was swift and inexorable. There was no dalliance on the part of Omnipotence.

Thirdly (as this is a sermon I might as well keep to the beaten path), one may discover a wonderful instance of how the bad name of a dog sticks to him after he has been christened. Down the ages the name of Ananias has been synonymous with a disregard for truth. You may call a man by a shorter name, but if you call him "Ananias" he will understand you perfectly. The lady does not figure quite so prominently, yet if her name was used in a family squabble, most people would perceive the significance. Perhaps "Jezebel" has outshone her humbler sister in the Billingsgate firmament, but that may be because the former was a kind of encyclopædia for the termagant. The epithet "Jezebel," hurled at a neighbour with sufficient vigour, is almost certain to bring about strained relations. It is one of the most bellicose terms in our language.

Please do not misunderstand my motive in attempting to state a case for Ananias. It may have been that he committed "a grievous fault." But, surely, "grievously" he had to answer it. It was a case of "Jeddart" justice, where they hanged a man first and judged him afterwards. He may have been "on the make" in his deal with that little plot; but the punishment did not fit the crime. And, again, what would our politicians do without Judas and Ananias? They come in very handy at times for these gentlemen.

ALAN TYNDALL.

Correspondence.

COLONIZATION AND THE BIRTH-RATE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Permit me to thank Dr. Dunlop, M.B., for his letter in the *Freethinker* (Jan. 7), in reply to my article on "Biology, Economics, and War."

I am sorry he has drawn the implication that I think the birth-rate factor can now be entirely neglected. Widespread intelligent birth-rate control *is* needed now, and will continue to be needed if man is ever to become master of his "fate" in the fullest possible way. But I hope Dr. Dunlop realizes that the necessity for birth-rate control is conditioned by the methods of food production and food distribution that prevail from time to time. Consequently, control of the birth-rate can only become fully effective when it takes place along with national control of other important factors in social evolution, such as the means of food production and distribution, etc. Might I suggest that birth-rate control need not imply keeping the population of a country stationary? The birth-rate only needs to be kept within the limits of man's capacity for socially producing and socially distributing food and other essentials of life, with a reasonable degree of comfort for all.

Dr. Dunlop's difficulty with regard to *international* colonization could, I think, be overcome. (1) Each nation concerned would only have to supply a proportion of the adult emigrants that would have to be supplied by a nation doing the work on its own account. (2) If nations exploited the earth for the benefit of all, a large number of able-bodied men, who in past years have lived in unproductive idleness, would be brought into the field of labour. Hence, each nation could afford to draft off some of the adults for the purpose of colonization.

The necessity of birth-rate control might have been mentioned in my article, but I was limited with regard to space.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Death of William Platt Ball.

IT is with the very deepest regret that we learn of the death of William Platt Ball, whose name will be familiar to all the older Freethinkers and to a large number of younger ones. Born in 1844, Mr. Ball gave up his earlier profession of school-teaching from a disinclination to teach religion. He became associated with the Freethought Movement during the days of the Bradlaugh struggle in the early 'eighties, and, after Mr. Foote's imprisonment, joined the staff of the *Freethinker*. It is pleasant to have to say that he always regarded the five years' work in connection with this paper as amongst the happiest years of his life, and only ill-health compelled him to give it up. But his interest in the paper and in the Freethought Cause continued undiminished. For some time he contributed occasional articles, but later only a weekly useful batch of newspaper cuttings. We received the last only a day before his death.

Mr. Ball's quiet and unassuming nature was apt to mislead superficial observers as to the mental resources at his disposal. He was naturally of a genuine scientific cast of mind, and whatever subject he took in hand was studied with a rare patience and a quiet homage to the supremacy of facts. Those who are acquainted with his small work, *Are the Effects of Use and Disuse Inherited?*—a really excellent piece of work, will appreciate what is meant. And perhaps the best compliment paid to that work of Mr. Ball's, was the one paid by Herbert Spencer. There were numerous other critics of the Spencerian position with reference to the Inheritance of Acquired Characters, and most of these Spencer ignored. But amongst the few to whom he did reply was W. P. Ball.

Brave and modest, a steady supporter of a Cause that has the quality of selecting the best for its servants, W. P. Ball leaves behind him more friends than he knew of, and more mourners than he would care to have. For his chief desire was not to give those around him pain or trouble—even in mourning for his death. He would have them face his death as he faced it himself. Fortunately, perhaps, for human nature, that cannot be. We mourn for our dead, even though that mourning is unaccompanied by foolish and superstitious fears. And those who knew William Platt Ball know that the world is the poorer for the death of a brave, honest, and simple soul.

By Mr. Ball's own request, the funeral is to be without ceremony of any kind, and also without—in the customary sense—mourners.

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MR. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office): Jan. 18, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Kells, "Give Truth a Chance"; 6.30, Messrs. Beale and Yates.

COUNTRY.

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LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): J. T. Lloyd, a Lecture.

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Views and Opinions.

Stick to your Last.

Woman, said Artemus Ward, in the course of one of his inimitable lectures, is a very necessary institution. "She is good in sickness and in wellness," but when she forsakes her proper "spear," and goes round "like a roaring lion seeking whom she may devour, she becomes a darned nuisance." We have no wish to discuss now what is woman's proper "spear." We were reminded of this deliverance by two or three recent expressions of opinion by military officers on religion in the Army. And after reading these we feel inclined to paraphraze Artemus Ward, and say that while the military man may be a more or less necessary institution, useful enough in his proper "spear," when he finishes that and goes round expressing opinions on matters outside his craft, he is apt to become a "darned nuisance" in the sight of those who have a conviction that people should understand their subject before posing as public instructors. And taking the records of military men, their success outside their particular department has not been such as to encourage a blind confidence in their leadership. If the cobbler should stick to his last, the soldier should stick to the work on which he is entitled to be heard with respect.

* * *

Religion in the Army.

The other day Field-Marshal Lord French opened a Salvation Army hostel for soldiers in Southampton Row, and in the course of his address said (we quote from a report in the *Christian World*):—

> The British soldier to-day was possessed of a very extraordinary spiritual power; in no other way could he explain the almost supernatural courage, tenacity, and endurance shown throughout the war. Only those who had served with him knew how terribly he had been tried, and could realize, what he had no hesitation in saying, that only those who were imbued with the spirit of noblest self-sacrifice and duty to God and country, could possibly have attained such results in such circumstances.

The language is vague enough, and the thought underlying it is doubtless correspondingly indefinite, but it serves. So long as expressions of such doubtful meaning as "spiritual," "duty to God and country," etc., are used, the religious world will not fail to see evidence of the strong religious feeling of our soldiers, and as in this country religion is closely identified with the Christian religion, the further step that all our soldiers are Christian is one easily made. Of course, it may be that Lord French had only in mind the desire to pay a compliment to the courage, tenacity, and self-sacrifice of men he has commanded. And that, we are quite ready to believe, those men have well earned. It is the use made of his remarks with which we are chiefly concerned, and when the *Christian World* caps its excerpt from Lord French, with a statement by Field-Marshal Lord Grenfell, that "the soldier has a strong religious instinct and rarely goes into action without some ejaculation of a prayerful kind," one is not left in much doubt as to how readers are asked to interpret the statement cited.

* * *

Are Soldiers Pious?

Now, this Army of ours is not composed of men who are strangers to us. We know them intimately. We have all walked with them, talked with them, worked with them, and played with them. We know just how much religion they had in times of peace, and we know just how much they had when they left for France or elsewhere, and—more important still—we can see how much religion they have when they come home on furlough. And we observe no marked change in their feelings towards religion—unless it be one of hostility. They do not, when they come home, rush off to church and chapel; they make no requests of their friends to send them out religious literature. They are certainly not more religious now than before they entered the Army. We may appeal to everyone's experience in support of what has been said. Of course, it may be said—it is said, as a matter of fact—that the men have become religious but are too shy to make any public profession. This, however, will not do in the case of religion, When a man has got religion he doesn't keep it to himself. We wish he did—in the interests of decency and good manners. The tendency, then, is to parade it, to thrust it upon every one and to make it a general nuisance. Lord Grenfell may be correct in saying that soldiers go into action with "a prayerful ejaculation" on their lips. But this is nothing new. Such things are heard on all sorts of occasions in the streets at home, but they are not usually taken as indications of intense piety. We have ourselves heard a man exclaim, "Oh, Christ!" when his feet have been stepped on, and in the classic precincts of Fleet Street. And the author of *Fragments From France* has depicted our soldiers as burning to give the Germans "'ell," because of the unwelcome intrusion of a high explosive shell. That pious ejaculations are often on the lips of our soldiers in France we quite believe. That is in accord with our experience of people at home.

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Religion Unnecessary.

That this War has called for a display of courage, endurance, tenacity, and self-sacrifice greater than other wars we believe; but what has the supernatural, what has God, to do with it? There are some forty millions of men under arms, and a large proportion of that number are enduring, or have endured, similar hardships. And, apparently, British, French, Russians, Italians, Austrians, Germans, etc., all display much the same kind of courage and endurance, as they all have to face substantially the same kind of dangers and discomforts. Is it the supernatural that is aiding all? Or does Lord French mean that it is only our own soldiers who are being helped by God and the supernatural? In that case, we beg to protest. As our readers know, we are no lover of the soldier as such. Our dislike for militarism grows the more we see of it, and our hatred of warfare gains strength, if possible, with the passing of the days. But we decline to believe that our soldiers need either the belief in God or the inspiration of the supernatural to nerve them to do all they have done. It seems to us that a sense of duty alone is enough. When General Joffre was asked some time ago about religion in the French Army, he replied that love of country was enough to account for all they did. We do not think Englishmen fall below Frenchmen in this respect. Love of country, a sense of duty, a sentiment of comradeship, and the power of discipline are enough to account for all that the War has furnished. And we must protest once more against this picture of the British soldier made suddenly religious because he is faced with the prospect of meeting an enemy in the field.

* * *

That "Blessed" Word!

It is not, as we have said, ultimately a question of what Lord French meant so much as the use that is made of his words. He meant, probably, as little as did the Master of Balliol, who, in addressing a meeting at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields on January 9, said "There was in Army recruits a vast reservoir of religion in the deepest sense." The same stupid use of a baleful word. There is a reservoir of religion in men because they can be roused to a sense of duty and self-sacrifice! Rubbish! Duty and self-sacrifice have no more to do with religion than with the differential calculus. It is part of the old game. If a man is a rogue, call him a Freethinker, or say he is non-religious, and in this way the Churches will escape the odium of possessing him. But if he is honest and straightforward, say he is "essentially religious," or "truly religious," and the Churches will escape the difficulty of explaining how *he* came to exist without religion, and will, perhaps, get some little reflected glory from his being thus. If a man is religious, let him say so. And if he is not religious, let him also say so plainly and openly. The pity is that, while so many millions possess the courage that enables them to face a violent death, there are so few who possess the kind of courage which enables them to withstand the frowns of "respectable" society.

* * *

Freethought and Religion.

Freethinkers would do well to steer clear of that baleful word "Religion." It is a bad word, with a bad history and bad associations. Right through human history religion has involved—and rightly involved—a belief in supernaturalism of some kind. And it is idle—nay, dangerous—for one who does not believe in supernaturalism to drape his naturalism in that cloak. Surely human nature is strong enough to stand without it! Surely ethics, science, and philosophy gain nothing by having the word "Religion" associated with them! By all means let the Churches keep the word "Religion." Let us see that they do keep it. It will at least make the line of demarcation clear. And it will enable a man to say with pride and without misunderstanding that he is without religion. Whether the stories be true or false, I have an admiration for those early Christians who declined to purchase salvation by dropping a pinch of incense on the altar of an alien god. Their own God was equally absurd; but their stubbornness indicated conviction. They could have purchased safety so easily, but it would have cost them their self-respect, and their courage reflected credit on their manhood. And as we admire their action, so we are convinced that no man can go on sacrificing, day by day, a pinch of incense to the Mammon of respectability without undermining his own character and injuring the cause he professes to serve. The Freethinker takes his stand, not on religion, but upon reason and humanity; and the way to make our enemies respect these symbols is to pay due reverence to them in our own person.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Self-Abolishing Deity.

THE non-interference of the Christian or any other God in the affairs of the world is an absolutely insoluble problem to those who really believe in his existence. Some treat this problem as if it were the special creation of the present War; but in reality it is the oldest and most difficult of all Theistic problems, though it must be admitted that the savage European conflict which has been going on for two years and a half has added fresh and heavier emphasis thereto. Ever since the War broke out the divines have been feverishly discussing God's relation to it, and scarcely any two of them have been in agreement as to the nature and extent of that relation. Some have boldly maintained that the War is the Deity's peculiar operation, that he sent it as a judgment upon nations that had been rapidly repudiating his right to their worship and service, and some of them wickedly denying his very existence. At times the Bishop of London seems to glory in the horrible carnage as a revelation of the Divine love and care, and as constituting a glorious day of the Lord. Others, like Dr. Campbell Morgan, find the cause of the War in the momentary ascendancy of some malign forces always more or less operative in the world, and declare that God has permitted it in order to bring about most effectually the overthrow of those evil influences. A third school of divines teach that it is not indifference, but love, which compels the Divine Being "to limit his interference on behalf of men." A leading light of this school is the Rev. W. Garrett Horder, a popular Congregational minister at Ealing, who recently preached a sermon, entitled "The Self-Limitation of God," which appeared in the *Middlesex County Times* for January 6. The main points of this discourse are these three: "that God's essential nature is love"; "that such love must of necessity make him suffer with the objects of his love"; and "that it is not indifference, but love, which compels him to limit his interference on behalf of men." It will be very interesting to see how Mr. Horder arrives at these curious positions.

The assertion that "God's essential nature is love" Mr. Horder fails to confirm by the adduction of a single fact. He merely repeats, parrot-like, what the Bible says, without presenting one scrap of evidence in support of it. He dogmatizes thus:—

> God is love. For my part, I believe that had there not been love in the nature of God, there would have been no world nor men upon it.....That love is manifest

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> in Nature and Humanity I am fully persuaded—manifest far more fully than is commonly supposed.....For myself, I am prepared to say that the world, taken as a whole, is witness to a loving purpose in the mind of its author. But for that the world would have been without beauty —without the multitude of things which give delight. It would have been a mere dwelling-place, and not as it is a veritable palace. It would have been constructed as men used to construct workhouses, into which they put the least they could—where they catered for mere existence, and not for life.

There is surely no argument in that extract. It contains nothing but empty rhetoric, skilfully adapted to the believing ear. Mr. Horder believes that God is love, and consequently discerns the presence of his love everywhere. To say that had there not been love in God there would have been no beauty in the world is to ignore the fact that the world contains ugliness as well as beauty. Besides, the world is all either a wilderness or a desert until man's intelligent toil converts it into a garden; and when man first appeared he did not find it a ready-made palace awaiting his arrival.

Mr. Horder girds repeatedly at the pessimists, as if indulgence in that alluring exercise could establish the reality of God's love; but pessimism is largely a matter of temperament. The reverend gentleman forgets that there are pessimistic Christians and optimistic Atheists. If Huxley was constitutionally inclined to pessimism, Darwin, despite his intimate acquaintance with Nature and her ways, cherished optimism. Jack London was an Atheist, familiar with and inured to the hardships of a strenuous and incessantly struggling life, was yet an invincible, glowing optimist throughout his brief career. One of the touching stories in his *Children of the Frost* is entitled "The Law of Life." In far off Alaska, Koskoosh, a very old man, was patiently waiting for death. Camp had just been broken; he had listened for the last time to the men lashing the sleds and drawing tight the thongs. The tribe over which his son ruled had left to return no more. He could still hear the whip-lashes snarling and biting among the dogs, who whined dolefully, hating the work and the trail. "Sled after sled churned slowly away into the silence. They were gone. They had passed out of his life, and he faced the last bitter hour alone." But his son came back for one last look at the father he loved. "Is it well with you?" he ashed, and Koskoosh answered, "It is well." He was alone once more. Beside him lay a pile of wood and the fire was burning brightly. It was snowing heavily, and the bundle of faggots alone stood between him and his end, and once the last faggot ceased to burn his blind eyes would close and his tired feet would be at rest for ever.

> He did not complain. It was the way of life, and it was just. He had been born close to the earth, close to the earth had he lived, and the law thereof was not new to him. It was the law of all flesh. Nature was not kindly to the flesh. She had no concern for that concrete thing called the individual. Her interest lay in the species, the race. This was the deepest abstraction old Koskoosh's barbaric mind was capable of, but he grasped it firmly. He saw it exemplified in all life. The rise of the sap, the bursting greenness of the willow bud, the fall of the yellow leaf—in this alone was told the whole history (*Children of the Frost*, pp. 40, 41).

Yet, face to face with all these natural facts, which even Mr. Horder dare not deny, and knowing absolutely nothing of the love of God, this raw Alaskan savage winced not, nor cried aloud, but from a sane and serene outlook upon life confidently exclaimed, "It is well." The constant refrain in many of Jack London's charming stories is, "Nature does not care," and it surely follows that, if Nature, in whose hands we are, does not care, there is no ground whatever for believing that Nature's maker and governor exercises any care for anybody or anything.

Of course, in the absence of any evidence that an all-loving Heavenly Father exists, there can be no proof that he suffers either for or with mankind; and in this entire lack of evidence, it follows of necessity that the testimonies of either Isaiah or Jesus can possess no value whatever. The God who counts all the hairs on our heads, and who falls with every dying sparrow, is but one of the myths that have unfortunately outlived the ages of ignorance and credulity in which they were born. The doctrine of the loving, suffering, and dying God, mystical union with whom alone secures salvation, is wholly mythological, whether preached in ancient India and Egypt, or in twentieth century Christendom.

At this point Mr. Horder is obliged to halt, because the facts are so many and so stubborn that he cannot possibly run away from them. Amazingly illuminating are the following words:—

> But then this love in God, which makes him to suffer with us, obliges him to limit himself, to refrain from doing what his love would like to do.

How astonishingly audacious is this terribly humiliating apology which the servant makes for his Master? Unlike several divines of to-day, Mr. Horder still holds the doctrine of the Divine omnipotence. He asserts that God *could* deliver all mankind from the wrath to come and make them heirs of heavenly glory, *could* banish all evil from the Universe forthwith, *could* have prevented this awful War, or put an end to it to-morrow, if he only *would*; but he respects the world far too much to will to exercise his power for its benefit without first getting its permission to do so. Surely, this is a new doctrine, and the most irrational ever offered to a credulous congregation. Love issuing in compulsion, the reverend gentleman assures us, "would be a lower love than one which so respected men and their freedom that, though it would appeal and persuade, it would never compel." Then love is, after all, not the greatest and strongest, but the weakest thing in the world. At the commencement of his discourse this preacher said that power in God is but the instrument of his love which he essentially is, but now he excuses God's non-interference in human affairs by declaring that the love that has omnipotence as its instrument is yet too timid and shy, too respectful towards human freedom, to employ it without first getting leave to do so. In our simplicity, we had thought that pure love's compulsion was the noblest and holiest thing in life, but at last we learn that the pleading and persuading done by God's love have been wholly ineffectual. Horrible evils, gigantic wrongs, shameful and most degrading forms of injustice and oppression, and devastating wars have been allowed to flourish and often to achieve their nefarious ends throughout the ages simply because the Creator, Sustainer, Sovereign, and Father of mankind has always respected his creatures, subjects, and children far too much to boldly step in and set things right amongst them.

All we wish to say in conclusion is that such a self-limiting Deity is also self-abolishing. In reality, however, both the self-limiting and self-abolishing are done by God's self-appointed champions. It is *they*, after all, who are the most successful manufacturers of Atheists.

J. T. LLOYD.

Contempt for human life, taught as every day by Nature, and alas! by man himself; all war intensifies that. But the more permanent forces, alike of human nature and of the natural world are, on the whole, in the interest of tranquility and sanity, and of the sentiments proper to man.—*Pater.*

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The Freethought Valhalla.

Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince,
For you a stately gallery maintain
Of gay and tragic pictures. —*Wordsworth.*

To the meditative mind there is no better reading than a list of names of note. We can well understand the sober joy of the old Puritans, who, taking their Bibles seriously, loved to grapple with the lengthy genealogies of Israel and Judah. Even a gazeteer is a mine of suggestion, and in a London directory you can lose yourself among the strange lanes from Pie Corner to Hanging Sword Alley. But a biographical dictionary or an encyclopædia is certain to make large inroads on our time. Take, for example, Joseph Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. In it there are thousands of entries, taken from all ages and all countries. That means thousands of names of interest, thousands of men and women who have played their part on life's stage, and who played it in a sufficiently remarkable manner to give their names a distinct interest to their descendants. We know of few more interesting occupations than the reading of such a book, and it is a pity that Freethought publishers are not sufficiently wealthy to include the portraits of many of the persons mentioned.

Such a book is informative, and turns the handles of many doors. We turn a page and encounter the name of Charles Bradlaugh, as brave as any soldier who ever drew a sword. He fought a great battle for thirteen years against overwhelming odds, and his was the cool head and the calm judgment of the great captains of men. He gave his life for liberty, and our children will remember something of this Freethought leader when they have forgotten the names of his opponents. A few pages further and there is the name of Richard Carlile. What an indomitable spirit does it not conjure up. There flits into our memory the terrible martyrdom of this bravest of the brave soldiers of liberty. Think of it! Carlile, the lion-hearted, suffered nine and a half years imprisonment for championing the liberty of the Press. His wife and other members of his family, and shop assistants, divided among them fifty years' confinement. Further, we see the splendid name of Edward Gibbon, the greatest of English historians, who in his *Decline and Fall*, "sapped a solemn creed with solemn sneer." He walks for ever as to the clash of martial music under an imperial banner. Without exploration we have found the magnetic and powerful name of Voltaire. What a man! His epigrams stung like wasps—rankled for years. At sixty-four, when other men are thinking of slippered ease, he was writing *Candide*, the wittiest book in the world. Writing *Œdipus* at seventeen, *Irene* at eighty-three, he crowded between these two masterpieces the accomplishments of a giant. And Edward Fitzgerald, the East Coast recluse, who turned the quatrains of the old Freethinking Persian, Omar Khayyam, into a great masterpiece of English poetry. "A planet larger than the sun which cast it," his friend Tennyson described it. The name of Thomas Paine is homely, but what a personalty does it recall? A character of outstanding ability, a maker of nations, and far removed from the uncouth and unlettered figure of popular imaginings.

There is a very significant entry in the name of the Empress Catherine of Russia. How many innocent critics of Freethought know that the evangel of Reason appeals equally to the monarch on the throne as to the toiler in his garret. Catherine was a Freethinker in word and in deed. When Denis Diderot was compelled by dire poverty to sell his library, she bought it back for him and installed him as librarian. Another Royal "intellectual" was Frederick the Great. What must it have been to have been present at those festal nights at Frederick's palace when the nimble wit of Voltaire challenged the choicest brains of Europe? It must have been a rich memory and an abiding delight, like those ever-memorable nights at the "Mermaid," when Ben Jonson exchanged quips and cranks with the smiling Shakespeare. Napoleon, the little Corsican, who shook the world before he was thirty, is here, too, in this volume. A more shadowy figure is that of Kit Marlowe, the Elizabethan dramatist, whose untimely death prevented his trial for blasphemy. Sir Richard Burton, the master of many languages, and the untiring traveller, who penetrated to the Holy of Holies at Mecca at the peril of his life, is another of the glorious company of Freethinkers.

The "intellectuals" of France are represented by a magnificent procession from Abelard to Anatole France. Who can see the name of Robert Ingersoll without a quickening of the pulses? He comes riding down the wind like a knight in shining armour to attack the embattled hosts of superstition. And the lonely student, Charles Darwin, who turned "Adam" and "Eve" out of the "Garden of Eden," not with a flaming sword, but with a steel pen. Here is Heinrich Heine dying upon his mattress-grave in Paris with a jest upon his lips, and Shelley, the sweetest-souled of the English poets, whom Christians sought to deprive of his children, and imprisoned men for selling his works. A sense of fellowship with the fled centuries invades us as we see the name of Giordano Bruno, one of the most fearless martyrs for Truth. And Time seems poised for a moment upon his spread wings as we encounter the puissant personality of Lucretius, one of the sublimest poets who ever attuned his lyre under the eagles of the Cæsars.

Names such as these are but signposts to meet the reader and direct him towards the wonderful universality of Freethought. And, mind you, there are many hundreds of such signposts. "Wonderful" is the only adjective which will serve for this maze of surprises; this patient account of the men and women who have cared, not for wealth and notoriety, but for intellectual honesty, written by a wise and careful student who himself emptied many an inkpot in the service of a great cause.

Here under one roof, we may say, is the temple of Liberty and the house of Wisdom, compared with which the churches and mosques of the superstitions are but charnel-houses full of bones. For each of these men and women were, in their way, the apostles of Freedom. They were knight-errants of the evangel of Liberty. From the dim twilight when Lucretius rolled his richest thunders against the infamies of religion in his day, until twenty centuries later Swinburne and Meredith rallied the soldiers of Freethought with the golden trumpets of their genius, Liberty never failed of her votaries. The bare records of the doings of these pioneers thrill and fascinate by very reason of their simplicity. The feats of Freethinkers have needed little of the embellishment which high-sounding language could give them. From Hypatia, murdered by a Christian rabble, to Ferrer, "butchered to make a Roman holiday," they strike our imaginations and hold our wonder in thrall. They are potent because of their very sincerity. Who could fail to recognize the splendid courage which held so steadfastly to the last moment, or fail to appreciate the iron nerve which bent only before the impossible?

We come to this in the end, that freethinking "saints" are the best. It is significant that even in Christian Scotland the popularity of St. Andrew's Day is far less than that of Burns's Night. Is it not true that in the sheer fight of personalities for the possession

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of England's day, Shakespeare has beaten St. George, as our American friends say, "to a frazzle."

This is but a little cloud of biographical dust, and, if an apology is needed for such trifling, we point to the fact that the interest of such a volume is inexhaustible. It reaches from the greatest names in history to hundreds of men and women whose achievements were less important, but, who, because they dedicated their lives to the service of intellectual liberty, laid the deep foundations of the future greatness of the human race.

MIMNERMUS.

A Sceptical Scientist and Saint.

II.

(Continued from p. 22.)

IN 1864 was formed the X Club. X being the unknown quantity, the only club rule was that it should possess no specified number of members, and nine was the original membership; and this number was never exceeded. The original members were Huxley, Tyndall, Herbert Spencer, Hirst, Busk, Frankland, Hooker, Spottiswoode, and Lubbock, and all these men reached high eminence either in science or philosophy. No formal dissolution of the Club ever took place, but at the last regular gathering in 1893 the attendance had fallen to three. Lubbock, Hooker, and Frankland formed this gathering. In a sense, the Club's final meeting occurred in 1911, when Lubbock visited the venerable Hooker. That great botanist died soon afterwards, and Lubbock himself passed away in 1913.

In the early 'sixties Lubbock was invited to stand for the City of London, then a safe Liberal seat. He regarded the proposal with favour, but his father set his face against it. In 1865, Warde Norman, the economist, invited young Lubbock to contest West Kent. The invitation was issued on behalf of the Liberals in that division, but, remembering his parent's opposition to the suggested candidature for the City—the great commercial and banking constituency—Lubbock declined the offer. From the progressive standpoint, West Kent seemed a forlorn hope, as there was a Conservative majority of 2,000 to pull down. Norman, however, refused to take "No" for an answer from the son, and appealed to the father, who, to the younger man's astonishment, promptly acceded to Norman's request. Lubbock's scientific friends murmured at the prospect of his wasting his energies in political life, and Darwin, while congratulating him on a speech at Maidstone, regretted his young disciple's desertion. "Even in the moment of triumph," wrote Darwin, "I must let a little groan escape me for poor deserted Science. Anyhow, I know that you will always love your first-born child, and not despise her for the sake of gaudy politicks."

The famous John Stuart Mill, who subscribed a little later towards the election expenses of Bradlaugh at Northampton, was a member of Lubbock's committee, whose list included other eminent names. Yet, despite his highly successful meetings, Lubbock was soundly beaten at the poll. And a contributory factor in his defeat was the appearance during the contest of his *Prehistoric Times*, which contained so many arguments and illustrations that were antagonistic to the almost universally treasured belief in the Old Testament story of the creation of man. Lubbock was advised to suspend the publication of this work until after the election, but he intimated that "such a course would be scarcely honourable." And the few years that divide us from this despotism of theological darkness will be vividly realized when we learn that—

> as late as 1871, a meeting was held to reply to a lecture he (Lubbock) had recently given. The speaker, the Rev. J. B. McCrea, considered that "Science was the cause, science *is* the cause, of the degeneracy of man. It was not man's natural tendency and development that made him scientific. Science did it. The Bible told us distinctly and plainly it was not the devil that did it. A great deal more was laid at the door of the devil than belonged to the devil, although he cannot be made worse than he is."

Evidently we have made some progress since then, for the most illiterate ranter in the most benighted little Bethel could hardly descend at our time of day to such drivel as this. The reviewers who addressed the better-instructed circles were loud in their praises, and *Prehistoric Times* received generous recognition from those whose opinions were of value in the world of science. The *Athenæum* notice was penned by Russel Wallace, who wrote that the work "teems with information on everything that has been yet discovered bearing on the early history of our race, and is written in so clear and agreeable a manner that it is sure to gratify and instruct every class of reader."

Prehistoric Times, nevertheless, abounds in arguments, verities, and implications with which Wallace in later life must have strongly dissented. The first edition was soon translated into the leading European tongues. Three editions have appeared in France, and in the sixth and final English edition we possess one of the finest of our anthropological masterpieces. A note to Lady Lubbock from Walter Bagehot, dated 1866, shows how novel appeared the views presented in this volume. The famous essayist, economist, and author of *Physics and Politics*, wrote:—

> I am afraid it will be a very long time before people will give up talking nonsense on *Prehistoric Times*. They have not quite given it up as to present times, and views so new as Sir John's and so entirely contrary to strong traditions will not be thoroughly understood, much less universally accepted, for many years. Argument moves men but very slowly.

In 1865, while journeying with his wife to the Science gathering at Birmingham, he met with a serious mishap. When a little beyond Banbury, most of the train left the rails. Lubbock was bruised and shaken, his hands and coat were drenched with blood, and, although the lady suffered no serious bodily hurt, her nervous system was subjected to a severe strain, and she was never the same woman again. She was at the moment well advanced in pregnancy, so much so that several weeks later she gave birth to their son Rolfe.

In 1870 Lubbock wooed and won the electors of Maidstone, and his maiden speech at Westminster was delivered in April. Military Education was his theme, and the new member told the House how our Army suffered for lack of science. After deploring the absence of chemical teaching, he turned to geology, and pointed out that—

> Portsdown great fort was built on the summit of a chalk ridge.....The strata sloped in each direction away from the summit; a very deep well had been sunk here; but as the rain which fell on the hill drained away along the line of the strata, this was the worst possible place for such a purpose. When the Military Authorities were building the College at Sandhurst, they had a quantity of bricks made of the Blackwater Valley or river alluvium. These consequently fell to pieces, and others had to be made. Along our South Coast, groins were placed to arrest the movement of the shingle caused by the prevalent winds and tides. The military engineers were ordered to set groins on the Dover Coast, and they slanted them the wrong way, thus helping the shingle on. Some of the forts on our Southern Coast, having been built in yielding strata, had given way, and though the damage might be repaired, it had caused great

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> expense. When our Army went to the Crimea, Sir Roderick Murchison applied to the Government to send out a geologist, but that request was not complied with. An unhealthy position was chosen for our troops in the Crimea from want of a scientific acquaintance with the geological conformation of the ground.

Yet thirty years rolled away before a Government-appointed Committee mildly recommended these very reforms. And so on, and so on; but we must be a wonderful people, for we have somehow managed to muddle along with at least the semblance of success.

Although Lubbock was actively engaged both in Parliament and in the City, there appeared in 1870 another important work from his pen. This was his *Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man*, which is now in its sixth edition. The book proved an immediate success, and, although an expensive volume, the first edition was soon exhausted. *Prehistoric Times* was filled with facts, but the new work contained weighty deductions and pregnant theories relating to aboriginal man's efforts to control and direct the forces of Nature to his own advantage, as well as to his rude struggles to rear a social structure. It also endeavoured to picture early forms of religious belief. Sir John's views concerning the genesis of savage religion were similar to those of Herbert Spencer, Sir Edward Tylor, and other evolutionists. He was convinced that dreams were largely responsible for the theologies of primitive humanity. He shows us the savage puzzling over the problem as to—

> What happens to the spirit during sleep? The body lies lifeless, and the savage not unnaturally concludes that the spirit has left it. In this he is confirmed by the phenomena of dreams, which consequently to the savage have a reality and importance which we can hardly appreciate. During sleep the spirit seems to desert the body; and as in dreams we visit other localities, and even other worlds, living, as it were, a separate and different life, the two phenomena are not unnaturally regarded as the complements of one another. Hence the savage considers the events in his dreams to be as real as those of his waking hours, and hence he likes to feel that he has a spirit which can quit the body.

Contrary to the settled convictions of the astute Parliamentarians, he was successful, in 1871, in placing his Bank Holidays' Bill on the Statute Book. Ever an enthusiastic advocate of the lessening of the hours of labour in shops and warehouses, Lubbock lost no time in providing the public with Bank Holidays. The holiday with which his name is inseparably associated is that which falls in August, and he was convinced that this summer season furnished fuller facilities for open-air benefit and enjoyment than any other part of the year. Critics have asserted that it was quite by accident that the wording of the Bill extended its provisions beyond the banking world. This is, however, entirely erroneous, as the subjoined note in Lubbock's own handwriting shows. "As regards the Bank Holiday," he states:—

> I will only say that I never intended it to apply solely to the Banks. In fact, the Bill expressly provides that nobody shall be compelled to do anything on a Bank Holiday which he cannot be compelled to do on Xmas Day or Good Friday. The term Bank Holiday was used for a technical reason; on other holidays, Bills of Exchange are payable the previous day. On our holidays, on the following day. Now, if we had used the expression "General" or "National," the provision would have been doubtful, and we therefore chose the special distinguishing term "Bank Holiday."

The August festival proved a magnificent success. All the scenes of rowdyism and drunkenness confidently predicted by the wiseacres were conspicuous by their absence. It is the privilege of few legislators to perform a deed of such widespread usefulness at the early age of thirty-seven. In the same year in which St. Lubbock's Day received the Royal Assent, Lubbock interested himself with Huxley and others in preparing food supplies to be sent to Paris, to relieve the famished population of that splendid city from the fatal consequence of the German invasion of France. And it was also in 1871 that Lubbock began that intimate interest in Avebury, the spot from which he in after years assumed his title. He had long been interested in the preservation of ancient ruins and public monuments, and Avebury is one of our chief national treasures. It was first mentioned by the antiquary Aubrey, who declares that "Avebury doth as much exceed Stonehenge in grandeur as a Cathedral doth a Parish Church." This venerable ruin stood in imminent danger of falling into the hands of the builder, and, although local protests were raised, its fate seemed settled. An enlightened clergyman sought Lubbock's assistance, and he willingly purchased the site, thus securing the lovers of archæology against the Vandals. All who know the Hardy country of Wessex will bear Sir John in grateful remembrance for his prompt act. Thus was conserved a priceless relic of far remote times.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

We have heard of trouble in China because engineers tried to run a railway track through a graveyard. This was because it outraged the respect and veneration which Chinese feel towards their ancestors. We were reminded of this by a case before the War Losses Commission the other day. The military authorities found it necessary to lay an electric cable under a churchyard path at Willesden. The rector objected, but the Electric Light Company were informed that the "outrage" would be assuaged if £200 were paid to the Church Fund, with an additional £30 for expenses. The Company objected to this as "blackmail," and the military authorities exercised their power and laid down the cable. Then the vicar claimed for professional charges. Hence the case before the Commission. We have by this time got quite used to patriotism at five per cent., and to everybody making all they can out of the War by way of *doing* their bit; and doubtless the rector and the vicar felt that here was the chance of "doing" something, or someone. The outrage on their religious feelings would disappear if £230 were handed over! So much for the sacred character of religious susceptibilities!

Sir Ronald Ross, who is world-famous for his discoveries in connection with malaria, retorts, in a controversial letter to the *British Medical Journal*: "Surely the All-Maker can at any moment stop a practice of which He disapproves." That Sir Ronald made this, in any case, pregnant observation with his tongue in his cheek is shown by his further one that Tennyson's "believing where we cannot prove" he considers "dishonest."

The Sabbatarians are at it again. The Chief Constable of Grimsby and the Deputy Chief Constable of Lincolnshire have both definitely decided to stop Sunday trading by prosecuting customers on a charge of aiding and abetting. These little local gods, dressed in brief authority, evidently do not read their Bibles. They should turn to the second chapter of Mark and then put on sackcloth and ashes. We wonder what parson is at the bottom of the game.

Mr. W. L. Hichens, Chairman of Cammel, Laird & Co., gave a very thoughtful address before the Headmaster's Conference the other day. In such an expression as "The true function of education is to teach a man to live, and not how to make a living," he showed that he had a much truer conception of the higher function of education than many of our

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statesmen who can see in it no more than a society decoration on the one side, or an instrument for beating a commercial rival on the other. If a man knows how to live, he will sooner find a way of getting a living, than by knowing how to get a living, find out how to live.

There was another expression used by Mr. Hichens that was worthy of note. "The code of honour which regulated the modern schoolboy's everyday life was derived, not from religious teaching, but from the cricket field and the football ground. He grew to understand that he must play the game in the affairs of everyday." We commend this observation to those who are fond of sentimentalizing over the power of religious education. The obligation of straightforward conduct comes from life, not from theology, or even from moral instruction. The one may turn a boy into a hypocrite and the other into a prig. But it is in association with his fellows, in the cultivation of his powers of imagination, and in a quickening of his sympathies that the real springs of moral development are reached.

Another poor wandering sheep is James Harry Thorburn who was sentenced to three months for frauds extending over six years and involving £1,300, the money of his employers. Thorburn was a choirmaster at Bradford. He will have plenty of time now to learn new tunes.

The New Year's Gathering of the Commercial Travellers' Christian Association has been held. Did it help those who attended to "tell the tale" more plausibly, or whitewash them for booking orders they never received? Perhaps they found consolation in the text, "I opened my door to the traveller." There is very little in the Bible which is appropriate for men on the road.

Mrs. Cornwallis West, who figured prominently in the recent War Office case, is a clergyman's daughter. And, curiously, Mrs. Langtry, who was considered to be her great rival, is the daughter of a former Dean of Jersey. The careers of both these charming ladies illustrate the value of early religious training.

Lord Curzon, speaking at a Primrose League meeting, said the soldiers were fighting in this War for the principles of the League. There's statesmanship made easy! One of the objects of the Primrose League is the maintenance of the Protestant Church of England, and he would be a bold man who would assert that French and Italian Catholics, and Russian and Rumanian members of the Greek Church care a button whether English Protestants worship cats or crocodiles.

At the Central Hall, Westminster, General and Mrs. Booth advertise "Two Days with God." The Kaiser will be cross.

"Food or Alcohol?" runs a headline in the press. Perhaps the clergy will respond by limiting the use of communion wine.

A facetious journalist has pointed out that the chief holy days of the Christian Church are associated with gluttony. Just so! The merry birthday of the Man of Sorrows is quite an old joke, and the hot cross buns on Good Friday appeal far more powerfully to the young than the trial and execution of the Trinity.

The forthcoming Spring meetings of the various Churches are likely to be seriously affected by the restricted train services, and the Godly are much perturbed in consequence. Probably, some of them will pray for the wings they expect to wear in another place.

Pious relics are a standing disgrace to priests. The "true cross" must have been the height of St. Paul's Cathedral, and the "real crown of thorns" the size of Lord's Cricket Ground, judging by the extremely numerous fragments scattered throughout Europe.

Enormous sums of money were spent at the coronation of the Emperor Charles as King of Hungary, despite the fact that his subjects are dying of hunger. When the King of Kings entered Jerusalem the sole decorations were palm-leaves. Probably the Emperor Charles agrees with Hosea Biglow that "they didn't know everything down in Judee."

Ever since the War began nothing has been more characteristic of British Christianity than the persistency and audacity with which it has sought to paint the Germans as a nation of Materialists and Atheists, even from the Kaiser downwards. The Bishop of London, Dr, Clifford, Dr. Campbell Morgan, the editor of the *British Weekly*, Mr. Spurr, A. G. Gardiner, in the *Daily News*, and many others, announced, several of them a score of times, with dogmatic certitude, that Germany had repudiated the Christian religion in favour of Nietzscheanism, according to some, or, according to others, in consequence of a return to the religion of Odin. This journal has availed itself of every opportunity to expose that monstrous lie, not because it hates Christianity but because it loves truth above all else. But the clergy of all denominations, from the Bishop of London down to the most ignorant curate or Nonconformist minister, continued to repeat the falsehood whenever they had a chance.

And yet all these more or less eminent men of God knew, or ought to have known, that they were lying in order to convince their fellow-countrymen that the War did not originate in a Christian nation, or that Christianity was in no sense responsible for it. Prior to the War they used to assert that there were scarcely any Atheists in the whole world; but after the War broke out they discovered that the hateful people were numerous enough to have caused it. They were willing to take their oath that it was so.

But that is not all. Before the War, they were in the habit of calling special attention to the fact that in Germany Christianity was triumphant. To refresh their memory we will here cite the testimony of the late Right Reverend Dr. Wilkinson, Anglican Bishop of North and Central Europe, published in the *Year Book of the Churches* for 1908. The editor of that work described Dr. Wilkinson as "a great authority on this matter." Said his lordship:—

> Germany is a religious nation. Germans, from their great Kaiser downwards, are a God-fearing people. The sense of duty, so strong in every German, plays a larger part in religious observances than with us. And God has blessed and is wonderfully blessing that nation.

The Bishop went on to emphasize the fact that "religious education in all the primary and secondary schools of Germany is compulsory." He contended that in many respects England might learn good lessons from Germany. As far as we know, no objection arose, in any quarter, in 1908, to that eulogistic characterization of the German nation; but soon after the outbreak of the War, the pulpit rang from end to end of the land with the declaration that a nation capable of pronouncing treaties as "scraps of paper," of violating the neutrality of Belgium, and of committing the unspeakable horrors laid to its charge, could not be a Christian nation. Appalling is the hypocrisy thus disclosed!

The early Christians believed in a community of property, as well as a host of fairy tales. This may account for the fact that one cannot go into any hotel or boarding-house without finding the touching text hanging in a conspicuous position, "The proprietor is not responsible for any articles left in the bedrooms."

"General Booth needs immediate help" was the headline in a bold advertisement in the press recently. We do not remember the time when this gentleman did not require assistance, but why does he not rely on the spiritual uses of prayer instead of the material methods of newspaper advertising?

The Rev. J. F. Newton, of Cedar Rapids, U.S.A., who has accepted the pastorate of the City Temple, London, says that

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his Nonconformist chapel is a "house of the Eternal." Bless his innocent heart! When he comes to England he should find out that there are many thousands of "houses of the Eternal," some of them tin-tabernacles, and many heavily mortgaged.

Surgeon-General Sir Alfred Keogh, who, as head of the R.A.M.C., has been responsible for the medical service of the British Army during the War, made a biting reference recently to the mental equipment of so many people in high positions. "I have to work with these men," he says, "and press scientific decisions upon them, and it is exceedingly difficult to get low enough to find yourself upon their level. They possess no knowledge whatever of the facts of science and nature." Perhaps this accounts for piety in high places.

"Buffalo Bill" (Col. F. Cody) is dead. On hearing that his death was near, he requested various Freemason societies to arrange his funeral. Then he called for a pack of cards, and insisted on playing a game of poker. Of course, the religious world will be shocked. He ought to have called for the Bible; and it is possible that the pack of cards may become a Bible in the future. But our respect for Col. Cody goes up in consequence of that request. We feel certain there was a *man* behind it. Whining for a Bible or a parson would only have proved there was a knave or a coward.

Rev. G. McLuckie, of Yarmouth, says he likes to think of the Allies as "God's chosen instruments." We do not say they are not; but if they are, it is a pity God does not look better after them. If he had warned them what was coming, it might—if we may so put it—never have happened. A God who knew his business would have prevented this horrible mess ever occurring. But to let it happen, and then merely select "instruments" to settle it, is only doing what a mere mortal could do. One thing seems certain. If theology doesn't find a man foolish, it leaves him so.

It looks as if that distinguished Christian, Mr. Horatio Bottomley, aspires to be among the prophets, for he has written an article with the title, "If I were Old Moore." We hope that Mr. Bottomley will never write like the prophet Ezekiel.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been ill, and doctors have been in attendance. Evidently, His Grace has not much faith in prayer alone.

It is said that dear old Providence takes a special interest in sparrows. Leicestershire folk will have to look out for trouble, for they are trapping sparrows in thousands and using them as a substitute for meat. Agricultural experts state that sparrows destroy annually the produce of 185,000 acres.

Juvenile humour is sometimes very pointed. In an essay on "The Church," a schoolboy thus classified the clergy: "There are three kinds of parsons—bishops, vicars, and curates. The bishops tell the vicars to work, and the curates do it. Curates are mostly thin, but get fuller when they are vicars, and podgy when they are bishops."

Miss Picton-Turberville told a meeting held to consider the subject of "Women in the Church": "In an invitation recently issued on a Church anniversary it was announced that the vicar would speak on the history of the Church, the curate on woman's work for the Church, and in small print it was announced that the ladies would give the tea and coffee." We are not surprised; but it is women's own fault. So long as they are content to act as handmaidens to the clergy, they will be used as such. And, after all, the arrangement was quite scriptural. Jesus selected no women disciples, although he permitted one to wash his feet. And that is an old Eastern symbol of abject submission.

We are indebted to the *Daily Sketch* for a tale of a man at the front which is highly enlightening as well as amusing. The censor opened two letters from the same soldier, one addressed to the vicar of his parish and another to a friend in the same village. The holy tone of the first was beautiful, the plain, or rather flowery, language of the other, describing the weather and conditions he was experiencing would have made the vicars's hair curl. But the clergy can use "some" language at times, and take a lot of beating.

The Church of Christ has always opposed everything new. It brought all sorts of charges against the cinemas, and in many London districts will not allow the "movies" to be shown on Sunday. There is positively nothing for the people to do in Tottenham, East Ham, and other places, if the people do not want to go to church, since the public houses are open for so short a time. Now another proposal is mooted. It is proposed that the Church take over the picture palaces, but about £17,000,000 has been invested in the industry, and this would take some finding. Anyway, the owners of that capital are not likely to hand it over to the clergy.

There is a proposal on foot to create a new Bishopric of Bradford. For this purpose a sum of £700,000 is required, and the public is earnestly requested to subscribe. Of course, at a time like the present, when the Government is urging everybody to invest in War Loan, the proposal might be called unpatriotic, for certainly the country is in no crying need of a new bishopric. But the authors of the scheme are alert, and they promise that every penny subscribed shall be invested in War Loan. Which means that, after having obtained £700,000 for a quite absurd purpose, the rest of the country will be called upon to pay 5 per cent. interest on it for thirty years in the name of religion and patriotism.

Jack London and Religion.

THE late Jack London, the author who had perhaps achieved greater success than any other American expert, except Mark Twain, was never suspected of being pious. Mr. Nathan Shapiro, a Californian reader of the *Truth Seeker*, who enjoyed a personal acquaintance with London, says:—"He was a sincere Freethinker." Jack London was all for brain and muscle, and could not give anything to religion and dogma. Living and not believing was his business. His experience with the professors of religion, from the Salvation Army promoter to the church-endowing, Bible-class capitalist, convinced him that they were grafters and hypocrites. Of one of the latter he said:—

> This man, talking soberly and earnestly about the beauties of idealism and the goodness of God, had just betrayed his comrades in a business deal. This man, a pillar of the church and heavy contributor to foreign missions, worked his shop-girls ten hours a day on a starvation wage, and thereby directly encouraged prostitution. This man, who endowed chairs in universities, perjured himself in courts of law over a matter of dollars and cents. And this raidroad magnate broke his word as a gentleman and a Christian when he granted a secret rebate to one or two captains of industry locked together in a struggle to the death.

He had opportunities to know the church at both ends, where the Salvation Army type of exhorter works his game, and where the pious millionaire or business man acts his part, for he had been a down-and-outer and he had entered the portals of "society." He had no use for either nor for types of religionists found between them. His friends among the clergy were the unorthodox and unfrocked. His economic heresies made him the idol of the radicals. He was not conservative enough to remain with the Socialist organization, although he promoted its objects. When the fragments of his work are collected, it will be found, as with Mark Twain (from whom he was otherwise altogether different), that Christianity not only never tempted his belief, but had his contempt rather than his admiration.

—*Truth Seeker* (New York).

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 28, Swansea; February 4, Abertillery; February 11, Liverpool; February 25, Clapham; March 11 Birmingham; March 18, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 11, Walsall. March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.

MRS. TURNBULL.—Very pleased indeed to hear from you. Thanks for good wishes to self and family. We hope that you are yourself keeping well.

W. MATHER.—We hope to publish that pamphlet, with many others, before long. It is a question of getting a little capital to be used for that purpose and securing a supply of paper at a reasonable price. We shall overcome both difficulties one day, we have no doubt.

DENEB.—We don't at all share your despair of Scotland. Of course, Christianity is still strong there, and we should like to see it weaker. But the Scott is a hard-headed "cuss." He doesn't rush, but once he has moved one can depend upon him, and his strength in the service of superstition is an earnest of equal strength in the service of Freethought. And he is the better worth fighting for on that account.

F. C.—Pleased to hear from one who attended our lectures at Blackburn, although these were given many years ago. We quite share your opinion of the priest—Roman Catholic and other.

M. BAXTER (Cape Town).—Thanks for cuttings and congratulations.

R. OGDEN.—We will not say "Courage," as we believe you already possess it. But we fancy that the stand you have made will in the future be looked back on by you as something of which to be proud—if that is not already the case. And nothing could really compensate for the sacrifice of one's sense of right.

G. E. WEBB.—You say, "If you keep on hammering away.....you will come out on top." We hope so. At any rate, we intend doing it whether we come out on top or go under. We note your neat comment on the "Mutual Admiration Society." It is all a matter of temperament. Some are born to fight, and others to be spectators.

A. BUTTON desires to thank all the writers in the *Freethinker* for the weekly treat he receives every Thursday. Thanks.

MR. B. SIGER.—We hope to keep on doing "nowt" else for a long time. Our best wishes to your son in Salonica.

G. L. B.—Very sorry to hear of your loss. We hope to have the pleasure of meeting you soon.

S. HEALING asks whether we could not induce our readers to make an effort to get the *Freethinker* into all public reading-rooms. We should be pleased to give any help we could to this effort, which is a desirable one.

A. SIMPSON.—The *Athenæum* is now a monthly, and can be ordered through any newsagent, price 1s.

J. BREESE.—We dealt with the article on "Religion at the Front" some time ago. We may recur to it again as opportunity offers.

B. DUNLOP.—Want of space compels; that is all.

J. EVANS.—Sorry we have not space to spare for a lengthy discussion as to the verisimilitude of Caradoc Evans' sketches of the Welsh peasantry. We can only say we have not seen their accuracy challenged, and Caradoc Evans asserts he is writing from personal observation. We must let the matter rest at that.

H. SILVERSTEIN writes that the word "live" in the quotation from Shelley on p. 26 of last week's *Freethinker* should be "rule." We are glad to find that the paper is read so carefully. The mistake was due to an error of transcription. "Rule" is obviously the correct word.

R. W. BLAKELY.—We don't quite see the point of your criticism.

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., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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.

Our Sustentation Fund.

LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Previously acknowledged, £250 15s. 3d.—G. E. Webb, 10s. 6d.; Deneb, 7s. 6d.; E. Beardall, 2s.; W. Dunlop (Torquay), 5s.; Kepler, 2s. 6d.; J. Bryce, 8s.; F. C., 2s. 6d.; R. Ogden (3rd sub.), 2s. 6d.; Capt. J. Latham, £2 10s.; Mrs. Turnbull, 10s.; T. M. Mosley, 2s. 6d.; W. Mather (2nd sub.), 10s.; Harry Randell, 4s.; C. T. Simpson, £1 1s.; W. D. and R. (Portsmouth), 3s.; A. Button, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. B. Siger, 3s. G. L. B., 2s.; S. Healing, 2s.; R. L. M., £1; R. A. Downes, 10s. 6d.; Bonnie Dundee, 4s. 6d.; J. Pemberton, 3s.; J. Bryan, 5s.; C. Bridger, 2s.; F. Webb, 5s.; R. Viedge, £1 2s.; S. Hartley, 4s.; A. Little, 2s. 6d.; J. H. Gastrell, 10s.; Nelsonian, 2s. 6d.; A. Waymark, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. A. Knoll, 2s.; E. Oliver, £2 2s.; T. Dunbar, 2s.; D. Richards, 2s.; T. Chalmers, 5s.; S. E., 2s.; H. Black, 10s.; W. Shelley, 1s.; W. Pitt, 10s.; F. Smith, 2s. 6d. *Per H. E. Anderson* (Leicester): G. Sharman, 5s.; Gordon Tate, 1s.; W. Leeson, 5s.; S. Leeson, 5s.; H. E. Anderson, 2s. 6d.; F. J. Smith, 2s.; E. Pinder, 5s.; W. H. Scott, 5s.; W. Wilber, 1s.; S. Woolley, 2s. 6d.; W. H. Woolley, 1s.; M. F. Frear, £1 1s.; total, £2 16s. *Per Miss Vance:* H. P. K., 2s. 6d.; "A Friend" (Blackburn), 5s.; John Halliwell, sen., 1s.; "J. L. F. Aberdeen," 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Cross, 5s. Total—£270 12s. 3d.

Sugar Plums.

Next week (Jan. 28) Mr. Cohen pays a visit to Swansea. It is the first time he has visited that town, but both this and Cardiff should prove profitable ground for propagandist work. South Wales is a most promising ground altogether. Perhaps this is because the older generation there was *very* religious, and the reaction has been greater than in other parts. At any rate and whatever the cause, it is our business to take advantage of favourable conditions when they present themselves.

The Sustentation Fund has realised £270 12s. 3d., and we take this opportunity of thanking all those who have so generously contributed to this result. We have been greatly encouraged by so prompt a response, accompanied, as most of the subscriptions were, by warm letters of appreciation for what we have done. We have had so many of these during the past week, that we can only take this method of saying how deeply we appreciate them. As we now stand, the whole of last year's loss—entirely due to the excessive cost of paper—has been cleared, with more than enough over to meet the deficit to date. There will be some months of the year to face, but we dare say we shall manage somehow. Without doubt had we adopted the suggestion of many, and kept the Fund open until the War ceased, we could have cleared the loss, week by week, but we think the plan we have adopted the better one. There are always some who will not send until closing day, and others who wait until the day after. But to ask for money is the worst—perhaps the only distasteful part of our work, and we are very pleased to cease from this for awhile. So, once more, we thank those who have helped. We also thank those who would have helped had circumstances permitted, and we shall not be misunderstood if we say the sooner we can get along without this kind of help the better we shall like it.

Please note that we have said *this* kind of help. Other help a paper like the *Freethinker* will always need. We always need the help of our readers in securing new subscribers to the paper. That help has enabled us to weather as well as we have done one of the worst periods in the history of the *Freethinker*. This journal remains one of the few in Great Britain that has remained practically unchanged during the war, while scores have ceased to make their appearance. That is a result of which we feel very proud, and it has been accomplished because so many have worked so hard and so effectively in securing new readers. May we ask, therefore, for a continuance of their help in this direction. We will send specimen copies when names

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and addresses are forwarded, or posters to newsagents who will display them. The more readers we can get the better —better to enable us to meet the expenses that must be met somehow, and better also for the great cause which the *Freethinker* exists to serve.

Mr. Cohen had two fine meetings on Sunday last at Nottingham. In the afternoon the hall was packed to the doors, and in the evening the place was well filled, despite the dark night and a snowstorm. No speaker could have wished for a more attentive or a more critical audience. There was quite a rush of people anxious to join in the discussion, and as many as a liberal extension of the time would allow were accommodated. And there were many requests for Mr. Cohen to pay Nottingham another visit.

We are rather sanguine as to the results of these meetings. Some very likely gentlemen expressed their willingness to co-operate in forming and helping a Branch of the N. S. S. in Nottingham, and, for the time being at least, Mr. T. Mosley, of 3 Carnarvon Grove, Gedling, has consented to act as secretary. We should be obliged if those who are willing to co-operate in any way will write Mr. Mosley without delay. There is nothing like striking while the iron is hot, There are hundreds of Freethinkers in Nottingham, we know. And they should get to work at once.

Mr. Lloyd was caught, like ourselves, in a snowstorm at Leicester on Sunday, but we are glad to learn that he had a good and a pleasant meeting in spite of the weather. We have no details to hand, so cannot say more.

The South London Branch re-opened its meetings on Sunday last with a lecture from Mr. P. S. Wilde, on the "Antiquity of Man." To-day (Jan. 21) Mr. A. D. Howell-Smith lectures on "Evil, evolution, and God." The meetings commence at 7 o'clock, and admission is free, with a few reserved seats at 6d. South London friends will please notice.

Mr. Harry Snell will deliver a course of lectures at the Emerson Club, 19 Buckingham Street, Strand, on Tuesday evenings, commencing January 23. The titles of the lectures are: "Modern Civilization in the Melting-Pot," "Religion and the Reformation of 1517," "Four Centuries of Religious Progress," and "The New Reformation; the Principles of a Universal Religion." We should have thought the world had had enough of religions—universal and otherwise; but if people are hankering after that sort of thing, we feel sure Mr. Snell will provide them with as good a one as can be found. The lectures will commence at 6.15, and admission to a single lecture is one shilling. A ticket for the four can be obtained for 2s. 6d.

A discussion on "Why I am Interested in Politics" (from a Mother's Point of View) will be opened by Mrs. Drake, of the Woman's Suffrage Association, at the Victoria Reform Club, 15, Victoria Road, Kentish Town Road, to-day (Jan. 21) at 7.30. These meetings are held under the auspices of the North London Branch of the N.S.S., and we hope that Freethinkers in the locality will do their best to make them a success.

"Free Will."

II.

(Concluded from p. 27.)

YET another example. A man is starving; he has been three days without food. He passes a stall on which some savoury and hot pies are exposed. He begs one from the proprietor, who refuses in scorn, adding an insult relative to "work-shys" as he turns away and enters his adjoining shop. The famished beggar gazes on the longed-for food and, with a last remnant of "respectability," turns, too, away. His tattered boot, with projecting rusty leather, strikes the trestle. The board falls, and he falls. A pie, still steaming, rolls within an inch of his face as he lies full length on the ground. He inhales the aroma, *and he is starving*. Does he desire to eat? No one doubts it. Does he *will* to eat? Then he will snatch at the food and soften the pangs of hunger. Does he *will* to be honest? Then he will refrain. Different readers will reply differently, but two alternatives of action alone present themselves. These, again, sub-divide into four, according to the definition chosen.

1. Will, including mental attitude, plus activity mentally pictured.
   - (*a*) He steals a pie.
   - (*b*) He crawls away unfed.
2. Will, signifying mental attitude only.
   - (*a*) He steals a pie.
   - (*b*) He crawls away unfed.

Now let us deal analytically with all four cases.

1 (*a*) He steals a pie.

That is he wills to eat, and eats. Or, more consistently with definition temporarily accepted, his mental attitude is decision to eat, and he actually does eat. Incidentally, his mental attitude is decision to steal, and he actually does steal. But hunger precedes both mental attitude and subsequent act. Hunger, the overwhelming and agonizing incentive, controls both. Thus the "will" is controlled, hence not free. Again, suppose his mental attitude were decision to eat; and the subsequent act to crawl away unfed. Then we have (a^1) a flagrant departure from the definition, for the mental attitude is not followed by act pictured in that attitude; (a^2) and we have an act consciously performed, either unwilled or contrary to the mental attitude preceding it. That is, (a^1) is not susceptible of discussion under heading 1 at all, for it opposes the definition postulated, and (a^2) both violates the same definition, or comes under the class of conscious involuntary acts, *i.e.*, like the live-blood twitching of the eyelids occasionally, or the spasmodic knotting of certain muscles in the leg, an uncanny pathological condition most people are familiar with. If will, of any kind conceivable, can be predicated of these, and freedom tacked on in addition, our opponents are welcome to the position. To us it appears too absurd to seek words with which to oppose it.

1 (*b*) He crawls away unfed.

That is his mental attitude—is decision to remain honest, and the act to crawl away, and sustain the attitude. Very well, but they both follow from the previous honesty in the man's training. They both result from earlier and repeated introspective views and conclusions as to the great ethical value of probity. Hence these past thoughts imprinted and retained mentally, control this example of will, and, again, what is controlled is not free. We need not consider here that he might (b^1) in mental attitude decide to be dishonest, and in act crawl away. All the strictures applied to cases (a^1) and (a^2) equally fit (b^1) and (b^2) decision to eat, and *then* a crawling away. Thus we have now class 2 only.

2. Will signifying mental attitude only, irrespective of what follows actually.

A. He steals a pie.

A^1. He willed it. A 2. He did not.

A 1. The willing followed the hunger; result as before, will controlled, not free.

A 2. He willed to be honest, and then stole. The will, as before, follows the bent and training, hence it is not free, and then conscious involuntary act follows, and absurdity as exposed above, again apparent.

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2. (*b*) He crawls away unfed.

(*b*) 1. He wills to be honest, and act following is in agreement. But the latter is unimportant on the postulated definition of this group 2, the will being the mental act. Adnauseum we have shown why he wills to be honest.

B 2. He wills to be *diskonest* and crawls away, unfed and honest.

Hunger controls the mental attitude, and the act leads us to the old absurdity.

Let us now gather all the loose ends of the argument and endeavour to plait or weave them into a coherent strand.

We assert with conviction, and we hope without undue dogmatism, the following theses.

1. Will is a mental attitude, which consists of two stages.
   (*a*) Intense desire, culminating in
   (*b*) Decision.
   (*c*) Will, as such, is independent of any act except a possible other *mental* attitude which may follow.
2. The physical act pictured in "will" follows the will accurately in the vast majority of cases. Nevertheless, the reverse or another physical act may occur.
3. No voluntary and conscious act can occur which opposes the will preceding it.
4. Physical acts which occur consciously and involuntarily prove nothing as to the freedom or captivity of the will. They are totally unconnected with it.
5. The will is always, and consistently, determined or controlled or impelled by one or more (usually myriads) of factors in thought or sensation which preceded it. It, the will, is never, in any circumstances nor in any conceivable manner, free.

The basic belief of most religions is in an all-beneficent Deity. Now, it would soon become apparent to even the lay mind that all-goodness could neither create nor permit evil; that evil could not exist in the work of such a deity and be due *to* that deity. The clergy, keen to anticipate any possible objection to their teaching; the clergy who have ever armed the fortress with all weapons possible, before risking attack unprepared, naturally saw the possibility of a raid still earlier. Evil exists. Poverty, death, injustice, cruelty, squalor, pain, sorrow, exist. They are as apparent to boor as to bishop. Beneficent omnipotence created all things they taught, but they dared not attribute the evil to the same source. The glaring contradiction was too vivid even for stultified and chloroformed believers. The evil must be accounted for, and the deity thereby exonerated. Obviously, the easiest method is to blame man himself. Teach us that man can do right when and if he wills, because will is free, and the thing is done. Man becomes the source of all evil, and Sin conveniently covers the whole ghastly connotation of it. Thus Free Will which masquerades as an added dignity to the attributes of men, is no more than a mean subterfuge to whitewash the deeds of a naughty God. It is immaterial to us that few, if any, of the Sable Herd in *all* denominations really believe this doctrine. The point is, they tell us to do so. Nay, more, they *must* counter one stupidity by another, or their credit with the masses, already not a little on the wane, were well nigh vanished altogether. Lest it might seem that we hint, and by innuendo oppose that which we dare not expose, we may state that the first stupidity referred to is a beneficent deity or any deity whatsoever, and the other is the moribund doctrine of Free Will.

In a word, then, Free Will in man was the inevitable invention to follow the earlier one of all-beneficent deity.

Hence we are prepared to find that the more orthodox the form of religion accepted, the more strenuous the loyalty to the false notion "Free Will."

For the priest, irrespective of which particular religion he upholds, Free Will serves to buttress a bias. It contributes to the support of a vested interest.

One can imagine a Peer-brewer waxing eloquent over the cases where alcohol has prolonged life. And were the said noble follower of "spirit" the poorer for every drink taken, even a prohibitionist might listen to the tale. But when we see that exactly as in the case of the devotee of another "Spirit" the stronger the pleas, the longer the lease, we may be pardoned for doubting, and forgiven for examining the case critically and independently.

That the masses of the people accept Free Will is plainly to be found in this. They are told that its absence would reduce man to a machine—an automaton—and degrade him even in his own eyes. Vanity, sometimes exorbitant, is a human quality. To learn from childhood, for a thousand generations, that man is himself a potential god, made in the image of his transcendant creator, with a Free Will, able to gradually climb to dazzling heights of beatitude in a future life of eternal glory, is not a picture so devoid of flattery as to be easily cast aside as idle babblement. The mental bravery, the unflinching heroism which can receive the news as "glad tidings" (because it is true), that man is a risen beast, with a will fettered and controlled and determined by environment and heredity, with a termination to his individual consciousness, exactly parallel with that of a mosquito, or a hippopotamus, with nearest surviving blood relatives among the tailless anthropoid apes; that heroism is to be found solely among men who prostrate themselves before one idol only—Truth. For these we make no apology, for these we crave no indulgence. *Their* glory is indeed eternal, for it is an heirloom which passes along from generation to generation, from the present to the future. It can never fade nor fail, neither shall it wear away nor pass into darkness nor death.

JERL. NIRRA.

Critical Chat.

THE GRIEVANCES OF SIR GEORGE GREENWOOD.

THOSE of my readers who have not had the misfortune to forsake literature for Freethought will remember that some while ago I drew attention to a promising quarrel between Mr. J. M. Robertson and Sir George Greenwood. As I remarked at the time, a number of unsportsmanlike conscientious objectors got at the editor of the *Literary Guide*, and persuaded, or forced, him to stop the fight, presumably in the name of ethics, the higher humanism, or some other dismal abstraction. That, at any rate, is the impression I received; but it may be that he needed more space for the abuse of the German nation in general. Those of us who were beginning to get a little tired of vague international indictments expected to find a pleasant relief in the more definite, if not more refined, art of literary invective. As I said above, this interesting display of the art of controversial amenity was stopped just when it was promising to become exciting. Mr. Robertson and Sir George would have made short and sanguinary work of each other's reputation, and the reader who knew nothing of their books would have gone away thinking there was not much to choose between them.

Here, if Sir George Greenwood had been wise, he would have let the matter drop. But he appears to have found Mr. Robertson's implied and direct abuse too galling, especially—and here he has my sympathy—the

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irritating harping upon an imaginary pathological cause for some more or less trivial error in statement or deduction. He has just printed with Messrs. Watts & Co. his part in the controversy, and calls his pamphlet *Shakespeare's Law and Latin*. I recommend anyone who admires Mr. Robertson's literary criticism to spend two shillings on this pamphlet. It will be all to the good if he takes the trouble to look carefully into the Shakespeare studies of Sir George Greenwood. He will then, I imagine, have no doubt as to which writer has more of the real spirit of scholarship and literary humanism.

The *brochure* is not, as one would expect from the title, a discussion of Shakespeare's legal and classical knowledge, but rather an attempt to show that Mr. Robertson has little Latin, and even less law. For my part, I do not profess to be very much shocked by these revelations. Mr. Robertson has quite enough learning for the matter he has in hand, the discrediting of the Baconians and their allies. It is to be regretted that he went astray in his discussion of certain legal phrases in the plays. Evidently he had only the vaguest notion of what was meant by "fine and recovery" in *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Act iv., sc. ii., 219, etc.). A candid confession of his ignorance would have made a better impression. The same criticism applies to his refusál to recognize any special legal sense of the word "purchase," which implies a "contrast between acquisition by such means as are recognized by law as *purchase*, and *acquisition by inheritance*." The passages in *Henry IV.*, pt. ii., and in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where the word occurs, are meaningless if this distinction is not borne in mind. Mr. Robertson seems to have misunderstood a few other legal expressions with which, as a critic of Shakespeare's knowledge of law, he ought to have been familiar. But, after all, I don't imagine that his errors amount to very much. I have among my friends two or three barristers who are also students of the Elizabethan drama, and they dismiss the legal part of Sir George Greenwood's theory with amused contempt.

For the support of this heretical theory that the plays were not written by the young man who came to London to make a living, who had only his genius to recommend him, but by a highly educated man, presumably of the same name, it is necessary to show that he had more than the ordinary classical culture of the average gentleman. Why it should be necessary to prove he was also a lawyer, I cannot understand. The frequent occurrence of legal expressions in the plays would rather tend to show that he was *not* a lawyer; and, on the other hand, their comparative absence in the work of Francis Beaumont would, I suppose, prove that he was no lawyer, if we had no direct evidence that he was "of the craft." It seems to me that the theory is a kind of half-way house to the Baconian heresy—if I may say so, a feather bed for a falling Shakespearean; and I should never be surprised to hear that Sir George had embraced the simple and edifying doctrine that Bacon wrote every work of any literary importance in his period. Mr Robertson, in spite of his error, is really on the side of critical sanity, and, what is more, he has the support of a learned lawyer like Mr. A. Underhill, who writes that the dramatist's knowledge of the law was neither profound nor accurate.

Another point which Sir George Greenwood tries to make against the Stratford Shakespeare is to prove that the writer of the plays was a classical scholar with a good deal of Latin and not a little Greek. This is a theory usually associated with the name of Churton Collins, a man who did more to encourage a dislike of English literature than a dozen University Extension Lectures. A friend of mind who had the misfortune to attend his lectures at Scoones' tells me that his overestimation of Shakespeare was only an insidious form of depreciation. In any case, his attempt to trace the Greek and Latin poets everywhere in the plays is a performance that comes but little short of farce. Nothing could be less Greek in spirit than the Shakespearean stage, it would have been no different in spirit and in form if the dramatist had never read a line of North's version of Plutarch. It would seem that Collins and the Baconians are responsible for Sir George Greenwood's heresy.

Mr. Robertson is told that he is not a classical scholar, and that any pronouncement on Shakespeare acquirements must be left to scholars. But scholars show no anxiety to take up the task; they leave it to a man like Collins, whose only qualification was a prodigious memory. The balanced scholar, ignoring the question as frivolous, is contented to leave it to Sir George and the Baconians. Mr. A. C. Bradley, whose scholarship will satisfy even the most exacting critics, nowhere suggests Shakespeare's indebtedness to the Greek dramatists, and has no word to say of any classical culture. "Shakespeare," says Sir Walter Raleigh, wittily, "is a live man; he is sometimes wrongly judged by slower wits to be a learned man." We notice that both of them agree with Mr. Robertson, who has no classical scholarship. But as we can see in the case of Churton Collins, and no doubt in that of Sir George Greenwood, a long training in Greek and Latin is no guarantee of sane scholarship; it depends largely on the spirit. Mr. Robertson undoubtedly went astray; he was wrong in saying that a good classical scholar would not scan the word "Academe" as Shakespeare does in *Love's Labour Lost*. A few more errors are noticed, and they serve to show that Mr. Robertson is not always as accurate as he might be; but in all candour, and while sympathizing with Sir George in his state of critical soreness, I can hardly think that he has damaged Mr. Robertson's reputation, which rests upon a fairly solid and broad foundation.

Indeed, by some of his censures, implied and direct, Sir George stands to lose his own reputation with an ingenuous reader who is inclined to have an interest in the matter discussed. When it is claimed that, while Mr. Robertson is an acknowledged authority in the history of Freethought and in some branches of economics, we must not assume that his studies in Shakespearean criticism are equally authoritative, the implied censure will have weight only for those who have no acquaintance with Mr. Robertson's work. Let us assume that the ingenuous reader begins with Sir George Greenwood's books. He will find some amusing criticism of the orthodox belief in the three or four books; he will reject emphatically the Greenwood Theory as insubstantial, as raising more difficulties than it explains—in fact, as a mere academic amusement a lawyer for whom politics is not a very strenuous occupation. He will then turn to Mr. Robertson's books In *Montaigne and Shakespeare* he will find one of the most shapely pieces of Shakespeare-criticism of modern times. Many a man has obtained a University fellowship for work of not a tenth its value. He will find in *Did Shakespeare Write Titus Andronicus?* not only a study of that play, but also an elaborate investigation into the authorship of the body of anonymous drama vaguely associated with Greene, Peele, Kyd, and Marlowe. Only those who have worked in that chaotic period of the early drama can really appreciate the immense value of Mr. Robertson's work. He will find some scattered essays on Hamlet, notably an early one on the *Upshot of Hamlet* (1885), by far the most illuminating criticism of that perplexing drama. If the Baconian Heresy is less satisfactory, it may be accounted for by its hasty

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passage through the press. Finally, I am afraid that our ingenuous literary Freethinker will have no very high opinion of Sir George Greenwood's pamphlet when he reads it again, and this time in the light of his new knowledge.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

A Modern Bishop's Move.

"TOSH," muttered Bishop Bloom irritably, as he twisted his latch-key in the massive fumed-oak door of the vicarage and banged into the dimly lighted hall. "Once more I venture to remark—tosh! What's the world coming to?" He threw his soft, black hat upon the hall stand and removed his overcoat, which he flung irritably over a chair, then, with much inaudible muttering, he marched into his study and switched on the electric light. The study was in a condition of chaos; books, magazines, copies of the *Heavenly Hooter* and *Bishop's Bathos* littered the floor in profusion. Bishop Bloom walked over to his armchair, lit the gas-fire, and sat down with a sigh. For over a minute he sat tapping his knee nervously with his fingers and rolling his eyes anxiously. "So it has come at last," he muttered in a low voice. "At last. Who could have foreseen it?" The thought agitated him so much that he rose suddenly from his armchair and paced quickly up and down the room with his hands clasped tightly behind his back. He visualized the immediate future—he saw quite clearly the position he was in—how hopeless the situation was. There seemed to be no way out; he frowned heavily. "I must act at once," he muttered, with emotion. "At *once*. This Woman in the Pulpit business is not only monstrous, but dangerous. Not only blasphemous, but calculated to take the very bread out of my mouth. I must think of something immediately." He sank into his armchair again and produced a notebook. He scribbled a few words absently; and then, a smile spreading over his previously gloomy countenance, he chuckled aloud. "I have it," he exclaimed with enthusiasm, springing from his chair and running his fingers through his hair rapidly. "The very thing. I must wire to Monsieur Clarkson at once. A splendid idea. The only way out. No one will detect—it is my only hope." He seized a telephone directory and raced through the pages until he discovered the number he wanted, then, placing the directory back upon the table, he raised the receiver and shouted a number. "Hello, hello! Is that Clarkson. Yes, Clarkson—it is, ah!—well, its me—er Mr.—er Mr. Dorgcollar. Yes, in fact—well I—er—want a complete female rig-out—hair—yes, I mean a wig—and, er—ah! you know. Splendid! Send it at once. Thanks so much. Yes, dark hair, of course. Splendid! Thanks! As soon as possible. Good-bye." Bishop Bloom replaced the receiver and staggered towards the armchair, where he sat with closed eyes. His breathing was slow and irregular, large drops of perspiration hung upon his brow, and he trembled in every limb. Then, with the electric light on and the gas-fire burning, he fell asleep.

* * * *

A week later, in the *Heavenly Hooter*, a special leading article, in extra large type, appeared on the front page. It read as follows:—

"No longer can we be said to place any reliance whatever in old bottles. Our new wine must have new bottles. We have been accused by many modern satirists and social reformers of a lack of, shall we say, scientific perception and moral courage in not supporting revolutionary ideas. But, to-day, this charge of apathy cannot be reasonably lodged against us. *Our tentative attitude towards change has itself undergone a change!* Our pre-war narrowness of vision, our lack of sympathy with the great working-class movement, our persistent ignoring of all the vital issues of the age, all these things have vanished, we have been, indeed, 'born again.' The point at issue is the new movement in the Church against women preachers. Well, we here and now state our attitude, fearlessly and without bias or party cant. We *believe* in this new idea. We believe that female bishops and women clergymen (or should we say clergy-women) have come to stay. Furthermore, that it is the duty of every sane Christian journal to help forward this great movement for the benefit of humanity. No one who had the pleasure last Sunday of hearing Mrs. Blossom preach at St. Margaret's, will deny that women can preach. In fact, we will go so far as to say that Mrs. Blossom possesses qualities which very many clergymen we are afraid do not possess. One thing in particular was very noticeable: her remarkably strong voice, her dominating personality, masculine in its power, her short vivid sentences, her masterly gestures, and freedom from narrowness. In fact, everything was as it should be. The sermon itself was splendid. No bishop, with the exception, perhaps, of Bishop Bloom, ever preached a better. We take this opportunity of urging our readers to hear Mrs. Blossom as soon as they can."

STOP PRESS.

A sensational event has just been reported from the Central News. Bishop Bloom, whose work is so well-known to readers of *Bishop's Bathos*, has suddenly disappeared and no trace of him can be found. Whether the reverend gentleman has joined the Army as a private, we cannot say; but it is exactly the modest sort of thing he would do, avoiding all ostentation, show, or vulgar advertisement. Let us hope so.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Correspondence.

ATTACK ON DEMOCRACY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—More signs are appearing that something is being prepared behind the scenes for an attempt to use the position caused by the War to filch from the British people the representative method of Government.

In the *Freethinker* of December 31, I had occasion to deal with this matter in regard to a weekly journal under the title of "Bogus Lessons of History," I now find the particularly respectable daily, the *Morning Post*, has taken up the question, and in an article discussing the coming Imperial Conference, it says, "If the War be used as a test of efficiency, the Democratic form of Government does not come out very well." This is a beautiful expression for a supporter of the Law and Order Party and the mouthpiece of the so-called Constitutional clubs. It is not only a piece of unmitigated inaccuracy, but it is also calculated to upset the good relations between this country and its Republican Allies, France and Portugal, to say nothing of the United States.

We are pleased to find that the *Star* has joined us in denouncing this move of the "hidden hand." In a leader of January 3 it says ".....what amuses us most of all is the cool assumption that the Democratic form of Government does not come out very well in war. We think it comes out very well. We are not afraid to back the French Republic and the British Democracy against the Russian Autocracy."

The *Freethinker* has always championed the free expression of opinion, at the same time exposing chicanery and lies, and therefore it denounces here and now this new movement, which can only be propagated with such disgraceful methods. Truth is great and will prevail, and such attempts as that referred to will end in ignominy and failure if the people are on their guard.

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Views and Opinions.

God Help Us!

Two men were out in a small boat during a storm. They were only a little distance from the shore, but the chance of landing seemed small. It was, clearly, an occasion for prayer. "Oh, God," prayed one, "save our lives, and we promise"—— "Hold on," suddenly cried the other, "don't promise anything, we're ashore." The story puts the philosophy of "God help us" in a nutshell. It expresses both the occasion and the nature of the exclamation. No one invokes God while there is a good prospect of help elsewhere. No one trusts in Providence who can get credit elsewhere. No one drags in the name of God until human knowledge has reached its limits. "God help us!" is a synonym of helplessness. "God only knows!" is a synonym of ignorance. The will of God, said Spinoza, in a fine phrase, is the asylum of ignorance. No one has ever bettered that phrase, and no one ever will. It is the philosophy of religion in a nutshell. A really scientific study of religion can be no more than a commentary upon that generalization. From the dawn of human philosophy until to-day "God" has never been more than the phrase with which hopeless ignorance or despairing helplessness seeks to narcotize the consciousness of its own impotence.

* * *

God and Right.

For two and a half years the world has been at war, and during that time thousands of parsons—to say nothing of laymen—have been trying to explain God's part in the conflict. What has been the use of it all? Has it helped us to understand the cause of the outburst? Has it helped us to bring it to a close? Will it help us to prevent its recurrence? God will see to it, says one of these men of God, that in this world-conflict right will not be trampled under foot. What guarantee have we of that? Is right never trampled under foot? God, if there be a God, seems remarkably impartial in the distribution of his favours. In 1870 he helped the Germans to conquer the French. Later he helped the Agnostic Japanese to conquer the pious Russians. Then he helped the Mohammedan Turk to conquer the Christian Greek; and, by way of levelling up matters, he helped the Christian Balkan States to conquer the Turk. One cannot count with any certainty upon so variable a factor. And, surely, if there is one thing certain, it is that whoever wins the War, Right *will* have been trampled under foot. Every innocent man or woman or child who has suffered in this War is proof of that. If the Kaiser and his advisers, with everyone else responsible for the War—in every country, were all hung sky high, it would not alter that fact or diminish the force of that truth. Right is trampled under foot whenever and wherever wrong is done. We may prevent its recurrence, but we cannot undo it once it has occurred. And it is God's business—if there is a God—to see that it never does occur. A God who does not or cannot do this should abdicate, or hand over his functions to a more competent tribunal.

* * *

Why Should God Help?

Why should we, from even the Christian point of view, believe that God will help us? The troubles and difficulties of life—including the force of human passions—do not exist uncaused. Such as they are, such as the world is, they are God's creations; and why should we expect him to remove difficulties he has himself been at the trouble to provide? If God really intended helping us, he would have helped us much more effectively by doing so at the beginning. And to Deity this would have been such an easy task. A very slight difference in the make-up of the Kaiser—we select the Kaiser because he presents a clear case to British readers—just a little difference in the chemical constituents of his body and in the structure or quality of his nervous system, would have made him quite a different man—as great a lover of freedom and progress as, say, the Czar of Russia. And if God did not choose to so arrange things, why should we assume that he will now help us to alter them. If God does all things well, to ask him to alter them or to help us alter them is ridiculous. And if otherwise, the correction must come from man himself, even though he is magnanimous enough to give God credit for the change.

* * *

A Sham Belief.

Is there anyone who really believes that God does help? The clergy. *They* say so; but it is their business to say so. We may readily grant that God—or the belief in God—helps them; the comfortable positions secured by clerical mediocrities is evidence of that. But do even the clergy trust in God while help is to be obtained elsewhere? Looking at them generally, one quite fails to detect any difference between their behaviour and that of other people. If a parson is sick, he visits a doctor or a health resort. If he is in trouble, he appeals for sympathy or help as readily as other people. Strip him of his collar and coat, dress him in

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ordinary clothes, and you cannot distinguish the parson from the layman. And the layman is equally contemptuous of God's help. The lesson of experience tells on him with even greater force than it does on the parson, because he has no obvious self-interest to serve in ignoring its lessons. During the course of the absurd National Mission of Repentance and Hope, the standing complaint has been that the nation has forgotten God. But a God who did anything useful would not be forgotten. A God who can be overlooked is a God who deserves to be overlooked. Man's forgetfulness is the measure of our appreciation of his services.

* * *

Facts versus Theory.

How glibly the phrase, "The protecting providence of God," rolls off the lips of the average preacher. And what a bitter satire life presents to such a phrase! While we write, the papers are full of the accounts of a horrible disaster in a munition factory in the East of London. The death roll is incomplete, but it is large, and, says one of the reports, "one of the saddest features in the terrible calamity is the number of little children who have been killed or injured." The clergy have told us that in this War we are fighting God's fight; and this is the way God looks after his own. Men and women, boys and girls, were toiling at the work of making munitions, and in a moment they were blasted out of existence. And around the factory itself rows of houses are shattered and little children killed or crippled. What was "Providence" doing there? Religious papers have told us how God miraculously preserved crucifixes on the wayside in France and Belgium. Why could he not have paid a little attention to East London? A Scotch elder once excused himself from attending a harvest thanksgiving after a bad harvest on the plea that he did not wish to approach the Lord in a spirit of sarcasm. To prate of "Providence" and "God's help" in the face of the horrors of the past two years is more than sarcasm; it is an insult to human intelligence, an outrage on human decency.

* * *

God or Man?

Of course, it will be said that God had nothing to do with this explosion, or with any of the other disasters. And that we quite believe. It is not, after all, the Atheist who charges God with the responsibility for these things. It is the believer in God who, by his belief, makes him responsible. We agree that if a man applies a match to a barrel of powder he must expect certain consequences. That is precisely the Atheistic position. And the moral of that position—not disputed, be it noted, by the believer—is that, if you are doing anything in this world, it doesn't matter the value of a brass farthing whether you believe in a God or not. Natural forces operate with absolute impartiality, and the question of the existence of God may be set on one side as of no practical importance whatever. If there is no protecting Providence, human safety and human welfare resolves itself into a question of understanding, controlling, and applying natural forces in a sensible and beneficial manner. And if that be granted, religion may be dismissed once and for all as a gigantic imposture. Years ago Carlyle said, "God does nothing." By sheer force of facts religious philosophy is being driven to the same conclusion. God does nothing; that is the real inference from the whole of human experience. Civilization is the work of man, not of God; and not a small part of our task is to relieve the human mind of the incubus of a belief that rests on no other and no better foundation than the fear-stricken fancies of primitive man.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Have Faith in God."

THAT is the *British Weekly's* motto for the New Year, and the leading article for January 4 is a sermonic exposition of it. To see the absurdity of such a motto we only need to set it in its original context:—

> Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them (Mark xi. 22—25).

Everybody who thinks knows that those words are not true. No prayer addressed to a god has ever been answered by him. This is an obvious truism that cannot be too often repeated. As a matter of fact, nobody believes that the Gospel Jesus himself expected his words to be taken seriously, nor have they been so taken by any sensible people. And yet the editor of the *British Weekly* counsels his readers to take the clause, "Have faith in God," as their motto during the present year. Sir William Robertson Nicoll is simply mistaken when he says that what Britain needs more than anything else is God, and most certainly the British people, as such, do not feel their need of him. Sir William assures us that "he governs all things in heaven and in earth," and that he keeps his servants "as the apple of his eye," folding them "under the shadow of his wings," and guiding them "with his counsel," in which case he affords them no occasion to feel their need of him. The reverend knight pretends to "set forth the presence and the action of the living God, who is the master and not the slave of Nature," but the task is too difficult for him. He can do nothing but multiply assertions, not one of which is susceptible of demonstration. He does not know that Nature has a master who "governs, interferes, and answers prayer." When has Nature been interfered with, and what evidence is there that prayer has ever been answered? It is easy enough to assert that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father in heaven, that "not one dies in the shock of battle but God knows it and marks it," and that "the very hairs of our head are all numbered"; but such assertions are incapable of verification. All that can be proved is that sparrows fall, often most cruelly, and that men and women die, whether in the shock of battle or in quiet homes. Equally easy is it for any believer to assert that he can see the hand of God in the ordering of his life from day to day; but this assertion, also, lies beyond the sphere of substantiation. Seemingly, a religious man credits himself with nothing; all that is good in him being of God, and all that is bad, of the Devil—he being but a machine which they run in turns.

Sir William is also able to see the hand of God in history. It was by the hand of God that Napoleon was vanquished and American slavery abolished; but was it by the hand of Satan that Napoleon was raised and slavery established? But the editor of the *British Weekly* has already declared that God "governs all things in heaven and in earth," a statement which shuts the Devil out completely. He is aware, however, that all is not well with that declaration, and so he adds:—

> And yet we do not walk by sight. We walk by faith, and are often unable to see why such things as happen should be. But the elemental convictions are more certain than the surface and transitory appearances of the world, and the heart is anchored deep in them.

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> Whether we succeed or fail for the time, still Jesus says to us, "Have faith in God."

We are profoundly convinced that if we study history impartially we shall be forced to the conclusion that faith in God entirely lacks justification. Even the history of the Church, the very temple of the Holy Ghost, reflects no credit on its Divine Head.

Yes, Sir Robertson Nicoll is fully conscious of the essential weakness of his argument; and it is marvellous with what *naivette* he gives his case away:—

> Does the Providence of God make it certain that the right must always win? The answer is, Yes, if we hold fast to the truth of another life. We may be defeated in this world, and to all appearances utterly defeated. Even that must not shake our faith. "Have faith in God" is still the message for times when everything seems to go against us, and the cause of righteousness apparently grows weaker every hour. The Christian must never say less than this, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him."

It is admitted that in this world the right does not always win, and we ourselves may be utterly defeated. In this world the cause of righteousness is not always triumphant.

> The annals of the world are full of darkness and confusion. There are crushing misfortunes that befall the righteous. Many a good cause has been overborne for a long season. Truth is on the scaffold and falsehood is on the throne.

Does Sir William really think that the world could be in such a woeful condition if an infinitely powerful and good God "governed all things in heaven and in earth"? All he says is that "the plan of our commander is not known to us." Surely, had there been a Commander, his plan would have been known to us long ago. The God in whom we are exhorted to have faith "gave Christ for the redemption of the world" two thousand years ago, and to-day the world is full of darkness and confusion and crushing misfortunes, and there is no certainty that the right shall ever be wholly victorious in it. Even a minister of the Gospel like Sir Robertson Nicoll can find no satisfaction, no light, no explanation except in the belief that there is another life. But even if there is another life, what is there to show that all things will be set right in it?

The curious thing is that, amid the welter and confusion so prevalent in the world, we are calmly told that even during the present brutal War in Europe "God has been working his own ends," and that "in his hands is the power of life and death." If this is true, he is directly responsible for the War and for all the unspeakable atrocities that have characterized it. Indeed, Sir William throws out the suggestion that to believers in God "it may be a privilege to live through a time like this," and an agony only to the unbeliever. "If we have faith in God it is well. It will be well with us even if we do not live to see the victory on earth." What the ends are at which God is working just now we are not informed, nor do we understand the prediction that "he will vindicate those who in a day of travail and blasphemy have taken him at his word." When has he spoken and what has he said? Thousands upon thousands in this land of ours have never heard his voice, neither have they ever had any ground on which to believe that he even exists at all; and to them the War only affords an additional evidence that the belief in him is one of the many illusions and delusions which have come down to us from the ignorance and stupidity of the past. All the words of which we have any knowledge are of human origin and character, and man is the highest living being of whom there is any trace.

The editor of the *British Weekly* is not ignorant of the fact that the conceptions of God are innumerable, and that scarcely any two of them are alike. In all ages his so-called servants have been disputing and wrangling concerning him, and putting one another to death because they could not agree in their descriptions of him. Having carefully considered the *British Weekly's* teaching on the subject, the only conclusion to which we can come is that its God is not deserving of our faith because of his utter silence and inactivity. Were it true that he "governed all things in heaven and in earth," to dethrone him would be the most benevolent act that could be performed. Such government would be a disgrace of the highest order to a super-human potentate.

J. T. LLOYD.

Chartered Libertines.

> Hebrew mythology contains things which are both insulting and injurious.—*J. A. Froude.*
>
> The "Zolaism" of the Bible is far more pernicious than the "Zolaism" of fiction.—*G. W. Foote.*

THE clergy are past masters at stifling or circumventing any movement likely to prove dangerous to them. The original Sunday-schools were initiated by laymen with the sole idea of imparting real education to children on the one day of the week on which, in the time prior to the passing of the Factory Acts, they were free to receive it. Nowadays, Sunday-schools are not concerned with other than purely theological instruction, and the average Sunday-school teacher cares as much for real education as a pigeon cares for hydrostatics.

Similarly, the clergy circumvented the great Public Library movement, which was intended to place knowledge within reach of the people. They have always had enormous influence on the local committees of the public libraries, and their one aim has been to render such institutions, from their point of view, entirely innocuous. So long as the shelves of these libraries were stocked with the books of Messrs. Charles Garvice and the Brothers Hocking, Miss Marie Corelli, and other purveyors of sentimental pap for intellectual infants, they were content. The instant any attempt was made to place before the reading public works which made for sanity or ordered thought, they at once displayed their hostility. The boycott was introduced, and the modern index expurgatories contains the name of practically every author who is worth reading from Bernard Shaw to Swinburne. Even popular novelists have not escaped, and Hall Caine has suffered in the company of H. G. Wells.

The latest clerical move is quite as astute as those already noted. Some clerical members of the recent Conference of Headmasters have issued a warning to the parents of schoolboys, in which they call attention to the danger of books, magazines, and plays, which verge upon indecency. "We venture to do so," say the headmasters, "because we have special opportunities of observing the actual effect upon boys and young men of suggestions so conveyed to which we feel bound to bear witness." And they add, "too little care is exercised to exclude them from the lives of the young."

To read such allusion to the books, magazines, and plays of the day, as if many of them were a noisome danger to society, is not pleasant. When such insults come from priests and their satellites, who thrust the open Bible into the hands of innocent childhood, one's sense of justice is outraged. For there are things in the sacred volume which are calculated to bring the blush of modesty on any face except that of a priest. Raw, naked filth, which cannot be read aloud to a

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mixed congregation, is forced compulsorily into the hands of every child; but masters of literature, who would present their puppets as sentient beings, must emasculate and etherealize them until they are the merest shadows of men and women, swayed by motives and temptations that would be held blameless by the Rev. Mr. Stiggins and gain approval of Mr. Pecksniff himself. Clergymen attach such loose meanings to the words they fling about so recklessly, but how such men can read the account of Ezekiel's banquet, or the story of Onan, and the adventures of Lot, without remark, and point the finger of scorn at modern novelists and playwrights is inexplicable, except on the hypothesis that they are insincere.

If the novels, plays, and magazines of the day are likely to corrupt the morals of the rising generation, what, in the name of common sense, is the Old Testament calculated to do? There may be found plain, unvarnished accounts of rape, adultery, and unnatural vice, written with all the nasty particularity and love of detail, which is the peculiar birthright of all Eastern writers. The florid, heated rhetoric of "The Song of Solomon" leaves nothing to the imagination, and the least lettered reader can appreciate the glowing periods. In fact, Oriental nastiness begins where Occidental pornography leaves off.

The overt action of the clerical headmasters is unnecessary. If they had any real reason for safeguarding the interests of the young, they would see at once, that, if an ordinary novel or a play will corrupt a young boy, the Bible will corrupt a regiment. No novelist or playwright would dare to fill his pages with detailed accounts of incest, rape, and unmentionable crimes. He would be imprisoned, and his books destroyed. Yet the clergy force the Bible, which contains all these things, into the hands of every child. We do not believe in bowdlerizing books, but if ever there were any occasion for such drastic treatment it certainly should be directed against the Bible. Unfortunately, if all the objectionable passages were deleted, "God's Holy Word" would be so reduced as to be unrecognisable. Instead of prating of indecent literature, let the clergy set an example. Let them cease to force into the innocent hands of little children a volume which they dare no longer read aloud in its completeness to a mixed audience of adults. Until they consent to do this they merit the title of "Chartered Libertines."

MIMNERMUS.

A Sceptical Scientist and Saint.

III.

(Continued from p. 38.)

IN 1872 Lubbock began his researches on the mental endowments of insects. These inquiries initiated the studies which subsequently gave the reading public his fascinating volume on *Ants, Bees, and Wasps*. That a busy banker and successful legislator should interest himself in the activities of insects struck the general fancy, and doubtless assisted in the circulation of the book. In the autumn he travelled along the Danube, and visited Turkey and Greece; and during a visit to France he tamed a wasp, which he introduced to his scientific friends. In a leading article, the *Daily Telegraph* stated that:—

> One of the most curious attendants this year at the gathering of the British Association in Brighton was a little gentleman in a brown overcoat, with black and yellow nether garments, wearing a sharp sword poisoned at the tip.....It was Sir John Lubbock's pet wasp; and the respect which would naturally be paid to the benevolent savant, who has given London its new holidays, was really due to this insect on its own account.

Excited by envy, among other evil human weaknesses, a rumour was spread broadcast that Lubbock was regarded as "a great scientist among the bankers, a great banker among the scientists." But the high estimation in which he was held by the great masters of science in what was a Golden Age of natural knowledge, completely disproves one half of the rumour, while, as to the other, the evidence is conclusive that the bankers did not hold him lightly as an authority on their calling. They accepted his Clearing system, and they valued his Falsification of Accounts Bill, which was passed into law in 1874. The circumstances which led to this enactment were somewhat strange:—

> A clerk at Stuckey's Bank had overpaid his account, and had deceived the auditors by falsifying the books, so that his frauds remained for a considerable time undetected. To everyone's surprise, it appeared that this was no offence in the eye of the law.

Lubbock's Act, for the first time, made this a criminal offence. This proved a very useful measure, as it had been no uncommon occurrence for clerks to rob the banks by means of false entries, and then escape punishment for their misdeeds.

Again, the Bankers' Association very heartily thanked Lubbock for the Bankers' Books Evidence Act, which he piloted through Parliament in 1876. Previous to this Act, bankers were bound on demand to produce their books in Court. "Many accounts being in the same ledger, it sometimes happened that a customer wished to consult his ledger, but could not do so as the ledger was in Court." Under the new Act, bankers were permitted to present a signed duplicate.

In the same year Lubbock went among the Wiltshire archæologists at Salisbury, and formed one of a party to Stonehenge that was conveyed there in some score or more carriages. A landowning agriculturist, busy with his harvest, was astonished when he noticed a procession of vehicles so imposing in an outlandish lane. He inquired of his bailiff as to its meaning. "I reckon, sir," said the man, who seems to have been uncertain as to the pronunciation of the word "archæologists," "it's them Archangels from Salisbury."

A curious slip of the pen occurs on page 165 of the first volume of Mr. Hutchinson's biography. Referring to Lubbock's Bill to amend the law relating to Companies, introduced into the House in 1879, Mr. Hutchinson mentions Lord Halsbury as Chancellor. Of course, the first Earl Cairns occupied the woolsack during Disraeli's lease of power from 1874 to 1880, while Halsbury was then Hardinge Giffard, afterwards Charles Bradlaugh's spiteful antagonist in the Courts of Law, and later still Lord Chancellor, or, as Labouchere preferred to term him, "Lord High Jobber."

This same year Sir John lost his first wife, to whom he was dearly attached, and her early decease was doubtless in large measure due to the effects of the railway accident previously spoken of.

When Gladstone swept the country at the General Election of 1880, Lubbock, although a Liberal, lost his seat for Maidstone, owing to his colleague, Sir Sidney Waterlow's, removal of slum property in the town. It was the old blunder of pulling down human dwellings before others were erected in their stead. Superior houses were subsequently built, which gave general satisfaction; but the election was fought while the houseless inhabitants were suffering considerable inconvenience. The angry people who were driven from their homes, and the tradesmen who relied on their custom, avenged themselves by voting for the Conservatives,

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who won the seats. As a sequel, on the elevation of Robert Lowe, the Member for London University, to the peerage, Sir John succeeded him as Parliamentary representative. He was returned unopposed, and retained the seat for twenty years, until he in turn accepted a barony.

In 1888 Lubbock was President of the British Association, and his Address secured the hearty admiration of Darwin. This gathering—the Jubilee meeting—was held at York, and in the afternoon of the opening day Lubbock strolled into the Cathedral with Huxley:—

> At the entrance they met Prof. H. J. Smith, who put up his hands with a look of mock surprise. "Ah," said Huxley, "you did not expect to see me here." "Well," said Smith, looking up, "if I had it would have been on a pinnacle."

Although a remarkably abstemious man, Lubbock suffered for the sins of his ancestors, and was afflicted with gout. This fiendish disease threatened at times to restrict his multifarious activities. But the busy man was busy still when, in 1882, the death of Darwin came. Sir John composed a memorial to the Dean of Westminster, suggesting the burial of the mighty naturalist in the Abbey. This was signed, among others, by Professor Fawcett, Thomas Burt, Sir Charles Dilke, and Sir George Trevelyan. Darwin was consequently laid to rest in what should be the National Mausoleum, and the pall-bearers included Huxley, Wallace, Hooker, J. R. Lowell, and Lubbock Although Darwin had passed the alloted span of three score years and ten, his death was a sad blow to Lubbock. Their early friendship had deepened into affection, and the younger man looked up to the philosopher of Down as a second father. Darwin's influence in shaping Lubbock's scientific studies was enormous. And, as Mr. Hutchinson states:—

> Nor is it on the intellectual side alone that the counsel and the example of the great Darwin counted for much with him. He was immensely indebted, too, to the example of his fine and serene character—cheerful, uncomplaining, courageous—in the midst of the attacks of ill-health, and of enemies who were unable to appreciate his work.

Relieved to some extent from personal attendance at the Bank, Lubbock became extremely active in science and politics. He conclusively proved that the Bank Holidays had not led to increased drunkenness, a charge constantly brought against them; he strove to secure the reduction of the National Debt, and was, if possible, more interested in archæology than ever. In August, 1883, *Punch* selected him as a subject for one of that entertaining organ's "Fancy Portraits." Sir John was cleverly portrayed as a big humble-bee, while below the drawing ran the lines:—

> How doth the Busy Banking Bee
> Improve the shining hours,
> By studying on Bank Holidays
> Strange insects and wild flowers.

Lubbock paid his first visit to Rushmore in 1883. This was the noble residence of General Pitt Rivers, the learned evolutionary anthropologist, who once offered that well-known heretic, Moncure Conway, the biographer of Thomas Paine, a nice living in the Church. There Lubbock met Alice Fox Pitt, who afterwards became his second wife.

The introduction of the measure to enfranchise the agricultural labourer gave an impetus to the cause of Proportional Representation, and Lubbock, who was a strong supporter of this system, took a prominent part in the formation of the Proportional Representation Society. This body was born in January, 1884, in Mr. Beaumont Lubbock's residence. And unquestionably, were such a scheme capable of satisfactory application, it would constitute a great improvement on our present methods of election.

Apropos of long dinner courses and interminable orations, the following is not bad. At a Cambridge celebration there were innumerable speeches, and, after midnight, Sir Frederick Bramwell was on the list to return thanks for "Applied Science." Overwhelmed by the oratory of the many preceding speakers, Bramwell delivered a commendably brief address. This is the verbatim report:—

> At an earlier hour there is much that I should have liked to have said about applied science; but as it is nearly one o'clock, the only application that strikes me as at all appropriate would be the application of a domestic lucifer to a bedroom candle.

With that he resumed his seat, when J. R. Lowell, who sat opposite, dashed off a verse, which he tossed over to Sir Frederick Bramwell:—

> O wise Sir Frederick,
> Who thy wit could catch,
> Hold thee a candle
> Or supply thy match?

As soon as Parliament reassembled in 1886, Lubbock toiled earnestly to persuade the House to accept his Shop Hours Regulation Bill, which limited the working hours of youths and maidens under eighteen years of age to seventy-four a week. The Bill survived its second reading, and was then hung up in Committee. Many opposed legislative interference in this matter in the name of liberty, and the Lord Mayor convened a general gathering in London, composed of tradespeople, which, it was supposed, would with practical unanimity condemn Lubbock's or any other similar Bill. Sir John made a point of being present at the demonstration, and asked the meeting to grant him a hearing. He then presented his case, and moved an amendment to the official resolution in favour of his own proposals. With wonderful success he brought home to the assembly the painfully long hours of shop assistants by quoting the old Norfolk epitaph:—

> Here lies a poor woman, who always was tired,
> For she lived in a world where too much was required.
> Weep not for me, friends, she said, for I'm going
> Where there'll neither be cooking nor washing nor sewing.
>
> I go where the loud Hallelujahs are ringing,
> But I shall not take any part in the singing.
> Then weep not for me, friends, if death do us sever,
> For I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever.

These lines made such an impression that Lubbock carried his amendment, much to the consternation of his critics. He was now more determined than before to secure the passage of his Bill, and laboured ceaselessly to achieve this object. And in a late note for the year 1887 he was able to write, "In Parliament I did not speak often, but succeeded at length in carrying the Shop Hours Bill, which limits the hours of young persons in shops to seventy-four hours a week."

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

The Avenues of Time.

AVENUES have a strange charm. Meditation, the broad browed goddess of the silent, solitary places, seems to make them her home. To rush through an avenue is to be guilty of sacrilege. For the life of me, I could not say why this is so; but the peaceful seclusion, the quietude, the restfulness, seem to demand more consideration. Your steps, naturally, move more and more slowly. Your mind becomes more and more sombre. Everything within and without you quietens

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into repose; and a mellow happiness seems to pervade you and your environment. An avenue tempts you leisurely to live. In the kindliness of the shadows of the wings of Meditation you unconsciously become reflective; your mind becomes more quietly attuned to truth.

But it is a different kind of avenue of which I am thinking. I like the poetic phrase, the avenues of time. I like to wander down these serene retreats, where the perfumed dust of death is scattered, and the air is fragrant with an incense that belongs to the immortals. All the characteristics that make the real avenues delightful are here intensified. The remoteness from this queer old world is increased. Its absurd folly and insane incongruity are further away than ever. Its hopeless incompetence, its inability, its grotesque inaptitudes are lost in the dimness.

Strange that one should draw nearer to life the farther one departs from it. When time is taken to think, which is seldom in these days of the dominion of dark death, the strangeness becomes appallingly weird; and as you wander down these old, time-shadowed avenues the nearness of the friendly, quiet old trees is a joy in itself; the peacefulness always associated with wisdom enters into the soul of you; and the outside commotion becomes something too full of the obnoxious to be understood.

Hidden away from the turmoil are these avenues where the spirit of life dwells in immortality. The soft, restful voices that flood the air with divine melodies are unheard in the world's uproar. The serene familiar faces that shine in the semi-gloom are untroubled still. The eyes that smile upon us are as fearless and placid as of old. The hands that are stretched forth to bless and comfort us are as tenderly firm as ever; and we know that the hearts from which spring the flowers of deathless thought and counsel, and contain the elixir of truth, are as impregnable as of old, despite the countless specious fallacies men use to garment their solemn folly.

It is quiet down here where the great men of all the ages live, and speak; and, speaking, rebuke the present and the foolish children of to-day. It is quiet down here where wisdom dwells, and the fraternity of genius gathers together to show men their desperate stupidity. Quiet it is down here where the only war that is ever broached is that in which Reason assumes her rightful place—Reason robed in charity, in love, in pity, and in fellowship.

In the quietude of the avenues of time there are no crimes, no barbarities, no blood-red revelries with death, no blaring mockeries of justice, no blasphemous adulteries with truth, no hypocritical sanctimoniousness of honour, God, or other superstitions. All is peaceful and restful. A barrier of distance lies between the voiceful solitudes and the shrieking insanity of a world that has gone mad with a wolf-like blood-lust.

Here the violets might grow, and the larks might sing, and children might be merry, without fear of the cruelties of the brute man. Horror is unknown here, beneath the foliage of love. Passions, revenge, spite, remorselessness, reprisal, every emotion from which the soul flees in despair, are strangers here. Animalism that sinks its teeth ferociously into flesh comes not into the dim shadows of the avenues of time. Degradation of life and thought, slavery of mind and body, starvation of the soul, gluttony of the ignoble survivals of decay, poverty of principle, feasts of diseased faith; these are only to be found ravishing the teachings of wisdom in *our* world, with its clamour, its depravity, its rank, raw, ugly Materialism.

The master minds whose spirits move gently amongst the foliage and shades of the avenues of time are unanimous in their denunciation of brutality. Their hatred of unreason and its children of vice was no passing spasm of indignation. Their love of peace was no questionable opinion founded upon shoddy principles, easily ruined by the gusts of expediency: it was based upon the knowledge that all quarrelling was unwise and unprofitable. In the restful quietness not one voice, I think, can be heard advocating the resuscitation of the savage nature of humanity in our endeavours to rid the world of evil, even of deliberately defiant and offensive evil. Not yet have I listened to one of these melodious voices attuning itself to discord and dis-peace. Out from their wisdom steal suggestions of Reason, the great arbiter that weighs the differences of men's opinions, and in its conclusions mingles justice with consideration. Through the harmonies that flood the avenues with music runs a golden thread of melody embroidered with Reason's incomparable majesty.

Is it not true that the world has carelessly neglected the wisdom of the master minds? Is it not true that it has contemptuously ignored the teaching of its counsellors? Is it not true that, by its ignorance and its prejudice, it has brought to the doors of its people such a mass of misery, and sorrow, and suffering, that centuries may be needed to purge Humanity of the evil influences of its own crimes?

Throughout the avenues of time a deeper sadness seems to have fallen. A more sombre remoteness from the world seems to exist. Loneliness has become more consciously palpable. Humanity has departed from the saving companionship of the master minds. The shadows are heavier down here; the voices are quieter; the gleam on the faces have diminished somewhat; a gloaming has been wafted from the fields of folly, from the lines and pits of insensate stupidity, and has settled down upon the neglected pearl-strewn, star-studded avenues of time, the dwelling-places of minds that have given their all that Humanity might live lives happy, bright and free; and given that all in vain.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Chorus of Life.

EVER be daring,
Never despairing,
Storm beacons flaring
Still lead you on;
Life's battle sharing
And vict'ries won.

Spite of all badness,
Folly and madness,
Even in sadness,
Patient and brave;
Tasting its gladness,
Breasting the wave.

Up from the valley,
Urging the rally,
Leading the sally,
Onward you go;
Never a dally,
Fearing no foe.

Then when the day is done,
All the long journey won,
Turn like the setting sun
Toward thy West;
Work that is well begun
Earn thee thy rest.

ANDREW MILLAR.

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Acid Drops.

Dr. Campbell Morgan complains of the "brutalities of our English translation of the Bible." As a sample he gives the "Damsel, I say unto you, arise," of Jesus, and thinks that a phrase such as "Wee bit lassie," would be nearer to the sense of the original. So it might be, but Dr. Morgan should be careful. If that part of the New Testament is rendered into the homely language of everyday life there is no reason why all should not be so rendered. And if that were done, while it would certainly induce a clearer comprehension of the Bible, the consequences might be very unfortunate for the Rev. Campbell Morgan and his class.

There is no reason save one why each new age should not have the Bible re-translated into the vernacular, as are other classics. But that one reason is very important, and it is vital to the interests of the Christian Churches. It would destroy the pseudo-sanctity and expose the solemn hocus-pocus on which religion lives. Certainly, a "wee bit lassie," or "bonnie girlie," is more homely and more human in its appeal to-day than than the austere "damsel" of the New Testament. But the latter does the work it aims at doing, and either of the former expressions would fail. Remember, it is a *dead* girl that Jesus is bringing back to life—an incredible, an absurd thing, on the face of it. And if he were represented as saying, "My poor little girl, get up and run away home to your father and mother," readers would see no more in the story than the action of a good-natured lunatic who expected to bring the dead back to life, or a shrewd observer who knew the girl was shamming and brought her to her senses. In either case the supernatural aura would be destroyed. But try, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise!" and the archaic language removes the whole incident from the impact of critical thought, the unthinking man remains undisturbed, and the supernatural is preserved. Of course, gods and prophets must talk a human language if they are to be understood at all, but make them talk like the people around us talk, and their pretensions to superiority become subject to the same tests as do the claims of ordinary human beings.

That is the reason why in connection with religion there must be a special lingo, a special dress, a special frame of mind, everything so calculated as to lift the individual out of the corrective, and, comparatively, rationalistic environment of to-day, and to place him in the comparatively irrational environment of some centuries ago. The more archaic the language is the more it impresses the unthinking. Mystification is the mother of mysticism, as certainly as understanding is the beginning of wisdom and the end of religion.

The Governor of Greenland, who is over in London on legal business, admitted in Court that he had never heard of the hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." The Eskimos are far from being uncivilized, although they have no army, no navy, no police force, and no taxes to pay. The Governor said that the chief impression the European War makes upon them is the wickedness of such a waste of human life. Happy Eskimos!

"Commissioner Adelaide Cox will represent the Salvation Army on the Cinema Commission," says the *Daily News*. Does this mean that Bible stories are to be filmed?

Advertisements of Sunday services at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, S.E., show that the great American preacher is assisted by a lady vocalist. When Spurgeon preached on hell-fire and its torments, he did not even have the assistance of a church organ.

"The way in which lamp-posts say 'Good evening' to you at night is very often more forcible than polite" says the Vicar of Addelstone, Surrey. It looks as if the mothers' meeting had been unusually festive.

We expect there has been a mistake made, but we have received an invitation to attend a meeting to be held in the Church House, Westminster, to listen to some addresses on "The Position of the Lord's Supper in Divine Worship." As we don't care to the value of a politician's word of honour what position the Lord's Supper takes in divine worship, we shall not attend. It is of much greater moment just now to consider the position of an ordinary supper in an ordinary household. That seems to be the pressing question of the hour. But imagine the state of things when such things can be gravely discussed by men and women who will persist in calling themselves civilized?

The Kaiser is not the only intimate of the Deity. Said the Rev. Billy Sunday in a sermon at Boston, U.S.A., "God might have sent angels down here to preach, but he didn't. He said, 'Bill, go to Boston.'" The cultured Bostonians must feel honoured.

An advertisement for a pious publication is headed, "Man doth not live on Plum Pudding only." The allusion is, of course, to the well-known words, "Man doth not live by bread alone," but Christians believe the Bible so often without ever reading it.

A gospel-temperance speaker at Southend-on-Sea hanged himself in a shed near his house. As he was not a Secularist lecturer, there is no moral.

The dear *Daily News* states that pulpit supplies have become a serious problem in the country owing to the large number of the clergy who have gone on "war service." The expression "war service" is good, for the few score clergymen who are with the troops are usually in safe billets at the back of the Front. The great number of the clergy prefer to console the girls that the soldiers have left behind.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have invested £3,500,000 in the new War Loan. In all probability it never dawned upon these pious patriots that a genuine help to the country would be given if the money had been lent free of interest, or if it had been invested in Government stock at a normal rate of interest. Patriotism at 5 per cent. on a gilt-edged security is open to a little suspicion. The transaction reminds us of Harry Lauder's comment on his investment of £50,000. After consideration he decided that it was the soundest investment in the country. Mr. Bonar Law hit the nail right on the head when he said it required little patriotism to invest spare money at 5 per cent., with the security of the British Government behind it. The three P's—Piety, Patriotism, and Profit run well together. In common decency the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the pious Mr. Lauder, should have declined more than 2½ per cent. interest on a loan for such a purpose. In a world of cant none is more detestable than that of patriotic sacrifice at 5 per cent.

Speaking at Boston, U.S.A., the Rev. Billy Sunday described man as a "dirty, stinking, rotten old adulterer." Billy forgot that man was made in the image of God.

A new book bears the title, *Bible Stories for Children*, and the author is a maiden lady. We wonder if she blushed when she transcribed and shortened the purple Old Testament stories.

"Lying in the East is an art more than a vice," says Sir W. B. Richmond. The Bible yarns prove the truth of this remark.

Lord Sandhurst, the Lord Chamberlain, has sanctioned the opening of a London theatre for soldiers and sailors

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on Sundays for free entertainments. The dear clergy will be in hysterics.

Another, of what the *Daily Telegraph* calls Germany's "blasphemous outbursts." The President of the Schleswig-Holstein Union of Agriculturists is reported as saying, "God has so ordered the world-harvest that it should be bad in order that England may be unable to feed herself." It would, of course, be inexcusably anti-British for God to do anything of the sort; and yet if there has been a bad harvest someone or something has been responsible for it. And if there is a divine ruler of the universe it is difficult to see what there is blasphemous as crediting him with a bad harvest. Man has done what *he* could to make it a good one, and we have no doubt that prayers have been offered to that end. If anybody puts forward a god for general acceptance, he ought to be shown to be doing something. And if he has nothing to do with such an important matter as the world's harvest, what is it that he does take an interest in? If the *Daily Telegraph* wishes to emphasize the fact that Herr Roesckl is talking nonsense, we quite agree with it. Only we observe it is *religious* nonsense; and so surely as a man begins to mix religion with his thinking he is certain to talk nonsense sooner or later.

"The mass of British workers find their thinking in the ordinary halfpenny papers," says Mr. H. G. Wells. In this connection it is amusing to recall Lord Salisbury's description of the "halfpenny press" as "edited by office boys for errand boys."

The *New York Tribune*, a staid and sober newspaper, had some startling headlines recently, which ran: "Chauncey M. Depew, 82, takes issue with David of Bible fame. Life's allotment of Three-Score Years and Ten all wrong," he says. In the following interview, Mr. Depew describes David's remarks on "the days of our years" as "distressingly poor so far as facts were concerned." David's dictum is funny when one remembers that the Bible says that Adam, Methuselah, and Noah each lived nine centuries, and Lamech was cut off at 700.

At Waterbury Conn., U.S.A., the Rev. Michael Mockus, a Unitarian minister, has been prosecuted for blasphemy. His offence is denying the truth of the statements that Adam and the whale eat, respectively, an apple and Jonah. The *New York Sun* pours ridicule on the prosecution, and asks why "musty statutes originating in the days of the witch-baiters" should be revived.

"Peace hath her victories no less than war," says Milton. Last year the boats of the National Lifeboat Institution saved no less than 1,185 lives; and 2,800 persons have been rescued since August, 1914. In affecting these rescues 21 lifeboatmen lost their lives.

That the bitterness engendered by a difference in religious opinion is often more superficial than real, is well illustrated by the latest story about the new Premier. Discussing the subject of religious dogma with a friend one day, Mr. Lloyd George said, "For some time a fierce controversy has raged in the Church to which I belong. It is on the question as to whether Baptism is celebrated 'in the name' or 'through the name.' I feel very strongly on the matter," continued Mr. George, "and I would willingly lay down my life for the side to which I belong, but—I forget which it is!" A fairly accurate summary of much present-day religious "thought."

The publication of the Allies' reply to the note of President Wilson has enabled a lot of Christians, who are at present more than usually filled with Christian love and charity, to denounce the Turk with all their might, Turkey is unprogressive, barbarous, cruel, etc., etc. We have no wish to stand between the Mohammedan and any legitimate condemnation of his rule in Europe or elsewhere, but it is as well to remember that this War, with all its horrors and brutalization, was not brought on Europe by a Mohammedan power, but by Christians. It is Christians who commenced it, it is Christians who continue it, and if Christians could make up their minds to peace the War would cease at once. And the Turk has so far proved himself one of the cleanest fighters of the War. All accounts agree upon that.

And when we are told of the unprogressive nature of Turkey, accompanied as it is by Christian digs at Mohammedanism as a rival religion, we beg to observe that the most unprogressive period in the history of Western Europe was experienced under Christian domination. It was Christianity, not Mohammedanism, which gave us the Dark and Middle Ages. And it was Mohammedan countries which kept the torch of learning aflame while Christian Europe was plunged in barbarism, and also provided the starting point for the re-birth of human learning. Civilization has to thank Mohammedanism for more than it has to thank Christianity. And when it comes to massacre and persecution, we venture to say that Christianity can take lessons in these things from no other religion in the world, At the game of persecution Christianity is supreme.

The Rev. Canon Winter, of Elland, Yorkshire, died suddenly whilst preaching at the local parish church. Had he been a Secularist lecturer, it would have been described as a judgment of Providence.

"We have thousands of our heroes wounded beyond repair, sent back to a hard, hard world, fed and fatted up with cigarettes, sentimental novels, and stupid songs. What equipment for real life!" Thus writes "A Sad Chaplain to the Forces" to the *Church Times*. The clergy see to it that they are "fed and fatted up" with something more substantial than "cigarettes, novels, and songs." Thirty-nine bishops share £180,700 annually.

A speaker at a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon exhorted his hearers to remember Emerson's words and "hitch their wagons to a star." The speaker omitted to add that Christianity was a falling star.

"Prayers that cure Pneumonia," is a *Daily Sketch* heading to the report of a Christian Science case in which the victim died from double bronchial pneumonia. We beg to warn our contemporary that this is rank blasphemy. If prayer can cure anything it can cure pneumonia. And we believe the evidence for prayer having cured pneumonia is as good as prayer having cured other complaints, or having effected anything in any direction. It is nonsense to say at a time when prayer is asserted to overcome the power of high explosive shells, that it cannot handle such a little thing as pneumonia. The *Daily Sketch* should cultivate a more robust faith Then anything would be possible.

The Vicar of St. John's, Stourbridge, writes in the parish magazine that he is quite sure good has resulted from the National Mission, "although the results are not very apparent." A good that is not very apparent is rather an indefinite thing to be thankful for, but if the vicar is content we won't complain.

FREE THE WOMAN.

Can man be free if woman be a slave?
Chain one who lives, and breathes this boundless air,
To the corruption of a closed grave!
Can they whose mates are beasts, condemned to bear
Scorn heavier far than toil or anguish, dare
To trample their oppressors? In their home
Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear
The shape of woman—hoary crime would come
Behind, and fraud rebuild religion's tottering dome.

—*Shelley*, "*Revolt of Islam*."

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 28, Swansea; February 4, Abertillery; February 11, Liverpool; February 25, Clapham; March 11 Birmingham; March 18, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 11, Walsall; March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.

FREETHINKER SUSTENTATION FUND.—C. S. Knight (Rhodesia), £2; Louis Levine, 5s. 6d.; J. Higgins, £1 10s. Per N. Courlander (East London, S.A.): A. Phillips, £1 1s.; T. A. Batten, £1 1s.; R. Alexander, £1 1s.; N. Courlander, £1 1s.; total, £4 4s.—The 10s. acknowledged as from F. W. S. (Portsmouth) should have read "F. W. L."

F. W. L.—Write Miss Vance, N. S. S. Office, who will send you the required information.

T. O'NEILL.—Thanks for citation from letter, which we shall be pleased to use next week.

H. IRVING.—Peccavi! We were quoting from memory only, and are glad to find that we did no wrong to the meaning of the message. Please send along the suggested article if it ever materializes.

W. SKEATS.—We quite willingly grant to the Bishop of London pre-eminence in the direction you indicate.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

W. WILMER.—Received, and will appear next week. Thanks.

J. DAVIES.—Mr. Lloyd has promised to call and see your friend.

C. S. KNIGHT (Livingstone).—We note your correction of our paragraph on labour in the Transvaal. We published a letter, on the lines of your communication, from Mr. T. W. Key, of Eastern Pondoland. We appreciate your good wishes.

J. HEWETT.—Pleased to hear from so old a Freethinker as yourself. If you have any difficulty in getting your paper, please let us have a postcard, and we will see that it is sent on from here.

T. MAY.—If you can see God's place in the War, you have a much keener vision than we possess. His place is certainly not at the Front. Your appeal for "a larger view of deity" strikes us as enlarged nonsense.

E. N.—Your parson friend deserved all he got. Whether he will appreciate it is quite another question.

H. LOMAX.—We are obliged for all you are doing to push the *Freethinker* in your locality.

CLIFFORD WESTON.—We quite appreciate your disgust after listening to the Bishop of Peterborough's sermon. If the War has been sent to bring us back to the Lord, the clergy should be the last ones to blame Germany. They ought, on the contrary, to thank the Kaiser as God's instrument and their best friend. As to the unity of Christendom, we expect to see that when Christians cease from troubling and the pious sink to rest. Ever since the Apostolic Age the Christians have provided the material for a fight, and we do not expect any change in this direction.

H. G. FARMER.—Pleased to hear from you. We are keeping quite well—perhaps, because we have so much to do we have no time to be otherwise. The pamphlet on Children and Cinemas is effective. Picture shows have, in our opinion, as much to do with an increase in juvenile depravity as have the rings round Saturn. Most people will not want to go further than the War atmosphere, and the absence of parental control due to fathers being in the Army and mothers out at work, for an explanation. But there is no accounting for cranks.

J. L.—We never set out to "please" readers. All we aimed at doing is to give a good Freethought journal week by week. And we hope that will please all worth bothering about.

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., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

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. Cohen lectures to-day (January 28) at Swansea. The meeting will be held in the Dockers' Hall, Elysium, High Street, at 6.30. Admission is by collection, but there are some reserved seats. Mr. B. Dupree, Siddall Buildings, 60 Alexandra Road, has the arrangements in hand, and he would be glad to hear from anyone who can lend him assistance in the conduct of the meeting.

Next Sunday (Feb. 4) Mr. Cohen lectures at Abertillery, afternoon and evening. Fuller information will be given next week.

Rev. P. Moss Weston, Naval Chaplain, Swansea Base, writes us from Swansea that he is opening a Reading and Rest Room for naval and military men, and wishes to provide the men with reading from all points of view. To that end he asks if we can supply him with a copy of the *Freethinker* weekly. Certainly we can, and we are pleased to meet with a clergyman who is desirous of placing all points of view before those for whom he is catering. We wish there were more of the same turn of mind.

Prose always tends to travel farther and farther away from poetry; but while it remains a living art, there is always an effort made by sincere and thoughtful writers to bring it nearer to divine poesy again. They are sick of the insipidity, the too easy music and emotion of sugary verse; just as real orators break away from the commonplaces of politicians and preachers. Mr. Eden Phillpotts, one of the select few of modern writers who commands attention by his work, is a prose writer who has always imparted the virtues of poetic imagery to his writing. It is, indeed, highly interesting to find how, after long mastery over his art, he turns more and more to the higher forms of literary expression, and writes with all the energy and force as if he were a young genius with worlds yet to conquer.

In his latest book, *The Girl and the Faun*, Illustrated by Frank Brangwyn (Palmer & Hayward, 1916, 6s.) Mr. Phillpotts has written an allegory which deserves a wide recognition, not only for the beauty of its language but for the charm of its appearance. Printed on fine paper with broad margins, with handsome designs on each page, and enriched with full-page coloured plates by Mr. Frank Brangwyn, the allegory satisfies completely the æsthetic senses of the reader. The story of the everlasting lover is exquisitely told. It might have been told under the blue Ionian skies in the days of old Romance, except that the author cannot forget all the hopes and fears of humanity. He keeps that sense of keen sympathy, and his intense love for his kind has imparted a lyrical tone to his story, and the reader has every reason to be grateful to him for so doing. There is a faith in humanity embedded in the book, and an implied rebuke to the faithless, though Mr. Phillpotts does not put it into so many words.

The suggestions of scenery, when the seasons sit on their throne regally, slightly touched as they are, have the true vision. They are part of the genius of the great writer, of the many-sided character whose self-revelation gives such extreme value to the book. With them we put the watchful eye for colour, the delight in music, the intense occupation with the play of life, the delicacy of artistry, and, above all, the love of mankind which we are made to feel through the story that is its channel. The volume is full of rich suggestive thought, and will be accepted with grateful admiration. Its publication proves that, even in these dark days literature is a great living possession. It will arouse a living interest, not a dumb and dull assent.

Mr. T. F. Palmer lectures this evening (Jan. 28), on "Man's Place in Nature" at the St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, Kentish Town Road. The lecture commences at 7.30, and will be followed by a discussion. Many of our readers who only know Mr. Palmer as a contributor to the *Freethinker*, will doubtless be anxious to make his acquaintance as a lecturer. They will find the acquaintance worth cultivating.

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The French Revolution.

I.—PRELIMINARY.

IF one asked what event, more than any other, marked the division between the old and the modern world, the truest reply, in the opinion of the present writer, would be, "The discovery of America and of the sea route to India." The second place—some would say the first—must undoubtedly be assigned to the French Revolution. The former event transferred the centre of commerce and civilization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic sea-board, and the preponderance of wealth and social importance from the feudal baron to the capitalist adventurer. The latter event marks the emergence of democracy as a living force in society, and the transference of the "rights of man" from the study to the market-place. The main thing to remember about it is that it is an event, not in French history only, but in world history, and that it is not yet finished.

The characteristic doctrine of the French Revolution, that of "liberty and equality," has been endlessly travestied and misrepresented by hostile writers, especially in England. These criticize it as though it meant that all men are equal in character or ability, and as though liberty meant nothing but "doing as you like with your own." The fact is that both terms, "liberty" and "equality," are useful chiefly in a negative way, as canons of criticism rather than as canons of construction. That "liberty" is to be used in this sense appears quite plainly from the opening of chapter I. of Rousseau's *Social Contract*. These words, as relevant to-day as in the eighteenth century, may serve as a suitable prologue to the present study:—

> Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. Many a one believes himself the master of others, and yet he is a greater slave than they. How has this change come about? I do not know. What can render it legitimate? I believe I can settle this question.

What Rousseau (who, remember, was the intellectual father of the Revolution) here undertakes is nothing less than a criticism of all authority. It is evident (though not so evident to Rousseau, perhaps, as to us to-day) that every kind of subjection of one human being to the will of another is here summoned to the bar of reason, to give an account of itself. Instead of, as previously, the assumption being made that "whatever is, is right," and that the innovator and the rebel are, *prima facie*, wrong, we are told that it is for those in authority, those who claim to impose their will on others, to show reason why. Unless they can show that their exercise of authority creates more liberty than it takes away, their authority stands condemned.

Take, again, the much-abused concept of equality. Everybody understands what is meant when we are told that, in England, we are "all equal before the law." (In point of fact, we are not, but for the present that may be passed over.) This means that, although men may differ in worth and in wit, one man is just as much bound as another to obey the law, and just as much entitled as another to the benefits it secures. What is even more important, however, than that men should be equal before the *law* is that they should be equal before the *legislator*. Once an unjust law is on the statute book, the most impartial and even-handed administration of it will, and must, lead to injustice. What Rousseau and the Revolutionists, therefore, meant by "equality" was equality, not only before the law, but before the legislator—the absence of legal privileges in taxation, in the administration of justice, in commerce, in the suffrage, or in religion. Rousseau thus expresses what he conceives to be the "social contract" implicit in a just society:—

> Each of us puts in common his person and his whole possessions under the supreme direction of the general will; and in return we receive every member as an indivisible part of the whole.

That is, as all have to obey the law, all should, as far as possible, have an equal voice in its making.

It is easy to show that, when Rousseau ceases to be critical and becomes constructive, he frequently falls into sophistry and error, and indeed re-admits through the back door a great deal of the tyranny he has expelled through the front. He leaves, apparently, endless loopholes for the tyranny of majorities. This arises from the fundamental mistake he made, which was to use a critical weapon as an instrument of construction. Plainly, to us, man is equally "in chains," under despotic or under democratic government. The "social contract," considered as a fact justifying the powers that be in the exercise of authority, is an obvious illusion. We are not parties to any such contract. None of us chose to be born, or to be born in the particular national unit that claims our allegiance. We are compulsory, not voluntary, members of it. Clearly, the Parliament of the United Kingdom, nay, the Congress of the United States and the Swiss Confederation, must stand at Rousseau's bar to give an account of themselves as much as any autocratic court of the eighteenth century. And the final justification of any government at the bar of humanity must be, not the sophistical "social contract" of Rousseau, but a proof that every one subject to it gains, by its maintenance, more liberty, more happiness, a greater range of opportunity, than he would gain by its subversion. It follows that it is the duty of every government to secure those conditions for its people, and that only so can it have a reasonable claim on their support.

In the eighteenth century this duty was only beginning to be realized. The human mind is so constituted that the most obvious truths are consciously grasped by it only under the pressure of material facts. To force the "rights of man" into the common consciousness, it was necessary that arbitrary government armed with the doctrine of the "divine right of kings," should run riot until it became positively unbearable. That is what happened under the Bourbon monarchy in France, under the Stuart monarchy in England. The kings of these dynasties, supported by the self-interest of ministers and courtiers and the slavish teaching of Catholic and Anglican ecclesiastics, claimed to govern by divine right, to owe no account of their actions to any earthly authority, to tax their subjects without the consent of their representatives, to prescribe to them their religion, and to punish resistance by the block, the gallows, the quartering knife, and the wheel. In England these pretensions led the philosopher, John Locke, to formulate the theory that kings reigned, not by divine right, but by contract, which really meant that the king was the servant of the nation, and could be deposed if he did not give satisfaction. This theory found expression, to some extent, in the Whig Revolution of 1688, when James II. was replaced by William of Orange. It must be remembered, however, that hardly anyone at that date had any notion of democracy, and that the Parliament which deposed James II. represented only the landowners and the merchant class, who were actuated by their own interests.

Locke's political philosophy was developed by the French philosophers of the eighteenth century, and especially by Rousseau. It found its second, and more pronounced, practical expression in the American Decla-

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ration of Independence, when the colonists, in revolt against being taxed by the British Parliament, declarep "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" to be the equal and inalienable rights of all men. The American Revolutionists, however, were more democratic in words than in deeds. Negro slaves were not included in the application of these "inalienable rights;" and to this day, despite Abraham Lincoln, the Declaration of Independence is a "scrap of paper" as far as the American negro is concerned.

This is merely one more illustration of the fact that men's consciousness of principles has generally been limited by their material interests. The English Revolutionists appealed to the "original contract between king and people" but took for granted that a Parliament elected by landowners and merchants represented the "people." The American Revolutionists affirmed that men were born "free and equal," and endowed with "inalienable rights" of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," but took care to apply these principles just as far as it suited them, and no further.

The French Revolution, in its inception, was hardly a more democratic movement than these. The members of the States-General, who were convoked by Louis XVI. in 1789 to get him out of his financial difficulties, had no intention (the overwhelming majority of them) of conferring political power upon the French people. As substantial middle-class men, they were annoyed at the exemption from taxation of the nobles and clergy, at their own exclusion from political power, and at the internal restrictions on trade and industry which survived as part of the dying feudal system. All that they wanted was to take over the reins of power into their own hands, make France a limited monarchy like England, and inaugurate the reign of *laissez faire*, according to then prevalent notions of political economy.

Accordingly, the first weeks of the French Revolution read like an ordinary bicker between an obstinate king and an obstinate Parliament. Even the "oath of the tennis court," by which the deputies, locked out of their hall by the king's orders, swore not to separate till they had given France a constitution; even Mirabeau's defiant challenge to the king to turn them out at the point of the bayonet, read more like a revised version of the dispute between Charles I. and the Long Parliament than like the birth of modern democracy. We feel that we are in the presence of a further stage in the old process, not the first stage in the new one. Had the Revolution taken place a century earlier, as the English Revolution did, there might have been little more in it than this.

But during the intervening century, the economic conditions of Western Europe had ripened. The Industrial Revolution was in full swing in England, and its results were beginning to be felt in France. In Paris, Lyons, and a few large towns, the old system of handicraft was giving place to wage-labour; to the old antagonism between the aristocracy and the middle class was added the new antagonism, as yet only fitfully felt, between employer and workman; and a large paper manufacturer, who had made some cynical remarks about the starvation of the poor, had had his works sacked by the crowd. The working-class looked to the newly convoked assembly to do something for *them*. And when the king and court summoned troops to the neighbourhood of Versailles to coerce the Assembly, and dismissed the popular minister, Necker, from office, the populace of Paris came to the rescue, ransacked the shops and the military depot of the Invalides for weapons, and, joined by some of the soldiers in the city, stormed the fortress of the Bastille (July 14, 1789). The king at once capitulated. From this moment absolutism was a lost cause; and many courtiers and nobles betook themselves in haste across the frontiers, to await the time when, as they hoped, the king should join them, and they should march on Paris at the head of an army to put down the Assembly and restore the old regime.

ROBERT ARCH.

(To be continued.)

Paulatim Retrorsum.

A Rejoinder.

WE have not had the fortune to meet with any formal reply to the indictment of the Council of University College School formulated in the *Freethinker* of Sept. 10 last; but in the Christmas issue of the *Gower*—the school magazine—there occurs, incidentally, in an article on the late Head-Master, a veiled pro-reply of a very feeble character. There is no reference to the *Freethinker*, and no pretence of any attempt to meet the counts in the indictment seriatim; but, since the article concludes with the words—"Is it to be *Paulatim Retrorsum?* Never! *Paulatim* onward and forward, ever in the vanguard of the advance? Aye"—there can be no doubt whatever as to what is intended. The writer of this article says that—

> realizing that true religion, *and that alone*, can supply the boy with a motive for being and doing right continuously, for working and living as a good citizen, they have *adapted a tradition* of U. C. S. to meet the *changed conditions* of time whilst *maintaining our great principles*. The peril here and now would appear to be not religious intolerance but irreligious apathy; not fanatical conviction but laxity of conviction. Hence the classes held on Saturday mornings; hence the prayers before morning-school.[1]

Now, of course, the writer is entitled to hold, as a personal opinion, that true religion alone can supply motives for doing right and acting as a good citizen. Certainly, facts may be hopelessly against him. The English leaders of Freethought have been men of singularly noble lives, shaming hundreds and thousands of their Christian fellows: nearly all the crimes committed during fifteen ghastly centuries of blood and cruelty and oppression of every kind have admittedly been committed by Christians—and by very sincere and earnest Christians, too, in countless cases: and Germany, which has brought the present catastrophe on civilization, is a country wherein so much stress is laid upon religion that moral instruction, divorced from religion, may not be given in its State-schools. Still, our quarrel with the writer is not that he, in common with the vulgar herd, holds a doctrine to which history on every page, and every man's daily experience, gives the lie—*our* rule of Freethought concedes him the fullest liberty to hold and promulgate any views, however erroneous we may deem them—but that he defends the imposition of this sectarian doctrine upon the one public school in which there was formerly perfect fair play and impartiality between the sons of men of all creeds and of none. Perhaps it is because he feels the hopeless weakness of his case that he makes no attempt to rebut our charges. He does not deny the departure from the glorious old tradition of University College School; he uses the euphemism of "adapting" the tradition, when he should have spoken of subverting it; and he appears to consider that utter surrender is synonymous with "maintenance" of "our great principles." Our charges and objections were set forth very clearly and very distinctly; but, instead of attempting to convict us of any error or

[1] Italics ours.

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misstatement, or any flaw in reasoning, he says, in effect, that, since boys cannot be good unless religious, the essential principles of a school, founded expressly to put Freethinkers and heretics and orthodox on a level, have been "maintained" by surrendering the chief distinctive trait of the school—which craven surrender he describes as an "adaptation" to "changed conditions." If a nunnery were turned into a brothel, or a temperance hotel into a gin-palace, the culprits responsible might assert with just equal accuracy and credit that they had "maintained the great principles" of their trust whilst "adapting its tradition" to "changed conditions." Moreover, in an avowed editorial on the first page of this *Gower*, smug satisfaction is expressed at the fact that the Bishop of Oxford visited the O.T.C. summer-camp to conduct a service; from which (and other indications) we must understand that, under the "changed conditions" and "adapted traditions," not only does true morality connote religion, but religion connotes the Established Church. Nonconformity and Unitarianism and Jewry contribute, we believe, a very large proportion of its alumni to University College School. We wish all these boys a series of very happy new years; and we congratulate their parents on the immense moral improvement that will doubtless be effected in their sons' characters and conduct as they are more and more put under the thumb of lord bishops, and more and more degraded to the position of boys in the old-fashioned unregenerate public schools.

To use the old figure of speech—it is all enough to make the great founders of University College School turn in their graves; but we fancy that they would writhe less uneasily if their treacherous successors had said boldly and honestly—"We have thrown the ancient principles and traditions overboard; and, having migrated from neutral and central Gower Street to a fashionable suburb, intend to propitiate Mammon by toadying to the Churches, and primarily to the most fashionable of them"—instead of proclaiming that, in permitting all this apostasy, they are "maintaining the principles" and "adapting the traditions"!

However, we attacked the Council of Governors, and the Council alone, for this great betrayal. The Council has, we believe, nothing to do with the *Gower*, which is managed by the boys, with some assistance from one or two masters; and our real quarrel is with the Council. Is there not in that Council even one man with enough courage to come out into the open, to answer our arguments and objections—if they can be answered—and to enter a really official apology and defence for perverting *Paulatim* into *Paulatim Retrorsum?* We feel sure that the *Freethinker* would hospitably open its columns to him, so that, where the Council was attacked, there too it might be defended. If such champion take his courage in both hands, and essay to defend himself and his colleagues, will he also explain why the *Gower*, in describing the Speech-day of last July, imitated the local paper quoted in our former article by omitting to record the striking fact that the proceedings ended with a hymn to "God, the strength of those that war"? The absolute silence maintained in print about this striking feature in the "adaptation of the tradition" to "changed conditions" seems too significant to be accidental. Frankly, we believe that a carefully engineered scheme for betraying and subverting the principles and traditions of University College School was worked out by someone years ago that it is being put into practice little by little; but that the conspirators are in wholesome dread of going too quickly and of angering part of the clientele of the school by too great a retrogression at one time; and we suspect that, having once got a hymn sung, and so set up a precedent, they wish nothing more to be said about it until the next Speech-day. We fear, however, that the backsliding has by no means carried the school to the destined bottom of the *descensus Averni;* and we have a shrewd suspicion that, within a very few years, a Lord Bishop may be trotted out to give away the prizes and to bestow an episcopal benediction upon whatever may then remain of the mixed throng of sons of Catholics, Anglicans, Nonconformists, Unitarians, Jews, and Freethinkers, whom it has hitherto been the peculiar glory of University College School to gather together on neutral ground under its all-comprehensive roof. We have the assurance beforehand, however, that then we shall see the triumph, not of *Paulatim Retrorsum*, but of "*Paulatim* onward and forward, ever in the vanguard of the advance." *Veris dis aliter visum!*

MATHEMATICUS.

Christian Susceptibilities.

IF every heterodox writer and speaker were to accede to the demands of Christian believers, the final result would be that neither would again wield his pen nor open his mouth. The Christian critic cannot afford to ignore the works of such eminent figures in the literary world as Thomas Hardy and George Moore. But with a fanatical gracelessness, so to speak, he in the end finds the former to be merely a "sort of village Atheist brooding over the village idiot"; and the latter, in his most recent book, *The Brook Kerith*, has, according to a Christian reviewer, put upon the believer in Christianity "an affront past excuse and forgiveness." Mr. Moore's "peculiar vandalism" is "bitterly resented." The forgiving spirit of the "Liberal" modern Christian does not attain to the standard set up in the teaching of Jesus. This by the way.

What would be the logical result of considering *every* Christian's susceptibilities before any secular reform was embarked upon? We have only to look at history to find the answer. The reform would never be started at all. "Mimnermus" recently gave us an instructive indictment of the English Bishops, containing a list of reforms which the majority of them opposed. Let us particularize a little. If we gave way to the demands of one large section of Christians, we should totally suppress public-houses. If we gave way to the demands of another, we should repeal the Married Women's Property Acts, re-establish marriage wholly as a sacrament of the Established Church, and deprive it wholly of the character of a social or civil contract. If we obeyed the dictates of another section of believers, we should reimpose the taxes upon knowledge and close the doors of the seats of learning against all who could not comply with religious tests. Pandering to the susceptibilities of Christians means retrogression, not progress. It is the clear teaching of history that the vast majority of social reformers and social regenerators in all ages have been infidels.

The claim of the Christian believer to be protected against "affronts" is based upon the narrowest and most insolent form of bigotry. The Freethinker definitely declines to limit the operations of his mental faculties. He is not to be turned back by the warning-post inscribed, "Thus far, and no farther." He denies no man the right to believe what he likes, and to propagate his belief, whatever susceptibilities may be offended; but he demands, and insists on having, no less right for himself. Where the Christian believer profoundly errs is in associating Truth with Custom, Tradition, Authority, and Dogma. The Freethinker's position is that Truth's only suitable concomitant and best ally is Freedom of Thought and Speech, and of action which is not anti-social in character. "The Truth shall make

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you *free!*" And Truth to him is far greater and more precious than any creed. The search for and the pursuit after Truth demands all the diligence of man; but it also demands that, in that search and pursuit, man shall not be trammelled or shackled by any preconceptions, however sanctified, however antiquated, however revered by majorities. Majorities may not always bewrong; they are not always right.

But, again, the Christian believer is not obliged to read the naughty pages of the books written by unbelieving authors. Why should he risk disturbing the placid equanimity of his faith or arousing his temper? Publicans do not compel men by physical force to enter their premises, and consume ardent liquors. But the Christian seems to long for a chance to throw mud at big Atheists whom he cannot boycott. He looks for "trouble," and is a "bhoy" for cutting up rough when he finds it. He "asks for it," and when he gets the worst of it, like a petted, spoiled child, he passionately kicks out at the unbeliever. Does Mr. Moore realize what pain he has caused by his wicked "affront" and by his "peculiar vandalism"?

Christian believers conveniently ignore the sufferings, physical and mental, inflicted by outstanding figures in the Church upon heretics in all ages, far outweighing in cruelty the effect of criticisms upon the puling, whining, childish type of mind evolved by Christian teaching. The Christian believer can as easily stay the present revolution of *thought* which is in progress as Mrs. Partington could keep back the Atlantic with her mop.

IGNOTUS.

The Right to Affirm.

By the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888 affirmation may take the place of an oath in courts of law and in all other places where the taking of an oath is necessary.

Affirmation may be claimed on one of two grounds, (1) On the ground of having no religious belief, (2) on the ground of an oath being contrary to one's religious belief.

A judge or other official may ask on what ground affirmation is claimed, but no further question is warranted, and all such additional questions should be respectfully and firmly declined.

In all cases where any trouble or difficulty occurs it would be well to inform us of the circumstances at once.

Correspondence.

THE COMPETITION OF THE FUTURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your interesting reference to the book *Eclipse or Empire*, in the *Freethinker* for December 17, you suggest that its authors do not realize that an empire may flourish economically as against other empires, and yet have a large population living in anything but prosperous conditions; and, secondly, that the attempt to develop our industries to the fullest extent must eventually lead to war with rival nations.

The first of these propositions is, I think, a misunderstanding of our meaning; the second, I hope and believe, is altogether ill-founded.

It is, of course, true that empires have existed in the past which have combined great commercial and industrial prosperity with slavery, with serfdom, with all the miseries of the cheap labour system. Personally, I doubt whether this form of State can survive in the future. But, in any case, it is not the ideal suggested in *Eclipse or Empire*,

We have urged our countrymen to brace themselves to recover their position as the first industrial nation of the world by the adoption of high production. The benefits claimed for the high production system, to summarize them very shortly, are (1) for the employer, high profits; (2) for the employee, high wages and shorter hours; (3) for the community generally, the incalculable advantages of efficient industries. This system has been tried in America, and the results are on record. "The American working man," says Mr. E. W. Scripps, an American business man who knows this country well, "is not only far better nurtured and nourished, but he is better housed and clothed, and his children are far more generally, and perhaps far better, educated than those of the English working class." But it is not necessary to go so far afield. High production is on trial in England at this moment. Germany is forcing us to move industrially along the path urged in *Eclipse or Empire*. With every allowance for the exceptional factors in the situation, can it be said honestly that the effort to increase our production has increased our poor? Is not the reverse, or the contrary, obviously and even startlingly true?

But, you say, our too great prosperity will excite the jealousy and hatred of foreign nations. Why should it do this? Why should it do anything but stimulate to a generous and wholly beneficial emulation? We are not asking our people to steal their neighbours' trade; we are asking them merely to develop their own resources, convinced, as you justly say, that "in our Empire there are almost unlimited sources of materials for development." Of course, so long as there are States like Germany, clinging to the old militarist ideas of the past, the sight of commercial prosperity will no doubt continue to excite their cupidity.

But is it certain that these States and these ideas will continue? Is it not fairly certain, on the other hand, that this War marks the beginning of the end of them, and that the competition of the future will be commercial, and not military? Competition, of course, there must be. It is an absolute condition of evolutionary life as we know it; but I think myself that the mass of evidence, broadly regarded, points to the gradual elimination of the more brutal and savage features of the struggle. There may be occasional "throw-backs," but they do not defeat the ultimate tendency. Not to believe this is, it seems to me, to despair of humanity; and it is because I do believe it, and because I think that high production, intelligently directed, will be a very important factor in the process, that I am concerned for its recognition and adoption in this country.

S. TURNER, Jun.

WAS NAPOLEON A FREETHINKER?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I hope you will not think I flatter you if I say that there is not one of your writers whom I read with more profit and pleasure than "Mimnermus." In my pious, or semi-pious, girlhood I used to admire, from afar off, the literary splendour of "Claudius Clear." Now, although I disagree with that writer in religious matters, I am still inclined to agree with one of his admirers, who tells us that in literary criticism "Claudius" is the compeer of Hazlitt and Lamb. It is therefore a compliment to "Mimnermus" when I say that he reminds me of "Claudius Clear." They have both the same gifts of splendid rhetoric and emotional unction; their tastes in literature are much the same, "Mimnermus" admiring, let me say, the unsophisticated and tuneful muse of George Bedborough, and "Claudius" the divine lyrics of the American laureate Ella Whilcox. If I had the space I could work out this parallel more closely.

My point, however, in writing you is not to indicate the good qualities of "Mimnermus," which are obvious enough, but to put my finger on the weak spot. The foible of my Christian master in letters was an amusing one of claiming an intimate acquaintance with great men. He is probably the Scots journalist of whom an eminent literary man wrote: "I did not know him half so well as he knew me." The foible of my Freethought master is a more violent one; he acts on the Christian injunction, "Compel them to come in." Every man of eminence is pitched neck and crop into the fold of Freethought. In his pleasant article on Mr. J. M. Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers* he tells us that Napoleon ("The Little Corsican," of course) has his place in Mr.

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Wheeler's book. If he has—and I don't doubt for a moment that "Mimnermus" is right—he must be in the wrong place, for I cannot find his name where it ought to be.

Now, if Mr. Wheeler has left him to the Christians, he probably did it for a good reason. Napoleon was always pious—conventionally pious, I mean. We are told that he despised Atheists and women who did not pray. M. Anatole France says somewhere that when Napoleon talks of God and the soul, he seems like a good little schoolboy of fourteen. He tells us that Napoleon never grew; that he had no inner life; that concerning life in society he held about the same opinions as one of his Grenadiers; that in his writings and speeches there is not a single trace of any speculative genius. In fine, that it was not a Freethinker who kicked Volney in the stomach.

MINNIE SPENCER.

IN CASE OF NEED.

The man who had his coffin painted a fiery red, and kept it for two whole years at his front door, had evidently a very clear idea of where he was going when he had departed from this world. He is not the only man, however, who kept Hades in view so continually. It is related of the late Marquess of Anglesey that when he married and settled down in life, the many sins of his past youth troubled him not a little. There was a slight fire at the castle one night, and orders were afterwards given that hand grenades should be placed in every room, which were faithfully carried out. Some dozens of these fire-extinguishers were left over, however, there being no place for them, and the butler approached his master as to their destination. "You'd better put them in my coffin," replied his lordship gravely.

THE CLERGY AND LITERATURE.

Shortly before the final dissolution of the Roman Empire, the literature of Europe fell into the hands of the clergy, who, taken as a body, have always looked on it as their duty to enforce belief, rather than encourage inquiry.—*Buckle, "History of Civilization in England."*

RELIGION AND ART.

For eighteen hundred years religion, when it has been strong enough, has persecuted or starved the arts. At times, when it has grown shallow, it has allowed a thin, subservient art to flourish beneath it; an art that, ostensibly educating men to be in some way useful for this life or the next, couldn't help treating them, for a stolen moment, as ends.....But, in general, the arts have been kept pretty well under, especially the arts of the theatre creeping slowly out when religion has slept, as in the eighteenth century, or sometimes liberated by such splendid bursts of irreligion as produced the Elizabethan drama in England.—*Rupert Brooke, "John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama."*

ITALY AND THE PAPACY.

It was not the Papacy which made Italy great; the Papacy has always stood for division; it has consistently been Italy's internal foe. Those who caused Italy to flourish, to be respected, admired, loved; who enabled Italian civilization to exercise its genial influence in all parts of the world were her artists, who also were thinkers, and may well rank as heroes—heroes who embodied her true ideals; artists, thinkers, heroes, all of whom had this in common, that they elected to gather the forbidden fruit of knowledge. These it is who made Italy great.—*Jacob Molescott.*

THE POWER OF THOUGHT.

Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth—more than ruin, more even than death. Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible; thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions, and comfortable habits; thought is anarchic and lawless, indifferent to authority..... Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. It sees man, a feeble speck, surrounded by unfathomable depths of silence; yet it bears itself proudly, as unmoved as if it were lord of the universe. Thought is great, and swift, and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man.—*Bertrand Russell, "Principles of Social Reconstruction."*

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.

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INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "Man's Place in Nature." Introduced by T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, F. A. Davies, "The Religion of Shakespeare."

MR. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Feb. 1, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Kells; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Beale, "Omnipresence"; 6.30, Messrs. Saphin and Dales.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate); 6.30, Concert.

SWANSEA (Dockers' Hall, "Elysium," High Street): 6.30, C. Cohen, "Can We Have Morality Without Religion?"

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Views and Opinions.

Mr. Bottomley and Immortality.

Soon after the opening of the War, Mr. Bottomley discovered God. How he did it, no one knows; so it is impossible for anyone to reach the same goal by the same path. But he did it. With the utmost solemnity —real or assumed—he announced his belief in Deity; and while the Freethinking world, instead of being riven to its foundations by so notable a conversion, went on its way with a smile, the religious world treated it with the most supreme indifference. Perhaps it was modesty which prevented it blazoning so noteworthy an addition to its ranks. And now, probably as a slight relaxation from his labours of advising—or is it commanding?—the Government, directing the public, and promulgating a new prophecy every month about the War, Mr. Bottomley turns to enlighten the readers of the *Royal Magazine* on the question of a future life. And on that topic we should be the last to deny that Mr. Bottomley is as well informed as any person on the planet. It is a subject on which the fool apes the air of the philosopher, and on which the philosopher only too often plays the part of a fool.

* * *

The Two Bottomleys.

It is, we confess, difficult to take Mr. Bottomley seriously in his ante-War guise as a philosopher; but we will do our best. This difficulty is increased by the fact that there appears to be *two* Mr. Bottomleys in this article of three pages. The old Mr. Bottomley is there at the beginning and the end. But in between, his body appears to have been taken possession of by someone else, who writes in a quite different style, and with a quite different tone. Spiritualists would explain it as a case of mediumistic "control." Psychologists might say it was a case of disassociation. But whatever it is, everyone with an eye for different styles of writing will see it is there. Mr. Bottomley—the old one—is quite there with a display of questions that are more or less artificial, and of answers that are more or less untrue. The other Mr. Bottomley is chiefly remarkable for an attempted philosophic or scientific theory of survival that strongly reminds one of the more ignorant type of spiritualistic quack. There is much talk of "Life Force" and "Vital Force" (Oh, ye gods!) and, of course, Karma and "Divine Purpose"; and it all might as fitly serve as a literary advertisement for somebody's pills as for a theory of immortality. The single-personality Mr. Bottomley is amusing enough; he of the dual personality is a constant scream.

* * *

Do People Trouble About Immortality?

But we promised to be serious; and to this end we will deal with Mr. Bottomley as a constant, not as a variable. "The perennial cry of a tortured humanity," says Mr. Bottomley, is, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Now, if Mr. Bottomley means that this has been asked in all ages, he is quite right; so right, if we may use the expression, that it was hardly worth the saying. But if he means that humanity is continuously worrying its head about the question, and bombarding the high heavens with its cries for an answer, then we say quite flatly, it is not true. The vast majority of mankind, even though they profess a formal belief in immortality, never trouble their heads about it. It is a constant complaint of the clergy of all denominations that people will not concern themselves about it; that they live as though there were no after-life, no Judgment Day, no great beyond. And the experience of everyone will bear this out. In ordinary conversation it is a subject seldom mooted. Death is as common as the weather—some sort of weather; and yet, while the one is a regular topic of conversation, the question of whether man survives death is generally ignored. The picture of a world worrying its head about immortality will not do. It is a pulpit-engineered superstition. It is about as near the facts of the case as is the advertising picture of thousands of people struggling to get into a chemist's shop to buy Blank's pills.

* * *

Life as Adjustment.

Life would be intolerable were it otherwise. Conceive a world of human beings obsessed with this question of immortality; you will have a world so weakened, so enervated that it would be useless for lofty deeds or useful purposes. An individual may be obsessed with this belief, a nation may be, but not for long. And in either case utility is weakened and sanity threatened. For a time Europe was smitten with this disease, and the consequence was the Monasticism of the Thebaid. Men and women forsook healthy human responsibilities; they strove to be like the angels, and became worse than the beasts. And the recovery of Europe began when it shook off that nightmare, and allowed the world of light and beauty, of sorrow and wrong, of loving and hating, fighting and striving, flesh-and-blood men and women, to occupy their attention. Mr. Bottomley has much to say of our gallant soldiers who are laying down their lives, etc. Well, look at them. Are they troubling about a future life? Not a bit of it. It is the strong man in the full flush of his manhood who throws away his life without a thought.

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It is the weak and helpless old one who is more apt to place an exaggerated value upon his existence. Again the same lesson. Obsession with a future life as the equivalent of enervation. And that is what every evolutionist would expect. Life is developed in relation to the needs of life here, not with regard to some hereafter. Man's real and permanent hopes and fears and aspirations are bounded by the grave, and it is only a false and artificial philosophy that sees their application or realization in a world beyond the tomb.

* * *

Sentimentalism or Sentiment?

Mr. Bottomley does not, of course, forget the emotional string. His question, "Are our dear war heroes really dead?" is not, he assures us, the barren speculation of theology; it springs from widows in their loneliness, lovers robbed of joy and promise, etc. Really, we have heard all this before, and from the professors of this same "barren theology." And we are not more impressed by it in the pages of the *Royal* than in the thousands of sermons we have glanced through in the course of our life. Again, let us appeal to experience. In how many cases do people who have lost one dear to them—for death, one must remind Mr. Bottomley, is not peculiar to the War—in how many cases do these turn to the belief in immortality for comfort? In how many cases does it give comfort? We do not deny the use of formal phrases, phrases that mean no more than the "Yours obediently" of an angry letter, on such occasions. But look at the cases around us. When the news comes alike to believer and non-believer of a death on the battlefield, can we detect less grief in the one case than in the other? How many people really find consolation in this direction? Do let us quit phrases and come to facts. Sorrow for our dead, its depth and duration, is a question of character, of temperament; it has very little to do with theological speculations.

* * *

An Absurd Theory.

We have but little space in which to deal with Mr. Bottomley's (the other Mr. Bottomley's) amusingly inconsequential theory of immortality. He has long been convinced that the universe is permeated by "an ocean of vital force," ever "flying in and out (at birth or death) of every living being." When a negro child is born, it attracts a little of this vital force, but the negro is "coarse material," and so, when the negro dies, the "vital force" flies back unaltered. But when a white child is born, it takes "a larger quantity of the Vital Fluid," and it is either refined or degraded in consequence. Then when it is elevated enough, "it is of too high a quality to blend with the common ocean, and roams about in search of an Affinity—which it finds in those who were dearest to it in life," and thus, concludes the first Mr. Bottomley, coming into his own at the end of the article, with a deadly raid on capital letters, we shall have, "After Armageddon—Peace. After Sacrifice and Suffering—Exaltation. After Death—for the Ordinary—Oblivion; for the Wicked—Unrest; for the Noble and the Worthy—Life, Glory, and Re-Union everlasting"—and a largely increased weekly sale of *John Bull*. That is Mr. Bottomley's contribution to the theory of immortality. Some of Mr. Bottomley's friends would, he says, like to see him in the Church. Well, we have been fighting the Churches all our life, so we are quite careless what happens to them.

* * *

The Exploitation of Grief.

Although we find it difficult to take Mr. Bottomley seriously, there *is* a serious side to this exploitation of a widespread sorrow in favour of this or that superstition. Over and over again the press has dwelt upon the way in which fortunetellers, crystal gazers, and the like are earning money out of the anxieties of credulous men and women anxious for news of those that belong to them. The exploitation of human sorrow in the interests of unfounded belief is, to us, equally detestable. We believe that real sorrow in the presence of death is of too sacred a character to be thus idly played with. Whatever help or sympathy it is within our power to offer—whether of hand or heart, should be given freely and without stint. But to play upon the grief-stricken mind in the way it is played upon is one of the most detestable consequences of the prevalence of superstition. Mr. Bottomley is not alone in this. All the Churches are with him. Nay, without them he would not be possible. It is they who prepared the ground, and sowed the seed, he is only reaping a little of the harvest. And one of the penalties the race must pay for its long servitude to superstition is that of falling an easy prey to such as care to play upon their unthinking susceptibilities.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Christ-Myth.

THE minister-elect of the City Temple, Dr. J. Fort Newton, whose sermons are published weekly in the *Christian Commonwealth*, repeats the old lie that when Christ came "the world was rushing into a dark night," that "humanity was almost hopeless," and that "weariness and lust made life a hell in that hard old Roman world." Dr. Newton cannot be ignorant of the fact that the Augustan Age was one of the purest, healthiest, and happiest ages in the world's history. On the whole, no Christian age is worthy of comparison with it. It is true that "Rome herself was doomed"; but when Christianity arrived it did not avert that doom, but, rather, accelerated its fulfilment. For a thousand years, each Christian century was worse than its predecessor, the tenth being the darkest and most degraded mankind had ever seen. Dr. Newton is discreetly silent on the subject of Christian history, though he has the temerity to assert that we ourselves are the proof of the truth of the Christian faith. He tells us that Paul, "the intrepid old prisoner, looked beyond the valley of the shadow and saw the sunlight shining on the hills," and that "in the swift and gentle years of the life of Jesus he discovered a redeeming force destined to reshape the crumbling world and slowly lift mankind from the animal to the angel shape." That Paul was mistaken was demonstrated by the character of his own converts, of multitudes of whom he was heartily ashamed. The Ages of Faith are known as Dark Ages, and Dr. Newton admits that after nineteen Christian centuries "a new Dark Age seems to be settling down upon us." Yet he assures us that the Christian faith is "equal to a world-tragedy," despite the fact that its history proves the opposite. He thanks God that this mighty faith still lives, "in these strange and troubled times." Does he not realize that his statements are essentially self-contradictory? With the same breath he praises the faith and denounces the times, which the faith has signally failed to redeem. He does, indeed, declare that there are many mysteries still unsolved. "Why all the woes of the world, its filthy lust, its brutal tyranny, its turbid ebb and flow of misery? If God is good, why is man so often vile?" To these and other similar questions he furnishes no answer, but claims that "Love lies at the heart of things, a Love profounder than sin, deeper than death."

Now, what is the use of believing in the existence of a love that is profounder than sin and deeper than death when both sin and death are still triumphant? How

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can Christianity be equal to a world-tragedy when that tragedy is still unrelieved? Emotional comfort may be derived from the lines:—

> Ah, never sank a sinner so low
> But God's paternal hand could deeper go
> His perishing child to save;

but anyone who looks the world in the face knows how utterly false they are. Dr. Matheson sang:—

> O love that wilt not let me go,

but, as a matter of fact, there is no such love at the heart of things. If there is a God, his love lets millions of people go. It is a notorious fact that unbelievers are never touched by it at all. Neither God's love nor God's wrath troubles them in the least. Though he is their loving Heavenly Father, he leaves them severely alone. Dr. Newton says:—

> At least God is no far-off Looker-on, judging men harshly, condemning them arbitrarily, but a mighty presence yearning over them, within them, wounded by their transgressions, bearing their woe.

The reverend gentleman offers no proof of the truth of these words except that which he finds in the life and character of Jesus Christ, or in his spirit, which fills the world.

> Deny how you will, doubt this item and that of his story, his spirit is here, and here to stay. He is inevitably present and inevitably influential. "I am the light of the world," he said—and the sun is up. It shines on farm and factory, on palace and hut, on peace and war, slowly changing winter into summer. None can stay it. His spirit is with us, whether we obey it or not.....His life, his character, his vision of God—these are the ultimate, ineffable, unspeakable beauties and the sublimest possessions of humanity.

Of that extract all we can say is that it is not true. There is no such spirit inevitably present and inevitably influential in the world. The only Christian spirit known to us is the spirit that dominates those who profess Christ's name; and it is very seldom that we can accurately define it as pure and beautiful. Indeed, it is often spiteful, jealous, malicious, bitter, and cruel. The Christ of the Churches is a figment of the imagination, and of necessity he can accomplish nothing. Like God, he has no dealings with unbelievers. He is called the Saviour of the world, whose heart is a shoreless ocean of love; but he never even attempts to save unbelievers. They never hear his voice, saying, "Come unto me and rest." He treats them as if he did not exist at all; and they are fully justified in positively denying his existence. His disciples are continually singing:—

> Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
> Doth his successive journeys run,

but very few of them verily believe that he shall. Nothing is easier than to say: "He will yet have his way with this hard world to the confounding of all injustice, all unkindness," but the pulpit has been repeating that promise for two thousand years, and it is no nearer fulfilment now than it was at the beginning.

The powerlessness of Christ is demonstrated every day, and were it not for the ministrations of the pulpit his very name would quickly vanish. The supreme business of the clergy is to create faith in him, and, having produced it, to keep it alive. Belief in him does not spring up instinctively, and its constant tendency is to die out, as the preachers very well know. If the Church were annihilated, Christ would inevitably cease to be. The clergy themselves admit that except through his human instruments he can do nothing. "For some mysterious reason," they proudly aver, "he has ordained to do his work only through us. He could easily do without us altogether; but in perfect wisdom he has graciously chosen us as channels through which his redeeming love performs its saving miracles." The truth is that Christ is a creation of the Church, and that apart from the Church he does not exist. The Church is founded upon a lie, and it is by means of that lie that it thrives. Its proud association with the supernatural is the biggest humbug in the Universe. Falsehood may be written in fiery letters across all its claims. All its so-called treasures are myths, of which the world is at last getting tired. The Christ-myth is losing ground, and, as a result, Man is slowly coming into his kingdom. At last "the lovesong of earth" is already resounding "through the wind of her wings"—

> Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things.

J. T. LLOYD

The Poet of Humanity.

> Sun-treader, life and light be thine for ever!
> —*Robert Browning.*

> The drowning of Shelley on that fatal July day in 1822 was, in all probability, the heaviest loss that English literature has ever sustained.—*G. W. Foote.*

THOUGH the newspapers be full of tumult, there is always a paragraph or so into which the meditative reader may turn aside, as into a quieter place. In one of these paragraphs there is a somewhat lengthy notice given to a great English poet, who, when alive, would have been astonished at so remarkable a display of publicity. "Hushed is the harp, the minstrel gone," but the spell holds. The name of Percy Bysshe Shelley still carries far. Those Continental critics who keep their fathers' excellent tastes in poetry know it well enough. In the New World it is known as a most famous name. As for English folk, it dwarfs for us most of the nineteenth century writers, although they are some of the most considerable in our literature.

The paragraph states that nineteen Shelley letters, and one hundred and thirty of the poet's cheques have been discovered. The original owner was manager for Brooks' Bank, in Chancery Lane, London, before that bank was taken over by another firm. The letters are business communications to the bank, and, whilst they contain no remarks on life, art, or literature, have an extreme value, for they reveal Shelley's boundless generosity. In one he sends a cheque for £150 to his friend, Leigh Hunt; and among other persons to whom he gave or lent, money were Thomas Love Peacock, Horace Smith, Claire Clairmont, and William Godwin. Indeed, Shelley was always giving, or lending, money, and it is very doubtful if he ever got repaid.

The great poet died so long ago that one would have thought that the facts concerning his life were well known to every lover of literature. Yet Christian writers have ever been loth to admit Shelley's Freethought, and his very virtues have been treated with the scantest courtesy, and his action presented in the worst possible light. Great, noble, and beautiful qualities met in this poet of poets. Splendid as his life-work was, he, the man, was greater and rarer. To the world he presented the spectacle of a man passionate for truth, and unreservedly obedient to the right as he saw it. He might have lived a life of ease and indulgence. The narrow, aristocratic circle into which he was born would have honoured him for it, but he thought continually of other and higher matters. His antagonisms to tyranny, religion, and custom seemed the merest midsummer madness in the son of a wealthy nobleman of many acres. Society denounced him, for it had long agreed that all reform was criminal. In such cases, indeed.—

> Were it not better done as others use,
> To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
> Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair.

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Yet, simply because Shelley was an Atheist, Christians insinuate that the great poet was a bad and vicious man. Thus they cast libellous dust in the eyes of the unthinking public, and incapacitate them from seeing the real facts of the case. Incidentally, they discredit the cause to which Shelley dedicated his life.

That Shelley was a humanitarian is amply proved. To help the needy and to relieve the sick seemed to him a simple duty, which he carried out cheerfully. He inquired personally into the circumstances of his charities, visited the sick in their homes, and kept a list of poor persons whom he assisted. At Marlow he suffered from an acute ophthalmia, contracted whilst visiting the poor, afflicted lace-makers in their cottages. Leigh Hunt has told us that Shelley, finding a woman ill on Hampstead Heath, carried her from door to door in the vain hopes of meeting with a person as charitable as himself, until he had to lodge the poor creature with some personal friends. Shelley's purse was always open to his friends. Peacock received from him an annual allowance of £100, and he discharged debts of Godwin amounting to thousands of pounds. So practical was Shelley in his philanthropy that he even went to the length of attending a London hospital, in order to acquire medical knowledge that should prove of service to the poor he visited. When his friend, Captain Medwin, was ill for six weeks, Shelley was by his bedside the whole time, applying leeches, administering medicines, and tending him like a brother. Without a murmur, without ostentation, this heir to one of the richest noblemen of England illustrated by his own conduct those principles of Freethought and Democracy which formed his ethical and political creed. Byron, who held Charles the Second's cynical view of mankind, acknowledged Shelley to be the best and purest-minded man he had ever met. Captain Trelawny, who knew Shelley very intimately in his later life, admitted that the Atheist poet "loved everything better than himself."

Christians have read the basest and meanest motives into Shelley's relations with his first wife. It does not matter to them that Shelley's relations with Harriet are still a most perplexing problem, or that when they parted she and the children were well provided for. Indeed, Harriet's death, over two years afterwards, had nothing to do with Shelley's so-called "desertion." Shelley was but a boy when he married, and it was the very chivalry of Shelley's nature that led him into so imprudent a step.

Dead at twenty-nine, posterity has but the outcome of Shelley's cruder years; and the assurance of something nobler and wiser was stopped by the tragedy of his untimely end. It is precisely because his heart was aflame with human sympathy that his poems have vital and permanent effect on succeeding generations. Shelley devoted himself to the idea of the perfectibility of human nature, and it is the mainspring of his inspiration and his poetry. In his finest verse its expression glows with the solemn and majestic inspiration of prophecy. He dazzles us with glories beyond our reach, making us yearn for that which seems unattainable, and we are entranced with his dream-pictures of an emancipated humanity. What Shelley might have been we cannot conceive; but, in his short life, he made good the splendid boast of a later poet concerning Liberty:—

> I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion,
> Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy breath;
> The graves of souls born worms and creeds grown carrion,
> Thy blast of judgment fills with fires of death.
>
> Thou art the player whose organ-keys are thunders,
> And I beneath thy foot the pedal prest;
> Thou art the ray whereat the rent night sunders,
> And I the cloudlet borne upon thy breast.
>
> I shall burn up before thee, pass and perish,
> As haze in sunrise on the red sea-line;
> But thou from dawn to sunsetting shall cherish
> The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine.

MIMNERMUS.

The Suicide of Mr. Hilaire Belloc.

LET me at once say that I would not have the reader imagine that Mr. Belloc has committed suicide in the more obvious sense of the word. Even his enemies—and, like every man who is worth his salt, he has many, and some of them very bitter ones—would be sorry to see him come to any bodily harm, and so deprive them of the malign pleasure of assisting at his intellectual downfall. What I would call attention to by my screaming scare-heading is that he has made another attempt, and this time a more successful one, to commit mental suicide. To be quite frank, I cannot say that I am sorry to see him come to intellectual grief. There is always, as Rochefoucauld says, a bitter-sweet touch of malign pleasure in seeing others suffer; although many of us are inclined to ignore this unpalatable truth, and pride ourselves on the humanity with which we regret the errors of our opponents. Yet I must confess to having much the same kind of mixed admiration for Mr. Belloc as I have for Mr. Chesterton. I am not certain that I should think more of them if they happened to be on my side of the theological fence. A larger dose of Rationalism would, perhaps, make them more intellectually serious; but it is not unlikely that they would show signs of the ponderous dullness, the mental inelasticity, which some of us find inseparable from ethical Rationalism.

Membership of the Catholic Church has, I think, some indubitable advantages. When you can have all your philosophical and moral problems solved for you by the august authority of secular wisdom, you have naturally more time to cultivate the senses and the emotions. I say quite seriously that if the Freethinker had some infallible, or semi-infallible, authority to which he could appeal to settle his metaphysical and ethical difficulties, there might be vital improvement in his literary style, in his artistic sense in general.

However that may be, one of the things I admire most in Mr. Belloc is his courage. Like many men of ability, he thought it would be a fine thing to help in making the country's laws. When he did get into the House, he found that he was expected to form a part of the voting machine. If he had had a larger measure of intellectual docility, or even of political cynicism, he might have been at least a Parliamentary Secretary to one of the big departments; but he chose to throw over politics, and to turn once more to authorship and journalism. He exposed the Party System in terms so round and plain that even the devout believer in political purity became something of a sceptic. He also supported the bid for an absolutely free press made by the *New Age*, by founding the *Eye-Witness* and editing it for a year. Under the title of the *New Witness*, it is now edited by Mr. G. K. Chesterton, and both these papers have this in common with the *Freethinker*—their writers say what they think, not what a proprietor pays them to say.

But if Mr. Belloc is courageous, it has to be admitted that his courage not infrequently shades off into rashness. He is often in so great a hurry to secure a victory that he does not stay to measure his own strength, or to reckon the cost of a possible defeat. It may be remembered how he assailed Professor Bury's excellent and fearless *History of Freedom of Thought*, a little

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book which every Freethinker should treasure. He had the good fortune to be able to correct a few dates and statements, which corrections were gratefully accepted by Professor Bury; but as no argument was based on these minor mistakes, there was no warrant for Mr. Belloc's assumption that they pointed to a "fundamental lack of scholarship," and that the historian had written without sufficient preparation or knowledge. The mistakes made by Mr. Belloc in his criticism, I suppose, did not imply anything more serious than ordinary want of care. For the reader of "Catholic Truth Tracts," in which series Mr. Belloc made his indictment, such a stupid controversial method is no doubt quite good enough. But the more intellectual Catholic does not take him so seriously, and does not confine his reading to books that bear the *imprimatur* of the Church. It is fitting that Mr. Belloc should be put in his place by a Catholic scholar, writing in the leading Catholic weekly, the *Tablet*, and it is amusing to see how neatly he is let down.

It will be remembered that Professor Bury, over whose book Mr. Belloc so nearly came to an untimely intellectual end, is the learned and capable editor of Gibbon. Following upon his unwise attempt to discredit the reputation of a great historian, he has made another exhibition of his foolishness by attacking Gibbon himself. In the October number of the *Dublin Review* he seeks to convict Gibbon of incompetence as an historian on the strength of one insignificant incident. With characteristic modesty, he takes a page of Gibbon, and endeavours to translate it into what he calls history. But, curiously enough, he depreciates his own efforts by telling us that the re-writing of the great work is a mere schoolboy's task. "I have often thought," he says,—

> that one of the most fruitful labours to which a young man might set himself after a course of historical study would be the publication of an edition of Gibbon corrected with the knowledge of Europe which Catholicism adds to historical scholarship. It would be a lengthy and an arduous task, but it would be final; for the whole great work is vitiated from beginning to end by the faults of which I have spoken; and upon its authority even Catholic writers (when they are of English-speaking culture) still misapprehend their past.

The *Tablet's* comment on this utterance is delightfully sarcastic:—

> It may seem an anticipation more sanguine than intelligent to take it for granted that the work of any given young man will necessarily have this "final" character, even though he be aided by "the knowledge of Europe which Catholicism adds to historical scholarship"—a benefit which is apparently denied to Catholics of English-speaking culture. When Mr. Podsnap is telling a Frenchman about the peculiar privileges which Providence has bestowed on the great British people, the Frenchman ventures to make a mild remonstrance. "It was," he urges, "a little particular of Providence." And now, when this new Anglo-French Podsnap comes to us with his dogmatic, *a priori* theories on the making of history, we are tempted to suggest that it was a little particular of Catholicism. Be this as it may, the limitation only makes us more sceptical about the imaginary young man with his definite edition of Gibbon. For as the book itself is written, in spite of Porson, in the English language, it might seem that it would need a Catholic of English-speaking culture to give it this final correction. But perhaps we must look for a young man of French culture who is also a master of the English language. And as another Dickens character was accustomed to speak of "a man," meaning himself, it is possible that Mr. Belloc's frequent thoughts of the young man setting himself to this lengthy historical labour crowned with fruitfulness and finality, may be susceptible of a like subjective interpretation.
>
> At first sight, this suggestion may seem to make the matter more hopeful. For some of us would find it hard to believe that any young man who set himself to the task would be capable of refuting or correcting Gibbon's great work. And when we are told of "the knowledge of Europe which Catholicism adds to historical scholarship," we can only marvel at this curious specimen of loose thinking and looser language. Catholicism, as such, cannot possibly impart this knowledge. Among the poor and simple in many parts of the world there are thousands whose Catholicism is all that could be desired, though they know nothing whatever about European history. But it is another matter if we are merely told that it would be an advantage to have this task of revising and editing Gibbon's history undertaken by some zealous Christian of brilliant natural gifts, such as Mr. Belloc certainly possesses, and an extensive knowledge of European history, both secular and religious. Even with this modification, we should hesitate to anticipate finality. For, even in the hands of the most competent critic, it would be a task of peculiar difficulty and delicacy. There are, happily, several Catholic historical writers who might be expected to do good service in this way. And we daresay that a good many readers, if asked to select a competent Catholic editor and corrector of Gibbon, would have given their votes for Mr. Belloc. But some of them, after reading his treatment of one of the historian's pages in the *Dublin Review*, may be reminded of the words of another great historian—"Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset."

Mr. Belloc makes some sweeping assertions with regard to the character of the history. "The great work," he says, without hesitation, "is profoundly unhistorical. It presents a thoroughly warped view of the whole vast revolution which turned Pagan into Christian Europe. That Revolution is Gibbon's very subject; and yet his work on it is open, upon almost every page, to strict historical criticism which wrecks its historical authority.....Gibbon's motive was an attack on the Catholic Church," his bias presumably "distorting the values of his narrative." "He thought the Church a moribund vanity." I will let his Catholic critic deal with him; his treatment could not be bettered:—

> As it often happens that famous books are known only by name to many readers, and as literary biography, with all its fascinations, is still a special subject of study, it is likely enough that Mr. Belloc's article will be read by a good many who are by no means familiar with the contents of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, or with the life story of its author. And to such readers it may be safely said that the *Dublin* article will give a wholly false idea both of the man and of the book. They will be left with the impression that Gibbon was an Englishman brought up in the narrow Protestant tradition, so that the grand vision of Catholic truth was wholly hidden from his eyes. And they will suppose that the book, like so much Protestant literature, is generally unfair to orthodox Catholics, and glorifies heretics and persecutors at their expense. Such readers will be considerably startled when they learn that Gibbon became a Catholic in his boyhood; that he was forced back to Protestantism by a year's tyrannical persecution and a system of education which, not unnaturally, had a fatal effect on his religious belief. Frankly, we cannot understand how a Catholic critic can write of Gibbon as Mr. Belloc has done, and pass over his conversion and re-conversion in absolute silence.
>
> The irreligion unhappily displayed in many parts of the history is only what might have been expected as a result of the author's treatment in boyhood. But to say that the main object of the great work was an attack on the Catholic Church betrays a complete misconception, both of the book and of its author. The bitterness and hostility was not, like that of Protestants, directed against Rome or orthodoxy. The satire in the account of the Arian controversy affects the disputants on all

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sides. And the severest censure on religious persecution in the whole course of the history is found in Gibbon's condemnation of Calvin's cruelty to Servetus. Nay, as the best judges have recognized, the historian, in some important pages, has been more favourable to the orthodox than to their enemies. Thus Moehler, in the preface to his great work on Athanasius, quotes the following words of Gibbon, with well-warranted approval: "The persecution of Athanasius, and of so many respectable bishops, who suffered for the truth of their opinions, or at least for the integrity of their conscience, was a just subject of indignation and discontent of all Christians, except those who were blindly devoted to the Arian faction." And has not Newman remarked that "Athanasius stands out more grandly in Gibbon than in the pages of the orthodox ecclesiastical historians"?

Mr. Belloc's indictment of one of the greatest of our historians is based on one page—that which deals with the death of Priscillian, the Bishop of Avila, in Spain, and the first heretic to suffer capital punishment at the hands of a Christian prince. Now we are told that Gibbon wilfully confused heresy with *magic*, for which crime we are assured by Mr. Belloc, and not heresy, Priscillian was tortured and executed. The same mistake, Mr. Belloc notes, is made by a writer in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*; but he does not stop to draw the obvious conclusion from this fact. When both the Catholic and the Infidel agree, it is not unlikely they are both correct. Both of them knew that *magic* was said to be one of the items in the indictment against the Spanish heretic, but neither of them is less convinced that he died, not for the crime of *maleficium* or sorcery, but for his religious belief. It is sometimes claimed by Protestants that Catholic martyrs under Henry and Elizabeth really suffered for the crime of treason. Certainly that was the distinct charge; and yet an historian is not misinterpreting the temper of an epoch when he refuses to believe that they were not really put to death for their religion. And, after all, Mr. Belloc cannot ignore one fact that upsets his whole case; he cannot disprove that St. Ambrose not only believed, but acted on his belief, that Priscillian died for his opinions; he cannot, moreover, explain away the passage in Sulpicius which tells us how Maximus was preparing to send tribunes into Spain to seek out heretics and to kill them, the soldiers having instructions to discriminate between heretics and Catholics by their *complexion*.

I suppose Mr. Belloc honestly thinks that he has done something to damage the great reputation of Gibbon; but what he has really done is to discredit himself as a critic of historical fact and method. I will leave the judicious and luminous critic I have quoted above to put the finishing touch on this bulwark of the newer Catholicism:—

> What Mr. Belloc says of Gibbon really recoils on his own head. He has completely failed to grasp the mind of the early saints about whom he dogmatizes. And he reads back into the past the narrow, intolerant ideas of a later age. When we recall the fact that he is asking us to judge of Gibbon's great work as a whole from this one page, we are irresistibly reminded of the famous encounter between John Wesley and Beau Nash. The autocrat of fashion began to attack the great Methodist, and Wesley asked if Nash had ever heard him preach, or read his writings. When he was answered in the negative, Wesley said: "How, then, are you able to judge me?" Nash answered: "From what I have heard men say of you." "Oh, sir," said Wesley, "I dare not judge *you* by what I hear men say of you." And in like manner we should be exceedingly sorry to judge of Mr. Belloc's historical work as a whole by his suicidal attack on a page of Gibbon.

Geo. Underwood.

An Old "Christian" Friend.

It is more years ago than I like to think of when I first got to know this particular friend—a Scotsman, like myself by nationality; a budding solicitor, *then*, by profession; genial, hospitable, entertaining; as straight as a die in all business dealings, an all-round sportsman. When I first knew him he had just embarked upon a professional career for himself, and was on the eve of being married. He was a regular attender at kirk, taught in the Sabbath-school, sang in the choir, and eventually was elected an office-bearer. I, too, followed a similar course as an ardent Presbyterian, and it was in this way we were thrown into contact. As our intimacy ripened, we began to have confidential talks over a pipe.

I shall never forget the shock he gave me one evening when speaking of his business prospects. We were alone. He was remarking upon the social influences that help to bring business to young professional men, which, he indicated, he intended to use to the utmost. "And," he added, eyeing me significantly, "I suppose you realize the meaning of all this bally kirk racket?"

I sat up; I gasped; I was horrified! Did I hear aright? What did my friend mean? Mark you, I was a believer—*then*. "Of course," he proceeded thoughtfully, "a kirk connection is worth a lot if it is properly worked. A nice, diplomatic way with the old wives (male and female) of the congregation, and, by Jove, sir, it may be worth anything from £300 to £500 a year to a tactful young fellow."

I was speechless.

"I am only one of hundreds," he went on. "You must know that the kirk is in very many cases a young solicitor's most promising source of business. Pat the old wives on the back, harangue the kids at the *soirees*, gas at the P.S.A.'s (a wooden, anæmic lot you get *there*), an occasional bit of prayer at the Office-bearers' meeting, and you have the ball rolling fine. "Ay" (with a chuckle), "and the joke is that they believe I believe all their dam nonsense. Religion? Bah! Religion has no meaning to me save as a producer of business, my boy,—*business* with money in it!'

* * * * *

I have again, after a long, long interval, foregathered with my old friend. He is greyer, fatter, wealthier; otherwise unchanged in mind and body. He has, indeed, prospered. He has a comfortable home. He is an elder of the kirk. The religious activities of his younger days are not so *active* as they were; but the offices he holds in connection with the kirk have quadrupled in number. We met at an hotel in the grey metropolis of the north, and he gave me a most cordial greeting. Two interesting hours we spent in his private sitting-room and compared notes, after fighting some of our battles over again.

"It *is* funny," I said, "looking back, when I remember how you shocked me by the announcement that you didn't believe what you professed, and only had a kirk connection for business reasons. Dear me; if I recollect aright, I nearly collapsed! And now to reflect that I am a Freethinker avowedly—and you are too, you know, with your intimates in the smoke-room."

"Ay," he said, with a chuckle, contemplating his fat cigar, "religion's been worth more to me than five hundred a year. I've never regretted it, though I never believed it, and got many a laugh out of it. You ken what I mean, yon oppressive solemnity"—he had dropped into the vernacular—"aye made me put my hand owre ma mouth tae keep me frae lauchin!"

"Well, well," I rejoined; "maybe that sort of thing has been some sort of compensation for the ordeal you

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went through. But, in spite of everything, man, I couldn't have done it—I could *not* have done it. You're a lot better off as regards money than I am; but no, man, I *could not positively*—I could *not* have done it!"

"That," said he, jocosely, with a kindly grin and a dig in the ribs, as he handed me his cigar-case, "that is because you are a dam fool!"

IGNOTUS.

Acid Drops.

On February 7 the King and Queen will open Parliament in State. "In State" means, for one thing, that there will be a lavish display of the Army and Navy, and on this occasion there will be a good representation of officers from the Overseas and Indian forces. This is quite in line with previous State functions, and that is all there is to be said in its favour—except that as the Monarchy itself is a mediæval institution, in this country modified in the direction of constitutionalism, one must expect a dose of mediæval accessories. Nevertheless, it is surely time that some drastic modification was made in the "get up" of these State functions. We should, for instance, like to see less of the Army and Navy, and more of the arts, sciences, and industries of the nation. A State function should be a reflection in miniature of the life of the State, and at present whatever else it may be, it is certainly not that.

Parliament is a *civil* institution. We use the word civil without reference to its behaviour, but solely with regard to the fact that it does not come under the category of "the armed forces of the Crown." Fundamentally, it represents the civil and peaceful life of the community, while its control of the Army and Navy is an indication that this civil life is supreme, and that the armed forces of the country only justify their being so far as they contribute to that end. This proportion should be observed in all pageants intended to impress, and in that sense educate, the public mind. If we are really in earnest when we rail against "Prussianism," the clank of the sabre, and the menace of the "mailed fist," let us make a start here. First place should be given to the peaceful and *permanent* phases of national life, and secondary place to what we hope are its more transient features. We should then be giving the public a lesson that in the opinion of our rulers it is in virtue of the peaceful arts of life that a nation progresses, and may lay solid claim to be called great. Our present plan is apt to impress the opposite of this, namely, that civilization rests upon brute force, that the uniformed soldier is of greater importance than the thinker or the peaceful artisan.

A pious Streatham lady has made the astounding discovery that the Kaiser William is the "Beast" mentioned in "Revelation." This mythical marvel has already been identified with an enormous number of persons from Nero to Napoleon the Little.

A daily paper has had some outspoken articles on the proceedings of a fashionable London quack who had a business in which he offered to pray for friends in the fighting lines and elsewhere at a sliding scale of fees. One journalist paid nine guineas for the "Absent Treatment" for two fictitious relatives. The dear clergy will smile, for they know that, whilst they are in the same line of business as the quack, few editors have enough courage to expose them.

The newspaper press of London has a peculiar flavour of Catholicism, due, perhaps, to the number of Catholic journalists who write the articles. In a recent review of a book on Giordano Bruno it was stated that Bruno "was especially eager to be restored to the Catholic communion." This might easily mislead an ordinary reader, who might be unaware that Bruno was tried by the Holy Inquisition and afterwards burnt alive.

The Rev. Murdo Smith Maclean, of Malling, Inverness, has been ordered to pay £200 for breach of promise of marriage. It was stated that he married a rich woman in preference to the plaintiff in the action. Evidently, the reverend gentleman was in no haste to appreciate the blessings of poverty.

In a dramatic notice of a recent play in a Sunday paper, it was stated: "The only impression left is that if America is God's own country it must be hell to live there." A fine example of Sunday reading for Christians.

The two strongholds of unreasoning conservatism are the Church and the Law. A good illustration of the latter was given in the discussion in the Inner Temple Hall that took place on Mr. Holford Knight's proposal that the time had arrived when women should be admitted to the Bar. The Attorney-General, Mr. F. E. Smith, occupied the chair, and the result of the discussion was the defeat of the proposal by between 200 and 300 to 22. A more stupid or indefensible vote could hardly have been given. The law is quite a "lady-like" profession, so far as we have been able to observe. It calls for no *very* unusual qualities of mind, and with the example of France, Italy, Russia, and other countries before us, one would have imagined that we might have followed their example in this respect. The incident is a fine commentary upon the genuineness of the "gush" poured out as to woman's work during the war.

The truth is that the legal craft represents a very close and a very narrow trade unionism. And, as with all trades unions, there is a dread of any innovation that threatens to restrict privileges or to diminish gains. And, in the last respect, England is a lawyer's paradise. We doubt if there is any other country in the world in which the gains are as large or in which the layman is so completely at the mercy of the legal practitioner. Some years ago a business friend of ours was involved in a law case in both London and Berlin. It was the same case tried in both capitals. In Berlin the expenses came to just about £40. In London the expenses ran to £200. No wonder the Bar opposes any reform that would tend to disturb its traditions and interfere with its emoluments.

General Sir R. Baden-Powell says that religion in the trenches is comprised in the words "God is love." The believer who realizes that thirty millions of Christians are waiting to murder each other must needs have a very robust faith.

Poor old Providence seems to be more easy-going than the people who believe in him. During the past twenty-nine months 2,821 persons have lost their lives by fire in the United Kingdom. During the same period the loss of lives on the Continent from the same cause has been almost incalculable.

The estate of the late Sir Joseph Beecham, the famous pill manufacturer, amounted to £1,000,000. Mr. Eno, another patent medicine proprietor, left £1,611,000. Evidently Christians put their faith in pills and potions more than in prayer.

In a special article on "Woman's Place in the Church," in the *Daily News*, it is said that Saint Paul's views "cannot be taken as a principle for all time." This is smart—for our Nonconformist contemporary; but it plays ducks and drakes with Biblical authority.

The clergy are quaint folk. They will not fight, and their ideas of work of national importance are as ridiculous as the religion they profess. Here is the Bishop of Norwich, whose income is only £90 a week, stating that he has been growing beetroots and carrots in his palace gardens, and geese were strutting about his lawns. Does his lordship not realize that his income would suffice for nearly fifty families of ordinary people?

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We are pleased to see *Truth* calling attention to the character of the "Commission" appointed by the self-styled "Council of Public Morals" to inquire into the effects on morals of the cinematograph business. This "Commission" was appointed, it is true, at the request of the people representing the film trade; but it is certain that this was done only because people with an exaggerated capacity for seeing something "nasty" in the most harmless of things were circulating stories as to the immoral consequences of picture shows. As to the character of the "Commission" and the person who appears to be the prime mover in the "National Council of Public Morals"—the very title is offensively redolent of cant and humbug—*Truth* says:—

> Why the cinema trade should have thought it desirable to petition the "National Council of Public Morals" for an inquiry, instead of the Home Office or the Education Department, I am quite unable to understand. I am in the same position as to why so many gentlemen of light and leading should have accepted appointments on the "Commission" from the "National Council," for the "Council," in spite of its pretentious title, is a very one-horse, or rather one-man, affair. It owes its existence to a reverend gentleman named James Marchant, whose apostolic career has been exceedingly varied. He appears to have commenced life as a Rationalist, and shortly afterwards to have blossomed out as a lecturer for the Christian Evidence Society. He next joined the Anglo-Benedictine Order, where he was known as Brother James. He was excommunicated by Father Ignatius, whom he thereafter virulently attacked. Later he seems to have been a sort of lay-reader in Presbyterian churches, and, after a brief connection with the Barnardo Homes, he was employed for a while by the National Vigilance Association. He left the association in 1908 to start a similar movement on his own account, called "The National Purity Crusade." A couple of years later the "Crusade" became the National Council of Public Morals.
>
> Where Mr. Marchant got his Holy Orders from is not quite clear. In *Who's Who* for 1913 he described himself as having been "consecrated for the work of public morals" in the Dean's Chapel, Westminster, by the Lord Bishop of Durham and the Rev. F. B. Meyer, but this consecration in later editions is altered to "dedicated to the work of the National Council of Public Morals in the private chapel of the Dean of Westminster Abbey." Whatever this mysterious ceremony was, it does not seem to give him any right to dub himself "Reverend." I have sought in vain also in the literature of the "Council" for particulars of its personnel. It has a distinguished president and a remarkable array of equally distinguished vice-presidents, but of the council itself there is no list. There may be a score of modest gentlemen who prefer to hide their lights under Mr. Marchant's bushel, but this is unfair to the public when they take upon themselves the appointment of public commissions to take evidence on matters of public importance. I suggest, therefore, to the commission that before proceeding further with their investigations they should make some inquiry as to the constitution of the "National Council."

It is the first time we have heard of Mr. Marchant as a "Rationalist." He was, many years ago, a member of the N. S. S. for a few months, and left because he found the Christian Evidence Society more attractive. The reasons for the change are best known to himself. Other people have, of course, their own theories on the matter.

Military officials usually allow the clergy a free hand in proselyting among the troops, but there are exceptions. In the United States, General Funston refused to allow revival meetings in the southern camps on the ground that "whether a man is religious or irreligious no other person has a right to rub his beliefs into his face." Three cheers for the General!

A Sunday paper has the following quaint note on a former "infidel slayer": "The Rev. A. J. Waldron, who, while vicar of Brixton, wrote a very bad play called 'Should a Woman Tell?' in which a parson actually tells his nephew what a woman parishioner has just told him in his capacity as a priest, appears this week as an actor! He is showing at the Victoria Palace in 'Nature's Call,' which is said to discuss 'the problems of the unmarried woman.'" We await the press notices with much interest.

The Kentucky Avenue Presbyterian Church, Kentucky, has decided to purchase a cinematograph machine for use at the Sunday evening services. The pastor of the church says he believes it will fill the place. We have no doubt it will—properly worked. And there are many incidents in both the Old and New Testaments in which Charlie Chaplin would cut a striking figure.

Patrick Kane, Catholic priest, was fined at Sheffield for stealing three bottles of whisky and one bottle of brandy from the railway hotel, Coalville. The defence was that there was no felonous intent, and that Kane was not responsible for his actions. The Catholic Bishop said he would pay the hotel bill if the magistrates would merely bind Kane over. This was refused, and a fine of one guinea and costs were inflicted.

A number of clergymen, claiming to represent the "Christian Community of Swansea," have written the Swansea Allotments Committee, protesting against ploughing on Sunday. Even for the purpose of feeding the people, or of winning the War, these good folk cannot agree to tilling the soil on Sunday. What they ought to protest against is things growing on Sunday. That would be logical, and quite as sensible as the other protest.

As we announced a week or so ago, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have invested three-and-a-half millions in War Loan. Not to be behind, the Episcopal Church of Ireland has invested £1,400,000. Both bodies will draw their five per cent. with smug satisfaction, and will not feel at all disturbed at making profit from the War. It never struck these pious patriots that the loan might have been made free of interest—or made earlier at a lower rate. As with other "investors," the country's extremity is their opportunity.

CRIMINAL HAPPINESS.

Only the Scot can really observe the Scottish Sunday in all its severity. But occasionally a visitor is taken to task by some more than ordinarily strict Sabbatarian. There was the tourist who was leaving his hotel in Glasgow one fine Sunday morning, and encountered the reproving glare of a police-constable.

"Hey," said the officer, with a warning shake of the head, "ye had better hae a care what ye're daeing."

"Me!" said the astonished tourist. "Why, I didn't know I was doing anything. What's the matter?"

"Ye're maybe no' doin' anything," observed the constable solemnly, "but ye're looking as happy as though it were no' the Sawbath!"

THE GREAT LYING CHURCH.

You have been told by Macaulay and others that the Church in the Dark Ages was the preserver of learning, the patron of science, and the friend of freedom. The preserver of learning in the Dark Ages! It was the Church that made those ages dark. The preserver of learning! Yes; as the worm-eaten oak-chest preserves a manuscript. No more thanks to them than to the rats for not devouring its pages. It was the Republics of Italy and the Saracens of Spain that preserved learning, and it was the Church that trod out the lights of those Italian Republics. The patron of science! What? When they burned Savonarola and Giordano Bruno, imprisoned Galileo, persecuted Columbus, and mutilated Abelard. The friend of freedom! What? When they crushed the Republics of the South, pressed the Netherlands like the vintage in a wine-kelter, girdled Switzerland with a belt of fire and steel, banded the crowned tyrants of Europe against the Reformers of Germany, and launched Claverhouse against the Covenant of Scotland. The friend of freedom! When they hedged kings with a divinity! Their superstitions alone upheld the rotten fabric of oppression. Their superstitions alone turned the indignant freeman into a willing slave, and made men bow to the hell they created here, by a hope of the heaven *they* could not insure hereafter.—*Ernest Jones.*

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

February 4, Abertillery; February 11, Liverpool; February 25, Clapham; March 11 Birmingham; March 18, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 11, Walsall; March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Newcastle Branch, 3s.

A. F. (Govan).—Thanks for the newspaper reports of Professor Alexander's lectures. Such things are nearly always useful to us, even when no immediate use is made of them in the *Freethinker*.

MR. A. G. LEWIN writes:—"This is the first time you have heard from me, so perhaps you will be interested to know that up to twelve months ago, I was a communicant of the Church of England, but, owing to the Church's uncertain voice and bellicose attitude, I have been bound to acknowledge its utter helplessness and failure. For the past six months I have been a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, and I must take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of its high intellectual standard."—We thank this correspondent for the pamphlet he has been good enough to send, which will be of service.

PERPLEXED.—Sorry we cannot offer advice on different lines. We have explained the various courses open to you, with their consequences, so far as we can judge. But we cannot advise anyone what risks they shall take. That each person must decide for himself.

B. F. B.—Received. Will appear next week. Sorry to hear of illness.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—W. L. Rowe (S.A.), 9s. 6d. Per Miss Vance:—Sapper B. G. Brown, 2s.

A. HEWIT.—We are afraid that publication would be so far misused as to furnish a weapon against the whole class. We have been, personally, much interested in your communication, and shall be pleased to hear from you at any time.

W. L. ROWE.—Pleased to receive your good wishes.

L. FRANCIS.—Sorry we have not the space at our disposal to permit a general discussion of the subject. The original point raised was little more than an illustration of the central topic; and as both writers have had their say, we fear we must let the matter rest there.

H. B.—We hope you will recognize the initials. Thanks for reference to article. Your letter has interested us greatly, and one day we may have the good fortune to meet you. At least, we hope so.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 writing this on Tuesday (Jan. 30), and we can only say that the Bowman case has just commenced in the House of Lords. We cannot say how long the hearing will take, but it should not last more than a couple of days, and we shall thus be able to give full particulars next week.

Despite the prevailing Arctic conditions, we are pleased to record that Mr. Cohen's visit to Swansea was a complete success. The hall was quite filled, and both the lecture and the discussion—a lengthy one—went with a swing. Many expressed a desire to see a Branch of the N. S. S. started at Swansea, and we have every hope that this will be done. To-day (Feb. 4) Mr. Cohen again visits South Wales, lecturing at Abertillery in the New Era Institute at 3 and 6.

Next Sunday (Feb. 11) Mr. Cohen visits Liverpool. The lectures will be delivered in the Alexandra Hall, Islington, and tickets may be obtained in advance of the Secretary, Mr. W. McKelvie, 21 Globe Street, Kirkdale, Liverpool.

A new Branch of the N. S. S. has been started at Falkirk. We hope all Freethinkers in Falkirk and neighbourhood will give their hearty support to the new Branch, and that other parts of Scotland—and England—will follow suit.

We are printing, and hope to have ready soon, a new pamphlet by Mr. Mann on *Christian and Pagan Morality*. This is a subject of considerable interest to both Freethinkers and Christians, and we feel sure it will be found useful. We have also in hand a revised edition of Mr. Foote's *Christianity and Progress*, enlarged by a chapter on Mohammedanism. We also have in course of publication a pamphlet by "Mimnermus," on *Freethought and Literature*. Others will follow so soon as circumstances permit.

Last week we published a letter from the Rev. P. M. Weston, asking for a copy of the *Freethinker* to be sent weekly to a reading-room for soldiers and sailors at Swansea. This was done—in fact, two copies were sent. We have now received the following from the same gentleman:—

> Dear Sir,—It is most kind of you to send two copies of the *Freethinker* to me, and to promise to send them. Those connected with the venture (Reading Room) do not think it desirable to continue to take same. I enclose herewith four penny stamps for the two copies sent, and one penny stamp for postage of same. My object was to let everyone see all points, so as to strengthen their Christianity.—Yours, etc.,
>
> P. MOSS WESTON.

We compliment Mr. Weston on his very laudable desire to place all points of view before his readers, but he evidently reckoned without the bigotry of others. Their idea is, clearly, to suppress every point of view but their own. There is no room for men like Mr. Weston in the Christian Church. His proper place is outside.

A correspondent sends us the following:—

> I am doubtful about your having space for this short letter; if not, scrap it. A son of mine, returned from France wounded, and now convalescent, tells me how he was converted from Agnostic to Church of England. When he joined up he gave in that he was an Agnostic. First Sunday he was taken and put to about two hours' scrubbing and other dirty work. The Sunday following the same. This against about three-quarters of an hour in church. This, he says, converted him, and he is now Church of England, and goes to church and listens to the rot.

Perhaps when the War is over, and we have finished *talking* about freedom, some people will set about trying to achieve it. It is little short of a national scandal that men should be *ordered* to church at any time; but to punish men for not going—and fatigue duty is nothing else—makes the scandal greater.

VIRTUE AND HELL.

It is the blackest sign of putrescence in a nationa religion, when men speak as if it were the only safeguard of conduct; and assume that, but for the fear of being burned, or for the hope of being rewarded, everybody would pass their lives in lying, stealing, and murdering. I think quite one of the notablest historical events of this century (perhaps the very notablest) was the council of clergymen, horror-struck at the idea of any diminution in our dread of hell, at which the last of English clergymen whom one would have expected to see in such a function, rose as the devil's advocate; to tell us how impossible it was we could get on without him.—*John Ruskin*, "*Ethics of the Dust*."

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A Sceptical Scientist and Saint.

IV.

(Concluded from p. 53.)

How little publishers, or for that matter theatrical experts, are capable of estimating the merits or probable success of a book or play, is well known to the initiated. It is notorious that no actor-manager would look at "Charley's Aunt," which has proved one of the very greatest monetary successes of the modern stage. In a loftier sphere, both Herbert Spencer and Buckle failed to find publishers, while R. L. Stevenson made no impression when he submitted his now famous writings to those whose favour is essential to the unknown man of letters, who aspires to present his compositions to the notice of the world. And, although already a "selling" author, Lubbock found his publishers somewhat frigid when he suggested a new venture. This volume was to be entitled *The Pleasures of Life*, and the projected work was to consist of various essays. The publishers coldly answered that—

> we are inclined to think that such a book, if it does not bear the appearance of a mere reissue of papers which have appeared elsewhere, but is substantially a new book, forming an organic whole, would have a very fair chance of success. Whether it would have a permanent sale, as your scientific books have had, we hardly feel prepared to say.

Not very encouraging, surely. Yet this work proved a tremendous success, and has probably been translated into more languages than any other book of recent times. Walter Pater, Sir George Trevelyan, and Hartpole Lecky all admired it, and the reading community displayed its appreciation by purchasing over half a million copies of its two parts. The volumes were popular in style and treatment, and deliberately so. And the author received letters thanking him for his gift from all quarters of the world. One communication came from a shopman whose leisure hours had been extended by Lubbock's legislation. This correspondent writes:—

> I feel under a debt of gratitude to you for having induced me by your *Pleasures of Life* to read your *Beauties of Nature*. This work led me to read Geikie's *Geology*, and a number of the Best Hundred Books, with the result that I now seem to live in a new world, and subjects which before seemed dry, are now intensely interesting.

At the beginning of 1887 Lubbock succeeded in placing two Acts on the Statute Book. One of these related to Public Libraries, and the other widened the facilities for the creation of open spaces in urban areas. Owing to the Home Rule controversy, then in full blast, he greatly concerned himself at this time with the problem of the so-called races of the British Isles. The Home Rulers contended that there already existed four distinct nationalities in the United Kingdom. But Lubbock had no difficulty in proving that although special types are more pronounced in certain areas, the racial stocks of Britain and Ireland are decidedly composite in character. Apart from the very cogent evidence which he himself advances, Lubbock cited that weighty authority, Dr. Beddoe, as saying that:—

> With respect to the distribution and commixture of race elements in the British Isles, we may safely assert that not one of them, whether Iberian, Gaelic, Cymric, Saxon, or Scandinavian, is peculiar to, or absent from, or anywhere predominant in any one of the three kingdoms.

At the first London County Council election Lubbock was returned at the top of the poll as a Progressive for the City. Lord Rosebery was first Chairman of the newly created Council, and Lubbock succeeded him in that office. He also paid considerable attention to the law relating to property at sea in periods of warfare. Lubbock formed the view that the "Declaration of Paris" was unsatisfactory, and he wished to render ships immune to capture or seizure. This opinion he laid before the London Chamber of Commerce, and that body's Council gave him unanimous support. He also approached Lord Salisbury, then Premier, who agreed that his contentions were conclusive, and recommended him to sound Lord Lytton on the subject. Lytton, in a long letter, submitted his reasons for supposing that another Power would not agree. And an epistle from Salisbury provides instructive reading to-day. Writing to Sir John, in 1889, that statesman said:—

> I am afraid that in proportion as wars tend, as they are doing now, to be wars for existence, the laws of war will be liable to change in a retrogressive sense. The very acuteness with which each belligerent feels the enormity of the stake he laid down, will dissuade him from sacrificing any sensible advantage in deference to any considerations of a less pressing character.

In an interesting and amusing address dealing with his *Personal and Political Reminiscences*, delivered at the Working Men's College, Lubbock related the following story:—

> Many correspondents send letters of reproof and remonstrance, rather in sorrow than in anger; and sometimes under an entire misapprehension. For instance, in my book on *Ants, Bees, and Wasps*, I differ from the well known German naturalist Christ as to the roadways of ants. On this I received a letter from a worthy Scotsman, expressing his surprise and regret that I should venture to differ from the blessed founder of our religion, but saying that he had looked in vain through the New Testament for any description of ant roads, and asked me for chapter and verse.

And this, somewhat suggestive of the phantom Russians and the mythical angels of Mons:—

> On one occasion a gentleman in Lincolnshire wrote to say that all the beans in that country were growing that year with the seeds the wrong way up in the pods.....I asked him for some specimens, but heard nothing more for some months, when he wrote again to say that the beans had given him an immense amount of trouble. He had heard the story from a friend, and when he went to him and asked for some of the curious beans, he was referred to someone else, and so on. In fact he had been riding about all over the country from one person to another for weeks, and at last came to the conclusion that it was all a mistake!

Lubbock relished a good story, and records one told him by that genial parson (A. K. H. B.). This anecdote related to—

> Dr. Muir, about 1834, praying for the Provost and Bailies of Glasgow, "such as they are, that they may have more wisdom and grace," and when the Provost sent the Marshal to complain, returning his compliments to the Provost with regrets that "his prayer had not been heard."

Always a sincere Pacifist, Lubbock many years ago seconded the late Mr. Cremer's motion in Parliament in favour of arbitration. As usual, Gladstone was supremely eloquent, but nothing came of the resolution, although it was carried unanimously in the Commons. Armaments continued to increase in number and in deadliness in this country, as in others. At a later date, when our relations with our friends, the French, were somewhat strained, Lubbock was asked by M. Michels, London correspondent of the *Gaulois*, to send a message for publication in that journal which would help to remove the suspicions of English antagonism then widely entertained in France. Lubbock, or Lord Avebury, as he had just become, was disagreeably surprised at the information

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furnished by his French correspondent. He wrote to say that he regarded even the possibility of conflict with our Gallic neighbours with horror, and proceeded to declare that :—

> I am sure that I express the general feeling of my countrymen when I express the hope that the peace which has happily subsisted between us for so many years may long continue, and our friendly feeling grow stronger and stronger.

The Associated Chambers were invited by the Paris Chamber of Commerce to meet in the French capital, but so many misgivings prevailed as to the advisability of acceptance, that Avebury submitted the proposal to Lord Salisbury, who intimated his doubts as to the wisdom of holding the meeting in Paris, while declining to oppose any decision the Chambers might make. As a result, the Chambers gathered in Paris, and many absurd misconceptions were removed. Lord Avebury took a prominent part in the proceedings, which proved a magnificent success. The Minister of Commerce, M. Millerand, heartily welcomed the English visitors to the Exhibition. M. Loubet, the French President, entertained them right royally, and the many other amenities of this historic occasion in reality formed the initial step towards the warm feelings which now obtain between our brave and brilliant allies and ourselves. Prior to the visit of the Chambers, very few Englishmen had attended the Paris Exhibition; but once the ice was broken, "a constant stream of English visitors followed."

Nor was Avebury indifferent to good relations between England and Germany. He presided over the first meeting of an Association, formed in 1905, to promote a closer friendship between the two countries. This body was the Anglo-German Friendship Society. Through its influence, ill-feeling was for a time considerably lessened, but much patient labour, spread over many years, was essential to any permanent success. As Mr. Hutchinson reflects :—

> The terrible tragedies enacted on the European stage since Lord Avebury's death afford a curiously sardonic comment on all these and the like well-meant efforts to promote a better understanding and a rational friendship between the two great branches of the Teutonic race.

In 1907, when the Kaiser came to England, the Committee of the Friendship Association appointed Avebury to present him with an olive branch. Avebury was bent upon adding a clause to this friendly address, pointing to the desirability of diminishing, or at least retarding, the perilous expansion of armaments. When approached, however, on this suggested addendum, Count Metternich coldly requested its omission. In reply to this request, Lubbock wrote expressing his colleagues' deep regret that the suggested clause must be left out, and he continued, "They consider that the gigantic armaments of European Countries constitute a great danger to the peace of Europe." But the Count would not budge, and in the course of his rejoinder he said :—

> The limitation of armaments being a question of controversy, and in no way connected with the Emperor's visit to England, I could not help saying, on my opinion being asked, that it had better be left out of your address.

Avebury was sufficiently sanguine to suppose "that, at any rate, Germany, France, and England might have come to some understanding as to armaments." How humiliating to realize that he was so sadly doomed to disappointment!

Although not great in the sense in which Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin were great, Lubbock was still a very big man. A noble humanist, as his beneficent activities abundantly prove; favoured by fortune, he was outside the necessity for striving eagerly for bread, and might have chosen an easier life. But being of splendid nature, he sought and secured happiness in dedicating the larger part of his working hours to the service of the race. And of him more truly than of most men who loom largely on the world's stage it may be written that he strove, and in rich measure succeeded, in conferring benefits on human kind.

T. F. PALMER.

The French Revolution.

II.

(Continued from p. 59.)

THE LIMITED MONARCHY.

JULY 14 is the birthday of modern democracy. For the first time the penniless masses had intervened in a political quarrel with decisive effect. The genteel politicians of the Assembly owed their victory to the people, and could not now ignore them. How did they show their gratitude? They overflowed with congratulatory rhetoric, told the people that they had saved the country, and took care that it should not happen again. They abolished indeed, on the night of August 4, all feudal rights and privileges, and they issued a "Declaration of the Rights of Man," modelled on Rousseau, in which they laid down the principle of political equality as their guide in the framing of the constitution. But they proceeded to elaborate a constitution founded on a strictly limited suffrage, from which the propertiless were excluded, which provided that Parliament should be elected indirectly (the propertied electors choosing an intermediate electoral body, and they in turn choosing the deputies), and which left the king a suspensory veto on all measures passed by the legislature. Even the abolition of feudalism was largely a recognition of the accomplished fact; for indeed, since the fall of the Bastille, and even before it, the peasants in the provinces had taken the law into their own hands, burning the manor-houses of the nobility, and destroying the legal documents which attested their feudal rights. To cope with any further disturbance in Paris, the Assembly authorized the formation of a "National Guard," or citizen force, to which only the well-to-do were admitted, and which was under the control of the municipality.

Nothing, it will be seen, was done for the working-class; and, although it was a period of great economic distress and high prices (cultivation having been nearly ruined by the iniquities and stupidities of the old regime), the Assembly strictly forbade all combinations of workmen, and left the economic problem simply to drift.

Yet the people continued to hope for Parliamentary redress, and to see their enemies only in the refractory nobles, the courtiers, and the Queen, Marie Antoinette. This woman, the daughter of Maria Theresa of Austria, was about the most worthless creature who ever sat on a throne. She was totally indifferent to the sufferings of the people, whether from callousness or from sheer lack of brains we cannot say; and she was the evil genius of her husband, Louis XVI., who, though very stupid, was a good-natured man, and, left to himself, might have made a fair constitutional king, as kings go. The Queen and Court, however, continually egged him on to thwart reforms, plot a counter-Revolution, and seek aid from foreign Powers. In October, 1789, this disastrous couple were planning another *coup d'etat*, involving the removal of the court to Metz, the proclamation of the Assembly as rebels, and the suppression of the Revolution by mercenary troops. Once again, they were foiled by the people of Paris, who got

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wind of dinner-parties at Versailles at which white cockades (the emblem of absolutism) were handed to the officers of the body-guard and the national colours (the tri-colour) trodden under foot. A mob of women, followed soon after by the National Guard under Lafayette, proceeded to Versailles, and the king was forced to come to Paris and take up his abode there. It was thought that, once at Paris, under the eye of the people, the king would throw off reactionary influences and be reconciled to the Revolution. No one, at this stage, had any intention of deposing Louis or setting up a Republic. On the contrary, he was still a popular monarch; all evil designs were put down to the Queen and Court, and he was regarded as the liberator of France.

With the establishment of the Court and the Assembly at Paris in October, 1789, the first chapter of the Revolution comes to an end. France was now a limited monarchy, and the Assembly was devoting itself to working out a detailed constitution which should put the new regime on a permanent basis, concentrate political power in the hands of the well-to-do classes, and, generally, avoid further trouble. The friends of the new regime formed themselves into a club, which took the name of the "Society of the Friends of the Constitution," but which was commonly called the Jacobins' Club, since it met at the old convent of that name. The leading lights of the constitutionalist party —Mirabeau, Lafayette, Barnave, etc.—belonged to it. Only a tiny minority, taking Rousseau more seriously, advocated universal suffrage, the chief of these being Robespierre, a young barrister from Arras, with sentimental Radical opinions and a total lack of humour, whom his Parliamentary colleagues regarded as a "crank," but who by his sincerity and ready eloquence was gradually winning the admiration of advanced circles in Paris. He belonged to the Jacobins' Club; but other democrats, discontented with its oligarchic atmosphere, founded another society, the "Friends of the Rights of Man," commonly known as the Cordeliers' Club, who represented the advanced Radical position. Their two chief members were Danton, a lawyer of great eloquence and political genius, and Marat, a medical man of poor health and irritable disposition, who edited a very advanced journal, *L'Ami du Peuple*, in which he denounced the constitution-mongers as enemies of the people, and demanded social as well as political reforms. But in 1789 little note was taken either of Danton or Marat. Neither of them had seats in the Assembly, and their public influence was as yet small.

The Revolution might have stopped in 1789, and French democracy have had to wait for generations for a trial, if the country had been solvent financially. To meet the burden of debt left to it from the old regime, the Assembly decided on a measure which eventually was to give a new turn to the Revolution. It decided to seize the lands of the Catholic Church in France and to sell them for the public benefit, substituting a "civil constitution" which would provide for the public payment of a fixed salary to the clergy. It must be understood that there was no intention in all this of attacking religion. Most of the Assembly had, indeed, imbibed the half-baked Deism popularized by Voltaire and Rousseau in the eighteenth century; but they were not hostile to Christianity, and regarded Catholicism as a very suitable religion for the "lower classes." There were a few Atheists, but Atheism was unpopular and viewed with suspicion by the majority. The confiscation of Church property was actually proposed by Talleyrand, the Catholic bishop of Autun, and afterwards the famous minister of Napoleon. Talleyrand was assuredly not a religious man, but he belonged to the "black" fraternity, and would hardly have suggested to his colleagues that they should "fork out," except under the pressure of the direst necessity. Church property was taken over, and the Church reorganized on a basis of popluar election made, in fact, into a department of government.

Here lay the blunder. If the Assembly had restricted itself to taking the property of the Church, the hierarchy might have fumed and fussed, and yet made the best of it in the end. But to alter the constitution of the Church; to make the bishops elective functionaries like members of Parliament; this was reformation with a vengeance, and brought the Revolution at once under the ban of the Pope. It would have been better to have disestablished the Church altogether, as the third French Republic has eventually had to do. But this, probably, would not have been tolerated by French public opinion in 1790. The Pope declared all who accepted the "civil constitution of the clergy" to be schismatics. A great number of priests refused to swear obedience to it, and were deprived of their benefices. Louis XVI. sanctioned the "civil constitution," but, being a pious man, felt immediately very uneasy about his immortal soul, and became, thenceforth, the secret and irreconcilable enemy of the Revolution. From this moment, he lived and hoped for the day when his brother-monarchs of Austria and Prussia should invade France and restore him to full power by force of arms. But he was still unsuspected by the multitude.

In April, 1791, Mirabeau, the one man of genius in the Assembly, died. He had led the opposition to the Court at the outset of the Revolution, and was extremely popular in consequence; but he was fundamentally a Conservative and an opportunist, and would never trifle with democracy. In the later months of his life, desiring to see a strong monarchical government established, he gave secret advice to the king in return for money payment—a proceeding which no amount of special pleading can distinguish from corruption. This was unsuspected by the people, and he died in the full enjoyment of popular esteem and veneration.

Before his death, Mirabeau had advised the king to leave Paris and place himself at the head of an army, to dictate his will to the Revolutionists. In June, 1791, Louis determined to carry out this project. The Royalist general, Bouille, was awaiting him on the Lorraine frontier. Secretly the king, queen, and royal family left Paris to join him. When driving through the small town of St. Menehould, Louis was recognized by the postmaster, Drouet; and at Varennes, a little further on, his carriage was stopped, and the party were arrested. The veil was torn asunder; Louis, after swearing to support the Constitution, was caught red-handed in an attempt to overthrow it by stratagem. He was brought back to Paris. For the first time in the history of the Revolution the cry was raised for a Republic. The Cordeliers' Club, the centre of advanced Radicalism, voiced the demand. But the Jacobins' Club, the official Liberal "caucus" (to use a modern expression), took fright at the spectre of real democracy. Even Robespierre opposed a Republic. The Assembly passed a resolution exonerating the king, and threatening the agitators with repression. The bulk of the well-to-do classes concurred. The Republicans then drew up a monster petition in favour of the deposition of the king, which was laid for signature on the public platform in the Champ de Mars, known as the "altar of the country." As the crowds came to sign it, two men were discovered hiding under the platform. It was thought that they were attempting to blow it up; and, in a sudden panic, the men were lynched by the bystanders. This gave the Government the excuse for

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strong measures. The National Guard, under Lafayette, accompanied by Bailly, Mayor of Paris, arrived on the scene. The Mayor called on the crowd to disperse; and when they did not, the Guard opened fire, hundreds of the petitioners were killed or wounded, and the first Republican movement was crushed in blood (July 17, 1791). Danton, the leader of the Cordeliers' Club, fled to England; Marat went into hiding; the Conservatives were triumphant. A split took place in the Jacobins' Club; and the monarchical and conservative section, seceding, formed a new society, the "Friends of the Monarchical Constitution," popularly known as the Feuillants'. Robespierre and the advocates of universal suffrage alone remained in the Jacobins'. Even they, as we have seen, did not raise the issue of a Republic.

(To be continued.) ROBERT ARCH.

Skeleton Sermons.

Snags of Eden.

"IT is not good that man should be alone," and the writer of that statement apparently knew what he was talking about. Undoubtedly, he had lived long enough in the world to find out all its advantages and wealth of meaning in the long run. And it is significant of much that the first thing the first man did after meeting the first woman was to marry her. Possibly he thought that was exactly what the woman was made for. Certainly it was the wisest thing for him to do; for we are all more or less mutually dependent upon each other. Night and day, summer and winter, heat and cold, man and woman represent each the complement of the other, and, had the first couple not married, the time would soon have come when scandal would have been talked by the neighbours. Mr. Adam would have had to call on Miss Eve some day to ask if she'd mind sewing a button on his fig-leaf; and some dark, weird night Miss Eve would have been compelled to call on Mr. Adam and ask him if he would please come over to her place and see what was making those strange noises in the cellar, as she feared some ghosts or burglars had got in. Then she would have to hold the candle while Adam poked round with a loaded axe or a waddy; and if the pair had been seen then, the neighbours would have had enough scandal to discuss for a year after. *Ergo*, it was a happy thought for Adam to marry Eve; and the pity is that all the Adams born ever since have not followed the good example set by the first man who faced the nuptial altar.

Again, women play a large part in the affairs of life. Our civilization to-day is in some respects lopsided because women's mentality has not had fair expression. From the time the first woman stole the first winter fruit to make an apple pie for the old man, right down to the days of Mrs. Pankhurst, she has been making history at the rate of knots. In upbraiding and denouncing Mrs. Adam for the little trouble about the apple, it is only just and courteous to a lady to say a few words in defence.

In the first place, she was only a young married woman, and she had no mother to advise her. If Adam's mother-in-law had been round keeping house and receiving visitors when the Devil called, he would have been glad to leave again and abdicate. But young Mrs. Adam's ma was not at home, or probably Adam himself would not have been out at the club that evening, and the misfortune might never have happened.

Then, again, poor Mrs. A. was just learning to make crust—another probable reason why Adam was away—and the temptation to have a real home-made apple pie on the table against his return was more than any young married woman could be expected to cope with. Perhaps only that day Adam, manlike, had growled about the prevalence of peach pie on the family dining-table, and poor Eve thought it would be a pleasant surprise to fix up a nice change.

There are scores of other excuses for the woman. It is all very well for the men to say that Adam had just gone round to look after the menagerie. Why didn't he attend to the animals in the morning, instead of spending all his time sitting on the fence smoking his pipe, while his wife, without a rag to her back, had to do all the work of the establishment? She hadn't even a girl to help her with the washing.

No wonder, poor thing, when the other gentleman made himself so agreeable that she listened to him.

THE OWL.

Correspondence.

COMPETITION AND PROGRESS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Kindly grant me space in which to briefly reply to Mr. S. Turner, jun., who is one of the authors of *Eclipse or Empire*. His letter in the *Freethinker* for January 28 suggests that I have possibly misunderstood the meaning of the above work. This may be so. Still, on looking over the book, I cannot get away from the impression it gives, that the authors look upon commercial and industrial empire as the means of the future social salvation of Great Britain and her colonies. In *Eclipse or Empire* we are called upon to work, not for all-round comfort, happiness, and culture, but for Imperialism. "Men and women must put their backs, and not their little fingers, into the development of Great Britain Unlimited" (p. 117). And while they do this, those in high places will strive to keep the toiling masses in subjection. I do not suggest that the authors of *Eclipse or Empire* wish this latter state of things to come about. My desire is to point out that it *will* come about if the ideal of industrial and commercial activity, for the sake of empire, becomes the order of the day. For the simple reason that those who have control of all this activity, and are bent on fighting for supremacy in the trade world, will forget nearly everything else. High profits, high wages, and shorter hours will not solve the difficulty, because this will mean high prices, and, as a rule, overwork during the short hours. In other words the capitalist will have his high profits at all costs, especially if he has to pay high wages for shorter hours. That means exploitation of the workers somehow; either by overwork or high prices, or both—as I above suggest. This, again, is no doubt not the conscious ideals of the authors; but I want them to realize that the exploitation of the majority of workers is involved in their ideal of all-round high profits, even with high wages and shorter hours. What is wanted is the abolition of high profit-making, or the legal taking of the surplus products of other men's labours. As the authors say in *Eclipse or Empire* (p. 117), "The mincing affectations of white-handedness, whether bred in Homes, or Schools, or Universities, or Society, must be seen no more." All who can must work for a living, but not merely for power and empire. We must have time and strength left to wash our hands now and then—that is, if a high state of social development is to be reached. If we are forced to fight for industrial supremacy, then let us not delude ourselves into believing it is the greatest thing in the world.

That strife for industrial and commercial supremacy is almost bound to lead to war, among empires engaged in the strife, seems *to me* almost an unavoidable conclusion. Why bother about *supremacy*, provided the people of an empire are all well provided for, as they would be only for our false commercial aims?

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Ignorance and arrogance are twin sisters with but one soul and one body.—*Giordano Bruno.*

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The Right to Affirm.

By the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888 affirmation may take the place of an oath in courts of law and in all other places where the taking of an oath is necessary.

Affirmation may be claimed on one of two grounds. (1) On the ground of having no religious belief, (2) on the ground of an oath being contrary to one's religious belief.

A judge or other official may ask on what ground affirmation is claimed, but no further question is warranted, and all such additional questions should be respectfully and firmly declined.

In all cases where any trouble or difficulty occurs it would be well to inform us of the circumstances at once.

National Secular Society.

Report of Executive Meeting held on January 25.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Brandes, Leat, Neary, Neate, Quinton, Roger, Silverstein, Wood, Miss Kough, Mrs. Rolf, Miss Stanley, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for the South London Branch and the Parent Society.

Permission was given for the formation of a new Branch at Falkirk.

The President reported that at the last meeting of the Joint Protest Committee, L.C.C., it was apparent that the only Society threatened with prosecution was the N.S.S. The situation was generally discussed, and the meeting adhered firmly to its former resolution.

Suggestions were made as to increased propaganda and the successful activities of the North and South London Branches reported.

The Secretary received instructions to make a similar effort in West London. Mr. Brandes offered his assistance to this end.

The death of Mr. W. P. Ball was reported by the President, who paid a high tribute to his sterling character as a Freethinker, and to his fine literary attainments which he had so generously employed in the cause of Freethought. A vote of condolence with Mr. Ball's relatives was passed unanimously.

Matters of routine business were dealt with.

E. M. Vance, *General Secretary.*

N.B.—I have to thank those members of the Parent Society who responded to the intimation that all subscriptions became due on January 1st, but there are still some outstanding subscriptions I should be glad to receive in the course of the next few days.

E. M. V.

We are not allowed to grow up before choosing our religion. We as little choose our religion as we choose to be born. It is done for us wirhout our having part in it.—*Cardinal Newman.*

Obituary.

The death of Mr. Thos. Coles removes from the membership of the New Era Union (Abertillery), one of the oldest Freethinkers in South Wales. Quiet and unostentatious in his manner, deceased met his death as only a convinced Freethinker can. The Secular Service was conducted by Mr. J. H. Edwards, of Cardiff, who delivered a most impressive address at the graveside.

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, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "Is Mind Evolved from Matter?" Introduced by J. Van Biene.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, C. E. Ratcliffe, "Man's Responsibility to Man."

Mr. Howell Smith's Discussion Class (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Feb. 8, at 7.30.

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales, "Omnipresence"; 6.30, Messrs. Beale and Saphin.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Abertillery (Tillery Institute): Chapman Cohen, 3, "A World Without God"; 6, "Can Christianity Survive the War?"

Leicester (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate); 6.30, W. H. Scott, "Reformers' Knots."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): 7, E. Egerton Stafford, "Dreams, in Relation to Religion."

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Views and Opinions.

The Wastage of War.

Somewhere about fifteen months ago we wrote an article with the title that stands at the head of this paragraph. It was there pointed out that the supreme wastage of this War is not the destruction of economic wealth, great as that has been; nor is it the loss of life—counting those who have fallen as so many biological units. Our supreme loss is neither economic nor biologic. It is, in a word, psychologic, and one which threatens to have a very serious effect on the general social environment. To realize this, one must bear in mind how radically our present Army differs from previous armies that have fought our battles. Then the Army was small; it was largely composed of what one may term the naturally militaristic, and it was voluntary in the full sense of the term. To-day our Army is large, colossal even; it is largely raised by compulsion—either compulsion by law or by social pressure—and it comprises the pick of the nation's manhood, physically, mentally, and morally. All the qualities that made thousands of men powerful influences for good in the life of the nation—love of right, a keen sense of duty, hatred of injustice, and a desire to have done for ever with the menace of war—have led to their risking, and often losing, their lives in this War. It is this psychologic wastage that is of supreme importance to the world, because it spells a poorer social environment for the rising generation.

* * *

War and the Elimination of the Fittest.

We were reminded of this old article of ours because we noticed that Mr. W. D. Whetham, the well-known writer on Eugenics, has been dealing with the same subject, but in a manner that invites criticism. Mr. Whetham is rather more concerned with the loss of young officers than his subject warrants, since it is by no means clear that the officers represent units of greater racial value than do the privates, and of necessity the death-roll in the latter direction has been the heavier. But in the main his contention on this head is a sound one. The deaths in this War represent a greater racial loss than has been the case in previous wars, and for the very reason that the appeal for service has led of necessity to a sacrifice of those who possessed qualities of the greatest social value. In the case of the Universities, Mr. Whetham points out, "in eighteen months some 3,000 applications were dealt with. In the rush of the first few weeks came the brightest and best of the young men; in the 'First Hundred Thousand' they went to the Front, and many of them have already fallen."

* * *

Quantity or Quality?

But having gone thus far, Mr. Whetham quite misses the significance of the phenomenon from the point of view of a scientific sociology. His remedy consists in the advocacy of an enlarged birth-rate to make good the wastage of war—ignoring the fact that it is at least an arguable proposition that increasing population is one of the factors that make for war. The State must, he says, pay an adequate price for larger families, in order to make good the wastage of war. Income tax must be so adjusted that it falls heaviest on the single man, less heavy on the man with a small family, while the man with a large family will escape altogether. But how will that solve the problem? Mere increase of population is not in itself a good. Large families are not in themselves better than small ones. Ruskin was absolutely right when he said that it was of no vital consequence whether a man had two children or four children, but it is a matter of very real consequence whether the children he does have deserve to be hanged or not. The great disaster of the War is not in the number, but in the quality, of those killed. Assuming that men and women have larger families than they would otherwise, because they may escape some measure of taxation, or earn a Government grant (which in itself would argue parentage of a not very high order), how would this make good the deterioration in the social environment consequent on the War? To ask the question is really to answer it. It would provide more people, but it is certain that there is no guarantee here that it would provide those of the quality desired.

* * *

The Social Mind.

Let us look at the problem really before us. Human conduct is in the nature of a reaction to environment. There is the character of the stimuli which invites response, and there is the nature of the organism which determines the character of the reaction. That both the influence of environment and the character of the reaction to identical stimuli vary from age to age is so plain as not to require proof. A word or an action which would in the mediæval period have led to a duel, is to-day passed by with contempt, or dealt with by an appeal to the law. And yet, if one were to transport the infant son of a modern Englishman to a society in which the practice of the duel still existed, he would resort to that method of vindicating his "honour" quite as readily as did his forefathers. The difference is one that

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is entirely due to a modification of the social structure. But the structure of society—certainly so far as we are concerned with it here—is entirely a question of psychology or of psychological inheritance. Each new individual is born into a network of ideas, ideals, or beliefs, which fashion conduct and determine our notions of right and wrong. All literature, all inventions, all the accumulated knowledge and experience of the race, operates to determine the conduct of the individual. Social or psychological heredity *plus* the capacity for acquisition, that is the whole problem of conduct reduced to a formula. * * *

The Price of War.

Now the peculiar and deadly wastage of this War is that it threatens a poorer and lower environmental influence for the next generation. We agree with Mr. Whetham when he says that while the death of an old general may be a disaster from a military point of view, the death of a young subaltern may be a greater disaster from a racial point of view. A large number of those engaged in war, and paying the price of war with their lives—the artists, the scientists, the men of letters, the educated young men filled with modern ideas and inspired by progressive ideals—all these represent an environmental influence of the greatest possible value. In a few years they would stand for the better and higher environment to which our young manhood would adapt itself. All wars kill off the physically fit, it is a peculiarity of this War in which nations and not merely armies are engaged, that it kills off the mentally fit likewise. When the War is over, it may well be that stupidity and reaction will have fewer enemies to fight because of the many alert minds and brave hearts that are no longer with us. And how will an increased birth-rate help us then? To encourage larger families will mean a larger population—although there may arise circumstances that will negative this—but will it secure a better and higher social environment? There is certainly no biological connection between fecundity and high organization, the connection is rather between that and low organization; and there is as little reason for assuming that by encouraging large families we shall make good the most important loss brought about by the War. * * *

The Condition of Progress.

We quite agree with Mr. Whetham that the production, maintenance, and education of children ought to be regarded as a contribution to the capital wealth of the community. But the value of these children, how far they are contributions to the process of civilization will be determined by the kind of education given, which will, in turn, be largely determined by the social environment in which they live. It is for this reason that we have protested so often against the introduction of military (not physical) training into the nation's schools. We can, if we like, turn out a generation of soldiers—Germany has shown what can be done by using the schools—in Liebknecht's phrase—as training stables for the Army. But I am quite certain that if we do so, and so far as we do, we shall secure a reaction on a lower plane to environmental stimuli. On the other hand, if we are in earnest in our desire to see the world at peace, and permanently at peace, we must see to it that thoughts of peace and ideals of peace shall predominate over thoughts and ideals of war. We must work to create an environment that shall be fatal to the very idea of war, and which shall render armed conflicts between nations as ridiculous as armed conflicts between individuals. This war, as Mr. Whetham points out, must leave us racially poorer; and, it seems to me, that the right way to regain that lost wealth is, not by way of calling out for a larger birth-rate, but by seeing that those born enter into an environment in which desirable ideas and ideals exert a commanding influence.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Heathen."

ACCORDING to the latest and best etymological authorities, including Murray's *New English Dictionary*, the term "heathen" comes from *heath*, and in primitive times, no doubt, the heathen were people who lived in the country, or on the heaths and in the woods, just as Pagans were originally villagers, peasants, rustics. To-day, however, both terms carry an unpleasant, religious significance, being applied in Christendom to the non-Christian population of the world. In Biblical times, by heathen we are to understand the nations whose religion was neither Jewish, Jewish-Christian, nor Christian. In the Old Testament the heathen are tribes or nations inferior to, and looked down upon, by the Israelites, with whom the chosen people were forbidden to have any intercourse except as hewers of wood and drawers of water. Jehovah regarded them as only fit for perpetual slavery. Here lies the root out of which has grown the present-day estimate of, and attitude to, the Heathen or Pagan world:—

> Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the Heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids..... and ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever (Leviticus xxv. 44, 46).

We read again and again of "the abominations of the Heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel," and "concerning whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them."

Coming over to the New Testament, we find a considerable intensification of the same estimate and attitude. Even in the Sermon on the Mount, the disciples are solemnly warned against imitating the Heathen. The Gospel Jesus expresses his contempt for the Heathen when he says, concerning an offending brother who cannot be brought into a realization of his fault, "Let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a publican." Everybody is familiar with Paul's dark picture of the Pagan world in the first chapter of Romans, in which God himself appears as a monster of callousness and cruelty. Here we see the Deity giving the poor Heathen over "to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, unmerciful."

Now, the effect of such teaching upon the Christian mind was to embitter it, which embitterment expressed itself in angry denunciation, and later in persecution and extermination. As soon as the Church became strong enough, it suppressed the Pagan worship by brute force, and by the same means came to dominate every department of life. After the conversion of the Western world to Christianity, the Eastern world still lay in the embrace of Heathenism, and to the converted West ultimately became an object of commiseration, which feeling embodied itself in what we know as Foreign Missions. Many millions of pounds have already been spent in the attempt to Christianize the Heathen. Missioners have gone forth in their hundreds, ostensibly constrained by the love of Christ, and their descriptions of the degraded and hopeless condition of the Christless East

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are all based upon Paul's portraiture of the once Pagan West. Thus it has always been the unanimous teaching of the Christian Church that the Heathen are unspeakably corrupt in mind and manners, deplorably lost to all sense of morality and decency, and indescribably miserable.

Such is the Christian conception of the state of things in Heathendom, and such is the motive behind all Foreign Missions; and our only charge against it is that it *totally disregards the actual facts*. In the late Professor Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites* we learn that the religious beliefs and practices of all the Semitic tribes were exceedingly similar, and that in no respect was any one tribe much superior to the rest. Indeed, this is rendered practically certain from many admissions contained in the Old Testament itself. The Israelites were continually accused of following in the footsteps of their Heathen neighbours by their own prophets. A tolerable acquaintance with the history of pre-Christian Rome suffices to convince any fair-minded person that Paul's account of it is as much a caricature as are Juvenal's *Satires*. All the vices of Pagan Rome are to be found in Christendom to-day by those who have eyes to see them. On the other hand, it is an irrefutable fact that, taking it all in all, the ethical standard of Paganism was, and is, superior to that of Christianity, not to mention that of Judaism. Cicero was by no means a superior type of a Pagan; and yet even he cherished and expressed the following noble sentiment:—

> They who say that we should love our fellow-citizens, but not foreigners, destroy the universal brotherhood of mankind, with which benevolence and justice would perish for ever.

In all its stages, Stoic philosophy abounds in sentiments of that order, and in personalities in whom they were beautifully exemplified. But we hasten to call special attention to a modern instance of Heathen "saintliness." Most of us know the story of Foreign Missions amongst the South Sea Islands. In many respects it is a terribly sad and humiliating story, with disastrous consequences, in several cases, to the natives. In Jack London's *South Sea Tales* is a story entitled "The Heathen." It introduces us to a white man, called Charley, who tells the tale, and a native of one of the islands, named Otoo (pronounced O-to-to). Charley was a pearl-buyer, and he and Otoo were together without meeting on the schooner *Petite Jeanne*, the former as cabin passenger and the latter as one of the crew, during a voyage between Rangiroa and Papeete. The *Petite Jeanne* never reached Papeete, for it encountered a terrific hurricane and literally went to pieces, and out of its ninety-one passengers and eight or ten Kanaka seamen, only two, Charley and Otoo, were saved. Now, mark, Otoo was dubbed a Heathen by all who knew him, and by most he was so-called in derision. To him the supernatural did not exist.

> He knew nothing of common Christian morality. All the people on Bora Bora were Christians; but he was a Heathen, the only unbeliever on the island, a gross Materialist, who believed that when he died he was dead (pp. 137-8).

Now observe how this born Atheist conducted himself in most trying circumstances. Charley picked up with one of the wrecked vessels' hatch-covers, on which he managed to keep afloat in spite of serious difficulties. Bear in mind that Oudouse, captain of the lost schooner, was a Christian. Otoo had succeeded in getting hold of a hatch-cover, and the moment he saw Captain Oudouse swimming, but almost at his last breath, he invited him to share his cover. This is the sequel as related by Charley:—

> Not twenty feet away from me, on another hatch-cover, were Captain Oudouse and the Heathen. They were fighting for the possession of the cover—at least the Frenchman was. Paien noir (Black Pagan), I heard him scream, and, at the same time, I saw him kick the Kanaka.
>
> Now, Captain Oudouse had lost all his clothes, except his shoes, and they were heavy brogans. It was a cruel blow, for it caught the Heathen on the mouth and the point of the chin, half stunning him. I looked for him to retaliate, but he contented himself with swimming about forlornly, a safe ten feet away. Whenever a fling of the sea threw him closer, the Frenchman, hanging on with his hands, kicked out at him with both feet. Also, at the moment of delivering each kick he called the Kanaka a black Heathen.
>
> "For ten centimes I'd come over there and drown you, you white beast!" I yelled.
>
> The only reason I did not go was that I felt too tired. The very thought of the effort to swim over was nauseating. So I called to the Kanaka to come to me, and proceeded to share the hatch-cover with him (pp. 129-30).

That was how the two first came together. They shared the hatch-cover between them, taking "turn and turn about, one lying flat on the cover and resting, while the other, submerged to the neck, merely held on with his hands." This went on for several days and nights until towards the last Charley was delirious most of the time.

> In the end, Otoo saved my life; for I came to lying, on the beach twenty feet from the water, sheltered from the sun by a couple of cocoanut leaves. No one but Otoo could have dragged me there and stuck up the leaves for shade. He was lying beside me. I went off again; and the next time I came round, it was a cool and starry night, and Otoo was pressing a drinking cocoanut to my lips (pp. 132-3).

For seventeen years they were together, ranging the Pacific from Hawaii to Sydney Head, and from Torres Straits to the Galapagos, and blackbirding from the New Hebrides and the Line Islands over to the westward clear through the Louisiades, New Britain, New Ireland, and New Hanover. Three times they were wrecked; and they traded and salved wherever a dollar could be made. Otoo was always at Charley's shoulder, watching while he slept, nursing him through fever and wounds—ay, and receiving wounds in fighting for him. Twice the "gross Materialist" saved his friend's life and the second time at the sacrifice of his own.

> Seventeen years we were together. He made me. I should to-day be a supercargo, a recruiter, or a memory, if it had not been for him (p. 143).
>
> He was no fighter. He was all sweetness and gentleness, a love-creature, though he stood nearly six feet tall and was muscled like a gladiator. He was no fighter, but he was also no coward. He had the heart of a lion, and I have seen him run risks I would never dream of taking (p. 131).

There are savages, some of whom are still cannibals; but even among the lowest savages there are multitudes who need no lessons from the so-called civilized nations in the simple art of living and serving their fellow-beings. But all the Heathens are not savages, millions of them standing high up in the scale of human worth, and capable of giving valuable lessons to many of those who consider themselves infinitely their superior. And yet the Christian pulpit has the temerity to assure us that without Christ mankind is lost, and to send missionaries to convert Heathens who need no converting.

J. T. LLOYD.

Theology is a child of philosophy which is always striving to assassinate its own mother.—*O. B. Niccolini.*

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Was Napoleon a Freethinker?

Whose game was empires, and whose stake was thrones,
Whose table earth. —*Byron*.

Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.—*Shakespeare*.

INTEREST in Napoleon Bonaparte has been heightened by the great European War. He appears to have been the last of the great soldiers who have impressed mankind, and modern warfare has not, since his time, produced a personality who sets the world alight before he is thirty years of age. Hence the War epoch through which we are passing tempts many to hark back to the remarkable being who was a great general from early manhood.

The trait that first and last most impresses us is the amazing personality of Napoleon. Even after his death this characteristic told in some inexplicable way upon those who came in contact with him. Ensign Duncan, a young English officer, who was on duty at Longwood at the time of Napoleon's death, and on two succeeding days visited the chamber of death, has recorded this impression in memorable words. Writing home to his mother, he said :—

> To see a man who had caused Europe and the world at large so much trouble lying in a small room, in his military cloak and camp bed, dressed in his full uniform, was an awful sight. It struck me so I could have gazed on him for hours, have taken his hand and kissed it, but I could scarce breathe. What would not thousands of people have given to see what I have seen?

Since that day much ink has been spilt on Napoleonic history. Opportunely comes the new and cheap edition of Lord Rosebery's *Napoleon, The Last Phase* (Nelson), which is no mere recital of the last days in the life of one of the greatest of mankind, but contains a wealth of wit and wisdom that will cause readers to turn again and again to the book, which throws a flood of light upon the unique personality who changed the map of Europe. The new edition is very welcome, for it contains a new introductory chapter in Lord Rosebery's best vein, which has an added value because the author is a man of action as well as a man of letters.

The real treasures of Lord Rosebery's book are the chapters devoted to Napoleon's personal traits. Emerson regarded Napoleon as the supreme type of the man of the world, and the critical Thomas Carlyle admitted that the one article of Bonaparte's faith was "the tools to him that can handle them." Lord Rosebery's painstaking researches certainly add additional weight to this view, although Napoleon's character baffled so many men. Even his own brother was mesmerized, for, after the Emperor's death, he marvelled at the impression his dead brother had produced on men. "He was not so much a great, as a good man," he said, simply. And he was not the only man deceived by this Colussus, who bestrode Europe for a generation, and whose greatness endures beyond death.

Critics say that some of Napoleon's conquests were splendid rather than useful; but they cannot deny that the ardour of his magnetic personality set France on fire. It inflamed every soldier who dragged the cannon over the sands of Egypt, and every warrior who carried his musket among the snows of Russia. Napoleon also imparted to his marshals something of his own impetuous and adventurous career. And when victory begot victory, nothing seemed impossible, for none then foresaw the melancholy and inglorious close of the Emperor's career, so feelingly described in Lord Rosebery's book, or that still later period when a charlatan Napoleon humiliated France to the very dust.

To Freethinkers the most interesting pages will be those that deal with Napoleon's views on religion. Lord Rosebery has some very pertinent remarks on this matter :—

> We have, of course, often read anecdotes in which the Emperor is represented as pointing to the firmament and declaiming a vague theism. Newman, too, in a noble passage, has given from tradition the final judgment passed on Christianity by Napoleon at St. Helena, wherein he is reported to have compared the shadowy fame of Cæsar and Alexander with the living force of Christ, and to have summed up with, "Can he be less than divine?" But the real Napoleon talked in a very different fashion.

This is put excellently. As a fact, Napoleon preferred Mohammedanism to Christianity. He objected to the Christian religion because it would damn Plato and Socrates, and he questioned the justice of eternal punishment for finite offences. He also agreed with the Mohammedans that Christians who worshipped three deities must, necessarily, be Polytheists and Pagans. "As for me," Napoleon breaks out on one occasion, "my opinion is formed that Christ never existed." As to man, he proclaimed himself a Materialist. In all this he was a true son of the great Revolution, which has changed, and is changing, the face of the civilized world.

Like so many monarchs, Napoleon was cynical in using religion to further his schemes; but he frankly admitted the soft impeachment: –

> It was by becoming a Catholic that I pacified the Vendee, and a Mussulman that I established myself in Egypt; it was by becoming Ultramontane that I won over public opinion in Italy. If I ruled a people of Jews, I would rebuild the temple of Solomon.

This patronage of religion in a ruler of a nation is understandable, for the Roman emperors did it systematically. Did not Henry of Navarre retract his Protestant views, saying that "Paris was well worth a mass"? And in quite recent days the "Holy Carpet" of the Mohammedans was saluted by British warships, and everywhere, during its journey, received with military honours at the hands of Christian soldiers. Napoleon's Catholicism was assumed to please his subjects, the majority of whom were Catholics. Yet his treatment of the Pope was brutal. In forcing the Pontiff to attend his coronation, he had no other object except that of impressing the crowd. His tolerance of the Catholic Church was not for any higher motive than that of consolidating his rule, for he was sufficiently sagacious to know that the priests would be better in harness than as open enemies. Napoleon always used religion to further his own ends, although he was himself as irreligious as Voltaire, though he had none of that passion for humanity which distinguished the great writer.

Yet Napoleon could be very human at times. Whilst walking at St. Helena with a lady, a heavily burdened peasant approached on the narrow road. "Respect the burden, madam," said the Emperor, as he stood back to let the man pass. Indeed, a mere catalogue of Napoleon's actions is more profitable than a string of epithets.

One could devote columns to so fascinating a subject, but our readers will do well to turn to Lord Rosebery's book for themselves. It is written by a master of style, who, had not his life been largely devoted to public affairs, might have made a great name in literature. Every page is worth reading and re-reading, which marks it out very definitely from the ephemeral publications of the day. And Lord Rosebery's final verdict on the last phase of Napoleon's life is well worth quoting and remembering :—

> It would be well if the sombre episode of St. Helena could be blotted out of history in the interests of Great Britain and Napoleon; it is not a bright page for either it consorts with the dignity of neither.

MIMNERMUS.

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Religion and Brutality.

THE Christian apologist has been put to sore straits ever since the beginning of the War by the cold-blooded brutalities of the Huns in their conduct of the War. Such an exhibition of inhuman barbarities was considered to be impossible in the case of people who professed the Christian religion. And it must be admitted that their incredulity is fully justified if they look upon the precept which enjoins them to turn the other cheek to the smiter as an *altruistic* maxim to be strictly observed by all Christians. To such people the spectacle of a famous Christian nation indulging in all sorts of unprovoked atrocities, and apparently revelling in their infamous work, naturally suggested the very negation of Christianity. Hence, as a way of escape out of their unpleasant dilemma, they were driven to deny the Germans any sincerity of religious conviction. The Christian devotion and zeal of the German nation is simply an undeniable fact; it must, therefore, be a form of organized hypocrisy. It is "Materialism" in the guise of Christianity; a correct statement, in the sense that it is true of every Christian country. No organization in the world is more materialistic in arms and ambitions than the Christian Church.

It never occurs to these apologists to turn their attention the other way, and see if they can find a single instance of even an attempt at putting that famous injunction into practice by any section of the Church; or, again, to inquire if the maxim itself was ever intended as a precept of *altruistic* morality. They simply *assume* that it was enjoined to be observed for the *sake of others*, and that true Christians have always done so!

A little reflection upon the annals of history, especially ecclesiastical history, would have taught them that religion and brutality are "familiar friends"; indeed, they are so correlated that the degree of inhumanity displayed has often been regarded as a measure of religious zeal.

It may be easily shown either psychologically or from history that a Monotheistic religion tends to make morality egoistic and clannish within the religious fold, and prohibited or inverted to those outside its pale. I need hardly say that I do not refer to the Monotheism of philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, with which, unfortunately, it is persistently confounded, but to the Monotheism of a Deity with an individual or "proper" name; that is, to the Monotheism created by priests, who, not lacking in self-confidence, and seeking self-aggrandizement, promoted or elevated their tribal deity to the place of highest honour by declaring him to be the supreme God. This "priestly made" or "promoted" mono-god retains all the traits of its former self, even to its name; his care is still the tribe or its equivalent, the Church. His attributes are simply extended and magnified.

The basic presumption of this sacerdotal Monotheism, viz., that of being the one true religion, inevitably engenders in its followers a spirit of supercilious hauteur, and makes tolerance of other religions an inconsistency. Perforce it becomes aggressive and despotic; and when two religions of this order meet in arms, there ensues such a spectacle of woe as would make the gods weep were they touched with human pity. Let the reader revert in thought to the Crusades of history.

But it is not only in the case of a collision of "likes" that such a religion tends to make the exercise of ordinary morality impossible beyond its own pale. The fact is sufficiently exemplified in the history of Judaism and of Christianity.

Jahveh showed neither mercy nor justice towards people who were not Israelites. His savage commands to "put everything that breatheth to the edge of the sword," "destroy them utterly," and the like, simply indicate the moral attitude and spirits of the Jews towards the Gentile world. The same lesson is taught by the egregious treachery of St. Bartholomew's Massacre, the wholesale murder of the Albigenses, and by the long list of villainies perpetrated by the Holy Inquisition. It reveals beyond possible cavil or doubt the fact that the moral code which "holy" Christian zeal provided for the conscience of Catholics, in the case of heretics and Protestants, was "treachery," "robbery," and "murder." These enormities were even regarded as virtues! And the same limitations of moral obligations characterized the inter-relations of all the Monotheistic fragments of the great historic Church; the same "gentle" spirit permeated all the strictly orthodox sections till modern Humanism assuaged their mutual bitterness.

The lesson, therefore, from these few historical references (which, by-the-bye, could be multiplied a thousandfold) is that barbarous atrocities were never considered by the Church, either Jewish or Christian, to be in any way inconsistent with a zealous profession of the Faith. Indeed, as I have already said, they were often taken as a test of divine loyalty and religious zeal.

But it may be retorted that Germany is not now engaged in a religious war, and that her enemies worship the very same God. Very true. But history likewise tells us that, in order to replace the moral law by a code of rapine and murder, it is not necessary to have a religious quarrel as a pretext to awaken the religious conscience of people. A Monotheistic cult always strives to become supreme in its own state—socially as well as religiously. The one aim of its priesthood is to hold the reins of both secular and religious authorities, and to unite king and priest in one person. And the reason is obvious: it is the one condition essential to enable it to impose its "one true creed and ritual" upon all.

When, however, it cannot capture the throne, it seeks to direct and control it from behind. This alliance, whether it be explicit or implicit, has received the name of "theocracy," or god-rule. Strictly speaking, it should be called "hierocracy," or priest-rule; for it is a government by the priesthood in the name of its deity. Religious and secular interests are thus unified, though the former takes precedence in all things. A theocracy may, therefore, be compared to a bipolar ganglion; for it is stimulated to action equally by either branch, the religious or secular. Interference with the secular interests of this ecclesiastical State is as furiously resented as if you touched its creed or ritual.

Now, Germany is virtually a theocracy. That is the meaning of the divine right of kings claimed by the Kaiser. He regards himself as Jahveh's viceroy—Germany's tutular divinity. Hence, religion and politics, or Church and State, are in the Fatherland united in one compound system, having one authoritative head in the Kaiser, who is both king and high priest. The interests of religion and of the State are there one. Whatever, therefore, promotes the general welfare of this great Christian fold is good, and whatever tends to injure it is evil. The enemies of the Fatherland are foes of Jahveh, and are therefore *outlaws*, to be tortured and slain by anyone who may or can. By so doing, he does a service to Germany and Germany's God; and so they pray, "Gott strafe England." Moral obligations are due to no one that fights against the Fatherland; indeed, to no one who does not fight with her. To assume that brutality and a sincere profession of a Monotheistic religion cannot reside within the same person is to shut one's eyes wilfully to one of the most palpable lessons of Christian history.

KERIDON.

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Religion in Russia.

I.—PAGANISM.

IN ancient times His Worship the Mayor of Heaven was as condescending towards the Russians in matters of religion as "He" has always been in the case of every other nation in the early days of history. Doubtless "He" deemed it wise to reserve the true revelation of "His" divine will until a later period, thinking it consistent with divine intellectual honesty to allow the Russians to live for centuries in the darkness of their pagan superstition.

No trace of Christianity, the so-called authoritative revelation of the way of salvation according to the "Will of God," is discernible in Russia for nearly nine centuries of the Christian era at least.

As the majority of Russians belong to the Slavonic family of the Aryan race, we must turn to the mythology of the Slavs for an idea of the evolution of religion, beliefs, and ceremonies in Russia. In doing so we shall meet with confirmation of the fact that the general evolution of religion has been the same throughout the world. From pre-human animal life there has been passed on to man the tendency to animize the inanimate objects of his environment, a tendency that has been prolific in the production of religious beliefs, especially when under cultivation by the ingenious members of the priestcraft.

Unable to realize the meaning of the various phenomena, with which they were surrounded, the early Slavs performed superstitious rites and magic charms in order to gain favour with objects from which they feared harm might come. In time, feelings of gratitude and joy towards certain external phenomena developed, and produced a belief in kindly disposed silvan spirits who populated the woods and forests, and gave joy to all human beings who sought to please them. But the feeling of fear has been such an essential element in religious emotion that it has persisted even into the most fanciful beliefs concerning nymphs and genii. There have been good and bad among these beings of the grottos, the mountains, the trees, the rivers, and the flowers. As S. Reinach says:—

> The nymphs mentioned by Procopious were the Vilas, common to all save the Baltic Slavs. The Vilas, who inhabited the clouds, the earth, and the waters, were pretty girls who passed their time dancing and hunting. Though sometimes benevolent and healers of sickness, they were often maleficent, raising tempests, killing or blinding those who surprised them bathing, and inflicting fits of delirium, like the Greek nymph (*Orpheus*, pp. 145-6).

Sacrifices of oxen, and even human beings, were frequently offered, by the ancient Slavs to their river-gods, and Volusu the god of flocks. The arts of divination were also performed in the hope that some knowledge of the future prosperity, or otherwise, of the fisherman or herdsmen might be obtained.

Among the principal deities of the Slavs in Poland and Russia were Lada the goddess of love and pleasure; Kupala god of the fruits of the earth; Kolida god of festivals; and, Forlong tells us, that three great rivers, the Dnieper, the Don, and the Bug, were represented by images and adored. (Art. 'Slavs' in *Faiths of Man*, vol. i., p. 318).

The chief deity of the Slavs, however, was Perun or Perkunas the god of thunder or of the sky and fire. He was "lord of the universe," to whom cattle and other victims were sacrificed. His wife was the earth, but he seems to have had an interest in Stri-bog the sun-goddess. The ancient Russians kept a perpetual fire burning in connection with his worship, but fire was also a symbol of the sun. Not only so, according to one writer, Perkunas or Perun is represented, in Lithuanian songs, as a champion of the sun-goddess.

> According to one of these songs Perkunas cleft the moon—which, we must remember, is masculine among the Slavs—for his infidelity to the sun, which is feminine. He had deserted her and fallen into love with Jutrzenka, or the morning-star (*Religious Systems of the World*, p. 262; *Slavonic Religion*, by W. R. Morfill).

The Slavonic conception of the god Perun was in keeping with one aspect of the popular idea of God, which implies wealth and power. Perun manifests his power in the making and weilding of thunder-bolts. So persistent has the worship of Perun been that he is in reality worshipped under the guise of the prophet Elias by many modern Russians. The powers of Perun, as god of thunder, have been transferred to Elias. When it thunders it is Elias driving in his chariot on the clouds, while the flashes of lightning are the arrows, which in anger, he throws to the earth. It is for him to send or withhold the rain or hail, and to him the people pray that the harvest may be abundant. (See Stepniak, *Russian Peasantry*, p. 359, vol. i., ed. 1905). Such is the power of Christianity to purify the world from pagan beliefs!

With the Baltic Slavs, one of the most important deities was Sviantovit, to whom there was erected at Arkona, the capital of Rugen, a fine temple constructed of wood. He was a god of war, who seems to have been closely associated with the agricultural and pastoral pursuits of his people. Year by year, when the harvesting was over, a great ceremony was held in his honour. Much feasting took place, and sobriety on the occasion was looked upon as sinful. During the ceremony it was the duty of the priest to take from the hand of the idol, of Sviantovit, a horn which had been filled with liquor at the previous harvest-time. From this he predicted whether there would be plenty at the next harvest.

In the worship of the river-gods, the god of flocks, the god of fruits, and in the worship of Sviantovit and Perun we note the influence of the economic factor. Here is man expressing gratitude for a full stomach, and hoping that a plentiful supply of food will be forthcoming in the near future.

Some idea as to the power of the soul to exist apart from the body seems to have developed among the early Russians. They were in the habit of placing various things around their graves in the hope that the one who had departed this life would make use of the gifts in the other world. To quote S. Reinach:—

> The word *raj*, common to all the Slavs, must have meant the other world before it was used to designate the Christian Paradise. The rites of burial and cremation were both practised; Slav widows, like those of the Hindus, were sometimes burnt on their husbands' funeral pyres. Banquets were given in honour of the dead, who were supposed to eat the remains. There is still a survival from this custom" (*Orpheus*, p. 147).

With the development of the patriarchal state of society from the Matriarchate, there seems to have developed a belief in ancestor-worship, and in the existence of house-spirits. The chief house-spirit, called the grandfather of the house, was believed to remain in hiding during the day, and to come out during the night. Then he would eat whatever food was left for him. His blessings and help were invoked, and sacrifices were offered to him. When the peasant and his family changed their abode, they invited all the house-spirits of their own household to go with them. Even now, at the celebration of a country wedding, in

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many parts of Russia, the bride goes through a ceremony of farewell to the house-spirits of her parent's household. After this she must perform the rites of introduction to the spirits of her husband's household. In the case of a bride who has misconducted herself before marriage, she must undergo a process of purification. This she does by sitting in a carriage by the side of her future husband, and thus crossing a huge fire which is ablaze in the yard of the bridegroom's house. A pagan method of purification nearly as cheap as the Christian washing in the "blood of the Lamb." (See Maxime Kovalevsky's *Modern Customs and Ancient Laws of Russia*, pp. 23-36; W. R. Morfill's *Slavonic Religion* in *Religious Systems of the World*, p. 266; and S. Reinach's *Orpheus*, p. 146).

For a long time the Russian peasants were "pagan" enough to believe that, provided they had their parent's approval, young people could be truly married without the consecrating hands of the priest being waived over them. This, however, did not mean good business to the Church. So the usual scheming for power and pelf was entered upon until marriage was turned into a Christian *sacrament* in Russia as in other Christianized countries. To quote Kovalevsky (as above, p. 37):—

> For many centuries the Russian clergy had to fight against the inveterate custom of our lower classes to contract unions without the sanction of the Church. The young couple saved the expense of a religious ceremony and thought their union legally established as soon as they were publicly joined to each other in the presence of the community.

"Saved the expense of a religious ceremony." Oh, the poor clergy!

As the worship of the Phallus, or male reproductive organ, has been one of the most widespread of religious acts, it is not surprising that it is to be found in Russia.

In the sixteenth century a Russian monk, named Pamphil, complains of the yearly phallic festivals, in which a good deal of sexual promiscuity took place. In the State of Novgorod the worshippers went to the banks of the rivers to hold their meetings, and to perform the rites which had been indulged in by their ancestors in pre-Christian days. Speaking of this M. Kovalevsky says:—

> The meetings took place, as a rule, the day before the festival of St. John the Baptist, which, in pagan times, was that of a divinity known by the name of Jarilo, corresponding to the Priapus of the Greeks (as above p. 11).

It is known that phallic festivals in honour of pagan deities have persisted into modern times in many parts of Russia. Here we have but another instance of the fact that widespread conversion to Christianity often, if not always, means nothing more than the adoption of Christian names, to take the place of the old, for various beliefs, rites, and ceremonies. Some modifications take place as time goes on, but, fundamentally, the pagan ways and pagan thoughts are there.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

(To be concluded.)

It is, of course, not the Germans, but our noble Allies, the French, who have completely secularized national education. Has the result been disastrous to the *moral* of the French nation? Is true religion weaker or stronger in France than it was when the educational system was effectively controlled by the clergy? Religion will not perish if it ceases to be indifferently taught *ex officio* to herds of inattentive babies in the elementary schools, and religious influence will remain in the only force that tells—the personal characters of the masters and mistresses.—*Professor Alison Phillips.*

Acid Drops.

Freethinker readers will probably remember the story circulated concerning the late Queen Victoria and the African chief. It ran that the Queen handed a Bible to the chief, remarking that that was the source of England's greatness. When some inquisitive person ran the story to earth, it was confessed that it was "founded on a misapprehension." A similar fate has now overtaken another and similar legend in which the late Lord Roberts figured. That impossible and constitutionally unveracious person, the Bishop of London, stated in a National Mission leaflet that Lord Roberts, shortly before his death, said, "We have got the men, we have got the guns, we have got the money; what we now want is a nation on its knees." For our own part, we considered it the kind of thing that Lord Roberts might have said, since he had said things equally silly; and a nation on its knees is what many would desire for various reasons. A great many things would be possible were that end achieved. As Ambrose Bierce remarked, camels and men take their burdens kneeling.

But it turns out that this story is one more to be added to the list of pious lies. *John Bull* wrote to the Bishop, asking for his authority for the statement. He was referred to a little booklet by the Rev. E. A. Burroughes. On the latter being written, he replied that the story was given him by a friend, who had seen it in a letter written by Lord Roberts, but he had not seen the letter itself. The name of this friend was given as Dr. Richardson, of the Church Army. On being written to, Dr. Richardson replied that *he* had not seen the letter; the sentence had been repeated to him by a friend. Dr. Richardson suggested that a certain member of Lord Roberts' family would be the best person of whom inquire. To an inquiry, this relative of Lord Robert replied:—

> I am quite certain Lord Roberts never made the statement you quote in your letter.....You are at liberty to say that Lord Roberts never made the statement.

Finally, on being confronted with this disclaimer, the Bishop of London replied, through his secretary: "If you can prove to the Bishop that this story about Lord Roberts is untrue, it is needless to say that, should a new edition of *Cleansing London* be issued, the Bishop would withdraw the quotation from it."

Observe the attitude of this man whose professed desire is to moralize London. He cites a story on behalf of which not a shred of evidence is offered. He is confronted with the statement that a member of Lord Roberts's family flatly denies that it was made, and *his* reply is that he will keep on telling the lie until you prove that Lord Roberts never said it! How on earth can one prove that a dead man never said it? Not being a bishop we were under the impression that right-minded people required some evidence *for* a statement before making it. Bishop Ingram's rule is the other way about. And we have no hesitation in saying that the rule indicates the man. Anything is lawful so long as it serves his purpose. Any statement is permissible so long as it serves the purpose of the Church. We suggest to the bishop—no, not to the Bishop, he is hopeless, but to the public—that one way of improving the morals of the Christian world would be to cultivate a sense of intellectual rectitude.

Writing on "Religion and the War" in a Sunday paper, Rita, the well-known novelist, says, "Every commandment, every tenet of faith and justice, every doctrine as Christ preached it and the Church canonized it, stand broken and aghast." Just so! But the dear clergy, who are "too proud to fight," still draw their salaries.

Why is it that so many newspapers advertise the doings of the clergy so industriously? Recently, the *Daily Chronicle*, in an article on "Prayer in the War Zone," said, "Of all the actors in the great tragedy of the War, none stand out more heroically than the chaplains." Is that the sober truth? We do not think that the Allies' cause would triumph if it had to rely solely on the aid of the clergy. Their chief duty is to

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administer communion to the soldiers, and they are paid handsomely for the service—far better than the soldiers themselves. The editor of a great daily newspaper ought to be aware of such things.

The new Headmaster of Eton is evidently bent on making a record—for stupidity. In his first sermon, after taking up his new post, he said the German peace proposals were not Christian either in theory or practice. We should not care to discuss this point, but the reverend gentleman goes on to say that these proposals were based solely on reason; from which we draw the conclusion that things based on reason are opposed to Christianity. A correspondent, in sending us the cutting, wonders whether anyone outside a lunatic asylum—except a clergyman—could be guilty of such an absurdity. We confess to having doubts. Walter Bagehot said once, "There are lies, damned lies—and statistics." We often feel inclined to paraphrase this by saying, "There are fools, damned fools—and clergymen."

The Headmaster of Eton was addressing the boys committed to his care, and, after saying what has been quoted, he declared that "reason by itself was not able to keep a boy straight for one half-year." There are, of course, other things than reason that go to the determination of conduct. But it is hardly a healthy symptom when the headmaster of a school commences by sowing in the minds of his boys a profound distrust of reason. After all, reason is the best guide we have, and it is the duty of a good teacher to train those committed to his care to use it well and wisely. Reason guided by sentiment is almost bound to lead one astray. Sentiment guided by reason is the only sane and useful rule. Such teaching as that of the Headmaster of Eton sets one wondering why a clergyman is appointed to the headmastership of a great school. It does explain why English education is in so unsatisfactory a condition.

Although thirty-nine bishops share £180,700 annually, their names have not yet figured among the subscribers to the War Loan. As they will not permit their clergy to fight, and will not assist the country financially in its hour of need, one might ask what they are doing that is at all useful.

The Rev. James Boyle, on taking the vicarage of Wembden, in the diocese of Wells, writes in the Mitcheddean Parish Magazine:—

> Very shortly the parish will see its tenth rector in less than 40 years. Few places can boast so melancholy a record. Of the nine who have vacated the benefice only three have done so on account of preferment.
>
> When I came to you in 1910 I said I should stay just as long as it suited my convenience—not an hour longer, not an hour shorter. I have kept my word.
>
> It is a real wrench to leave our magnificent church and the reredos. I wish I could say the same about the people as a whole. We part with much regret from a few staunch friends, but the bulk of the people do not seem to have the faculty of arousing a rector's interest or of responding to his attempts to win theirs. If this were an unusual thing the blame would appear personal, but the parochial history seems to point elsewhere.
>
> I am sure Mr. Colchester Wemyss (the patron of the living) will get you the best man he can, but his work will depend upon you. There are some, however, who belong to the synagogue of Satan, who try to undermine the rector's work with consistent impartiality. How long will you be beguiled by them?
>
> First impressions are lasting. When your new rector comes see that you give him the impression that it is what you can do for him, and not what you can get out of him.

We venture the opinion that this clergyman's pastorate has no been quite a success.

The tender affection of the clergy for education has been shown over and over again during the course of the War. They dare not openly oppose it, the time has gone by for that, but no opportunity is lost of using Germany as the "orrible example" of the results of education, and of impressing upon the people of this country, that in any case education, to be of service, must be under religious control. Thus, the Rev. A. C. Hill, of Elgin Place, Glasgow, said the other day: "We must not follow the German lead in education too closely, but must educate the conscience and train the ethical faculties." Greater nonsense was never uttered. What else has Germany been doing but training the conscience of its people? It may be said, and with justice, that it has trained the national conscience in the direction of giving a servile support to militarism; but that is all. The War would have been impossible had Germany not trained the people in this way. The real charge against Germany is that of the misdirection of education. To use Germany as a warning against devoting our energies to education is, to put it mildly, absurd.

"Give us this day our daily bread" was emphasized in a special service held in Berlin on the Kaiser's birthday. It strikes us that the prayer would be better addressed to the British Navy, which has far more to do with it than the Deity. And whether addressed to Admiral Beatty or God Almighty the answer to the prayer is likely to be the same.

Sir Robert Newman, speaking at a Church Union meeting in Exeter, said he believed that "the majority of men and women in this country did not believe in Christianity at all." We wish we could endorse Sir Robert's opinion on the matter, but we take it as a pleasing admission of the fact that a very considerable portion of the population are as described. All we wish is that this proportion would *say* so, and say it in a way that could be heard by all. Sir Robert Newman also confessed to a fear that when the War is over there would be a school advocating brotherly love in such a way that one would not know whether a man was Roman Catholic, Anglican, or Plymouth Brother. Sir Robert need be under no apprehension on this score. Christian brotherly love is never likely to be so aggressive as to prevent Christians showing by their conduct that they belong to different sects. Religious zeal will always be strong enough to keep Christians fighting.

War is a great national cleanser, say the clergy, although they like to see other men doing the fighting. At Barking recently it was stated that all the reformatories were full, and three boys were ordered to be birched.

In view of the call for men for national service some of the bishops are of opinion that the clergy ought to volunteer their help, so long as it was some sort of non-combatant service. Evidently they are discovering the blunder of their attitude towards the Military Service Act. But this move will hardly improve their position in the eyes of intelligent persons. We could appreciate the last move if the clergy had stood apart from the War and confined their energies to those of a peaceful and humanitarian character. But they did not. They have been energetic recruiting agents. And we have nothing but contempt for people who urge others to go to war while declining military service for themselves. And, we fancy, many others—not of necessity Freethinkers—will share our feeling. The only man who is justified in urging others to fight is the man who is willing and ready to fight himself.

The great European War is to benefit religion the clergy tell us, but there are few signs that point that way. A writer in a Sunday paper, speaking of the question of immortality, says "Religion, as taught and accepted, does not answer the question except by a demand for belief in miracles and a faith opposed to all reason. If the Great War has done nothing else, it has brought that fact home to thousands of suffering, questioning, breaking hearts."

In Paris a hospital patient has been asleep for twenty-nine months. The Christian Church has been asleep for centuries.

The War has not absorbed the energies of a kindly Providence. Landslides have occurred on Bali Island, causing over six hundred deaths, and a fishing village has been wiped out on the Devon coast by a furious gale.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

February 11, Liverpool; February 25, Clapham; March 11 Birmingham; March 18, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 11, Walsall; March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—T. Raff (Western Australia), £2 2s.; A. Pringle, 5s.; Old Sailor, 9s. 6d.; S. E., 2s. 6d.

T. V. WILLIAMS.—Pleased to hear from one of a family of ten—all Atheists. You ought to be a fearfully depraved lot; but somehow we feel you are all "all right," in spite of so demoralizing an environment.

H. M.—Domestic differences arise on many other questions besides religion. And we certainly see no reason, in the general run of cases, why one should wait for the rest of the family to avow heresy before doing so oneself. Someone must make a start every time.

T. MATHEWS.—Let it stand that Christianity did not cause the War. Is it not enough that it did not prevent it? On that there can be no dispute.

H. LEWIN.—Glad to have your appreciation of "Acid Drops." We note that you would like more each week. We should also like an extra pair of hands and a few more hours per day. We are doing our best with one pair of hands and a day strictly limited to twenty-four hours.

W. P. (Ashton-under-Lyme).—*Li Hung Chang's Scrap-Book* is published by Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's Court, E.C. Price 6s.

W. LAURENCE.—As you take the trouble to write a long letter, we must believe that you find the *Freethinker* "painful reading." Still, keep on, and we have no doubt you will come to like it, and thank us for having brought you to that state.

T. RAFF.—Literature is being sent as requested. Thanks for appreciation of the *Freethinker* under our editorship. We hope that the *Freethinker* will become "a greater power in the land in the near future." We are doing our best to make it so, and it does exert far more influence than many people imagine.

J. C. ROBERTSON.—Certainly there is a difference between "not very apparent" and "not yet very apparent," but the criticism is not seriously affected thereby. We, of course, depended upon the report before us.

G. E. WEBB.—"Balderdash" is the right word. We agree with your wife as to the folly of placing such men in such a position. Still, it is part of the historic policy of all the Churches to keep a hold on the machinery of social life, and they will continue to do so while the folly of people permits them.

MR. T. MAY, of Mexboro, asks us to call attention to the fact that he is not the T. May whom we accused of talking nonsense in the *Freethinker* for January 28. We have much pleasure in doing so. The correspondent to whom we replied wrote us from the West of England.

J. B. (Newcastle).—We very much regret to hear of the death of Mr. McIntee. We have a very lively recollection of him, and believe that he deserved all the good things said of him—and more. We note that the obituary notice you send is very reticent as to his freethinking opinions. Candour and courage are rare qualities.

H. A.—We can't promise, but we will do our best.

T. W. GAISS (S.A.).—The writer in *South Africa* who has noticed the uneasiness of Atheists—on account of their Atheism—must have keener powers of observation than we possess. But, there! religious folk have a whole menagerie of Atheists that no one ever meets in the flesh.

C. W. MARSHALL.—Will be useful for our next issue. Thanks.

KAL ELTHON.—We do not quite catch the drift of what it is about which you wish to write us. Personally, we have no objection to "cranks." We rather like them, and agree with you as to their utility. Please note that all communications must be accompanied with name and address, but not for publication unless desired.

H. SILVERSTEIN.—Too late for this week, but will serve for next issue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 Bowman case is still pursuing its course in the House of Lords. The hearing commenced on Tuesday, Jan. 30, and was continued on the Thursday, Friday, and Monday following. It now stands adjourned until Thursday, Feb. 16 (We are writing this on Tuesday), and all that one can say with certainty is that it is four days nearer the end. As the case is undecided, we are precluded from saying much that we might say otherwise, so prefer to mention nothing more than that we await the result with confidence. We are arranging to publish next week a summary of the argument, to be followed by a full report of the judgment. In any event that will be a document of, one may say, historic importance.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (Feb. 11) at Liverpool. The meetings will be held in the Alexandra Hall, Islington. In the afternoon the subject will be: "The Place of Mind in Social Evolution." This is a topic which we fancy will yield a lively discussion. In the evening the subject will be "Can We Have Morality Without Religion?" We hope Liverpool "saints" will do their best to bring some Christian friends along to both meetings. Tickets for the meetings, 6d. each, may be obtained of Mr. W. McKelvie, 21 Globe Street, Kirkdale, Liverpool.

For some time past the propaganda at Manchester, owing to various causes, has been in abeyance. It is very regrettable that this should be so, and, as Mr. Cohen is lecturing at Liverpool on Feb. 11, he has, in his capacity as President, and at the request of the N. S. S. Executive, invited all members and friends of the movement to meet him at the Merchants' Hotel, Oldham Road, at 7 o'clock on Saturday, Feb. 10. Mr. Cohen will leave London early on Saturday to permit his meeting the friends, and will travel to Liverpool by a late train. We hope there will be a good muster, so that a thorough review of the situation may be made. Manchester is a very important centre, and there are quite enough Freethinkers in the city to maintain a very strong movement.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd is lecturing to-day, Feb. 11, at the Co-operative Hall, Bridge Street, Walsall, at 6.30, on "Self-Reliance v. Trust in God." As this is a new effort, and intended to be the forerunner of regular work in Walsall, we hope that friends from Wolverhampton, Wednesbury, Dudley and neighbouring towns will be present.

We see that one firm of paper manufacturers made over £10,000 profit in 1916 as against £80 in 1914. And, on the whole we believe, paper merchants have been doing well. It is the poor paper users who have sweated. Our opinion that the threefold cost of paper, as against pre-war prices is quite unjustifiable, and we are threatened with yet another rise in price. It is a fine commentary upon the patriotic "gush" that is being poured out to observe the way in which all who can squeeze the last half-penny out of the public—whether in increased prices, or out of the Government in the shape of interest on war loans, do so We should like to see it made absolutely impossible for anyone to make a penny profit out of so ghastly a thing as a war Suffer we must in time of war; suffer we should, and no genuine patriot would complain at the suffering even though he may regret the occasion.

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Members of the N. S. S. should be particularly interested in the debate to be opened at the St. Pancras Reform Club to-night (Feb. 11) by C. E. Ratcliffe on "Secular Organization: its Strength and Weakness." Last Sunday evening a most interesting and useful discussion followed Mr. Van Biene's enlightening address on mind and matter. It is most desirable that these meetings should be made more widely known, and we hope to see them extended to every quarter of London. The General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, is inviting co-operation towards the opening up of a similar series of meetings in West London, and we hope to hear shortly that, with the promised assistance of the Executive, this has been accomplished.

Under even normal conditions works written from a standpoint of rational humanitarianism meet with scant recognition, and at a time of war they are nearly completely ignored. It is not surprising, therefore, *The Flogging Craze*, by Mr. H. S. Salt (Allen & Unwin, 2s. 6d.), has received small notice at the hands of the ordinary newspaper reviewer. And yet it is, in the best sense of the expression, an important book. Mr. Salt has devoted his life to humanitarian work, and has been chiefly responsible for the carrying on of the Humanitarian League under discouraging conditions. For his long and unselfish devotion in this direction he deserves the thanks of all interested in genuine social reform.

In *The Flogging Craze*, Mr. Salt deals with the question of corporal punishment from every possible point of view, and his case against it is stated with an impressive calmness that should affect all impartial readers. Its failure as a deterrent, as an aid in the training of juveniles, and as a normal part of prison discipline, is well dealt with, and the advocate of the last is left with little logical ground from which to defend his favourite instrument. As Mr. Salt remarks, the only real argument in favour of the lash is that it saves time. But only at the moment. Its general consequences, not only on the one who is flogged, but also on the one who flogs, far outweighs its value in even this direction. The tendency in all civilized countries to diminish brutal punishments is, in itself, a condemnation of the practice. The whole question does, in fact, resolve itself into the old antithesis of the scientific prevention of crime through the reformation of the criminal, the betterment of the social state which fashions him, and the infliction of brutal punishments which satisfy only the unthinking and the semi-civilized.

There is another, and a very unsavoury aspect of the subject, with which we are pleased to see Mr. Salt deals. The physiological connection between flaggelation and morbid manifestations of sexual emotion is well known to all scientific students of the subject. The annals of the monastic life, the biographies of certain individuals, and other materials available to the student, supply ample evidence on this point—which is, indeed, well known to all medical writers of authority. And that is, perhaps, as Mr. Salt points out, the final argument against such as would reserve the use of the whip for a certain class of offences. In such cases we bestialize still more thoroughly the already sufficiently bestial. There are other aspects of Mr. Salt's book with which we should like to deal, but space forbids. We will only say that it is a volume which should find a place on every reformer's bookshelves.

In view of what we have said concerning the patriotism of the pious—at five per cent., we have pleasure in noting that the wife of Lieut.-General Maxwell has offered to the Government as a war loan a third of his capital, amounting to £35,000, free of all interest. We commend this example to other "Patriots," particularly to the Church of England with its loan of three and a half millions, in which it will claim the last farthing of interest. Lady Maxwell has set a good example, and deserves all honour for doing so.

The Church of Ireland has contributed the tidy sum of £1,400,000 to the War Loan. The original Christian Church, proprietor and founder included, was sold up for thirty shillings.

A Turning Point.

IN the city whither I was going were many brave, bright, hospitable spirits, each one of whom would have shared with his fellow-mortal the last shilling and the last crust. But it is so easy to abuse hospitality, to impose on good nature. And even among "kindred spirits" a mischievous mistakenness persists. One cannot always—at least, not everyone can—afford an Inn, where one can be so free and independent, so monarch of all he surveys. And, as Shenstone truly sang:—

Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Whate'er his fortune may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an Inn.

And, as an Ayrshire poet, Ebenezer Smith, has well, if somewhat bitterly, expressed the sentiment in the lines:—

Compared wi' me, the poorest cock
Is blest that rests on Ailsa's Rock;
The home to which it now has flown,
However humble, is its own.
I, drawing in a stranger's chair,
A stranger's parlour here maun share,
And, from strange clatter all but dead,
Seek refuge in a stranger's bed.

How savoureth of salt the bread of others! But the strangeness may be merely subjective, psychological, metaphysical, or *Scotch*, in keeping with Ingersoll's and Barrie's "metaphysical peasantry," or at worst misunderstanding; so to our tale.

It was a dreary, dripping, clammy, kindless Sunday in December when the daughter of a late leader, and one whom we all revere, Charles Bradlaugh, lectured in the city; and I, with twenty miles to walk, took a notion to be there, and duly set out under the umbrella of respectability. On the way a wooded ravine, with a gleaming, surging torrent sounding and winding its way amid huge boulders and masses of splintered rock, invited me to Nature-worship, to magnificent sermons in stones and books in the rushing stream.

But, no; onward, onward, onward. But how to get back? that was the thought that paled the native hue of resolution. I was half-way now, and getting into swing, when suddenly I stopped—moved on, stopped again—like poor Le Fevre's pulse in *Tristram Shandy*. Shall I go on? No! It was the turning point. It was sadly, but I felt wisely, resolved upon. Had they known, perhaps the friends I faltered from had been disappointed too.....Babies are noticing folk. I had passed a group of children, and, as I repassed them on my way back, a little chap in arms, and just beginning to lisp, said, "The man's turned!" It is true, precocious darling; but only bodily; otherwise I am on the straight path, the path of reason and experience; the plain and safe direction, even if the road be rough. But what a crooked world, and world of crooks and fools, *you* have just entered! And all so brave and confident, you and your baby contemporaries, "puir wee souls"! How many turnings you may take, and reach how many turning points. But you are sharp, and may win your way; but the charlatan and his imposing but shoddy magic awaits you. You will be solemnly, officially, and pompously misdirected by godly men in black, themselves misled, and nescient as thee, but suffered and presuming to teach the unintelligible, the unknown, and the unnecessary to an ignorant and credulous generation.

The great objective given up, the traveller had leisure to turn aside and rest by the ruined mill, the cascading rapids, and the roaring waterfall. He wanted to shout louder than the linn itself, to worship in some Pagan way, but feared the alien unsympathetic, because misunderstanding, eye and ear. And all too soon, reluctantly,

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he left the frowning rock, the red of heaped-up leaves and soil; and the grey leap of waters showing and thundering through the trees, and the white "quilt" of foam on the shelving pool between the criss-cross rapids and the brink, keeps circling ever round as the last footstep departs and the shadows deepen in the glen. He had been to church, and had come away serious but satisfied, his peace of mind, like the fading twilight skies, softly reflected in the quiet hedgerow pools. One other thought he had among a thousand unexpressed was, that it might please the Lady of the Lamp to know that her and her father's memory were honoured in those rustic shades, and that the mind of the dutiful daughter—tired at times, no doubt, might unconsciously and vicariously lave itself in that living stream and be refreshed.

And he thought of all the "saints" of Freethought, far and near, illustrious and obscure; all on whom this twin light of reason and humanity had fallen. Even if the light failed to illumine immediately, in the inner light of his mind was a grand reunion of all the choicest spirits of the earth as the outer shadows deepened on the lonely homeward way.

THE MODERN PILGRIM.

The French Revolution.

III.

THE MARSEILLAISE.

(Continued from p. 77.)

THE Assembly, after a little further thimble-rigging of the electoral laws in favour of the wealthy, offered the Constitution to the King for his final acceptance, which he signified. This proceeding was the hollowest farce; for the King was by now in regular communication with Austria and Prussia, who were leagued together by the Treaty of Pilnitz to intervene in France in the event of further developments unfavourable to monarchy. On Sept. 30, 1791, the Assembly dissolved, after declaring its work complete. Hoots and hisses from the populace greeted the constitution-mongers as they left the hall. They were regarded as accomplices of the King. But when Robespierre and Petion, the spokesmen of the Radical section, appeared, they were carried shoulder-high by the crowd. They alone, and the few with them, were regarded by the people of Paris as true Revolutionists.

The new Parliament, the Legislative Assembly, met next day. No member of the old Assembly could, by law, be elected to it. As was natural in a Parliament chosen on a limited franchise, and by indirect election at that, the Conservative element predominated. The out-and-out Radicals were very poorly represented, comprising a dozen or so unknown men of very moderate abilities, who, from their seats being on the high benches on the extreme left of the hall, were nicknamed "the Mountain." None of the well-known Radicals were members. There was, however, what we should call a strong "official Liberal" party consisting of a number of talented lawyers, theoretically Republican, but prepared to accept the existing Constitution, and insisting only on the greater responsibility of Ministers to the Assembly. The leader of this group was Brissot, a Paris journalist with a gift for wire-pulling, who had been concerned in the Republican agitation, but was prepared to support the Constitution if only his party could control policy. The chief speakers of Brissot's party, however, were a knot of able men representing the department of the Gironde, and from them the whole party came to be known as the "Girondists."

The chief question to be faced by the Legislative Assembly was the threatening attitude of Austria and Prussia, together with the measures to be taken regarding the emigrant nobles and the priests who had refused the oath of fidelity to the Constitution. The Assembly decreed that the emigrants should be called upon to return on pain of death and confiscation of their property; and that the non-juring priests should be liable to arrest in the event of religious disturbances in their parishes. The King, who retained the right of veto under the Constitution, vetoed both these measures. This served to increase public discontent.

In March, 1792, the Royalist Ministry fell owing to internal dissension, and Louis was forced to call Brissot's party into office. Ministers could not be selected from among members of the Assembly; and the head of the administration was Roland, who was dominated by his more famous wife. Dumouriez, a military officer of no very steady principles, was Foreign Minister. The first act of the new Government was to declare war on Austria.

The declaration of war was welcomed by everyone except a few of the popular party. The Court hoped that the French armies would be defeated and the Revolution undone. The Constitutional Royalists hoped that war would strengthen the authority of the King by necessitating a strong Government. The Girondists hoped that it would throw power into *their* hands, and, if the worst came to the worst, force the King to declare himself openly for or against the Revolution. Only three men attacked the war policy. Robespierre, Danton, and Marat had the sense to see that the war could only prejudice the cause of democratic progress; and each of them, from slightly different points of view, attacked the Girondists for precipitating it. Their fears were borne out when disasters began, and the French troops were beaten. However, the Revolution was now on the defensive against an absolutist coalition, and there was nothing for it but to win through. The situation was, indeed, gloomy. Against the imminent invasion what had France by way of defence? The King and Queen were in collusion with the enemy. The officers of the army, led by Lafayette, were not, indeed, traitors to this extent, but they were, for the most part, much more afraid of democracy than of reaction; and if forced to choose between a monarchy supported by foreign arms and a democratic Republic, they would be certain to prefer the former. The majority of the wealthy classes, at this time, probably inclined to the same view. Only the peasantry and working-class, with a resolute minority of the well-to-do, were still heart and soul for the Revolution, and determined to save it at all costs. Marat, who saw all this clearly, wrote with fury in "L'Ami du Peuple" of the treason of the Court and the governing class, especially Lafayette. Venting without restraint the anger and despair with which the situation filled him, he declared that the only hope of France lay in the instalment of a popular dictator, with a free hand to slay all, generals, ministers, or politicians, who were guilty of treachery to the nation. These articles of Marat excited the indignation of the well-to-do classes, and led the Girondist Government to proceed against him; yet what he had stated was no more than the truth. As yet, however, he stood alone.

The Government, though hating Marat and the advanced Radicals, yet had to do something to defend the country against the enemy without and within. They proposed to establish a camp of 20,000 men near Paris, for use as might be required, and to disband the King's bodyguard. Louis opposed his veto. The Government remonstrated; whereupon he dismissed them from office, and recalled his Conservative advisers. Lafayette, from the head of his army, wrote to the Assembly demanding the forcible suppression of the Jacobins, or opposition,

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party. Feeling ran higher than it had done for many months. On June 20, 1792, a patriotic demonstration was got up in Paris by the opposition rank and file. A deputation waited on the Assembly, and, of course, was put off with phrases. After demonstrating in the Assembly hall, the multitude proceeded to the royal palace of the Tuileries, broke in the doors, and surged into the King's presence, demanding sanction for the law authorizing the camp of 20,000 men, and the recall of the "patriot ministry." No harm was offered to the King—a proof that, even at this eleventh hour, the democratic party had no thought of regicide, and that Louis might even now have saved his throne if he had consented to lead his people instead of betraying them. To humour the crowd, he put on his head the red woollen "cap of liberty," which was now becoming popular as a badge of democratic sentiments, and drank a glass to the health of the nation. But he would not grant their demands. At last certain Girondist deputies from the Assembly, and Petion, mayor of Paris (Robespierre's old colleague in the former Assembly) persuaded the crowd to disperse.

The only immediate result of the demonstration was to frighten the well-to-do classes into a fever of Royalism. Lafayette left his army and appeared at the bar of the Assembly to demand once again the adoption of vigorous measures to suppress the agitation. The authorities of the department of Paris suspended Petion from the mayoralty for not having prevented the demonstration; and many men concerned in the movement were prosecuted and imprisoned. The Assembly—the Girondists equally with the Royalists party—continued to shut its eyes to danger. All that the Girondist leaders ventured to do was to address a private memorandum to the King, and remonstrate with him once more.

The friends of the Revolution outside the Assembly had, therefore, to save themselves in spite of their official representatives. Steps were taken to carry out the proposal for an armed camp in spite of the King, by inviting the municipalities of provincial cities to levy men locally on their own authority. Barbaroux, a young man from Marseilles, and a friend of the Girondist leaders, wrote to the mayor of that city for "500 men who knew how to die." The municipality forthwith raised 500 volunteers, who marched to Paris, singing as they went the world-famous hymn:—

Allons, enfants de la patrie!
Le jour de gloire est arrive;
Contre nous de la tyrannie
L'etendard sanglant est leve.

Brest and some other towns also sent volunteers.

And, indeed, it was time. Prussia was now arrayed with Austria against the Revolution; aud the combined armies, massed on the French frontier, and opposed only by the treason-ridden army of Lafayette, were commanded by the Duke of Brunswick. This German potentate had a reputation, it seems, for Liberalism; and, in July, 1792, some of the Girondists were even talking of offering the throne of France to him instead of Louis, and so solving two problems at one time. Great was their consternation when, on July 25, Brunswick issued a manifesto in the name of the allied sovereigns, threatening to destroy every French town which resisted the invaders, shoot all "National Guards" who might be taken in arms, and, finally, if any violence were done to the King, to deliver Paris up to "military execution"—in other words, to treat Paris as Brunswick's modern successors have treated Louvain.

This manifesto—inspired by the rancorous emigrant French nobles—put an instant stop to the Royalist reaction in France. Even the wealthy were not disposed, after this, to stand between the King and his fate. Already the Assembly had declared "the country in danger," called for volunteers, and mobilised the National Guard. Petion had been restored to the mayoralty of Paris. On July 26, the 500 men from Marseilles marched into the city, and the famous hymn was heard in the streets for the first time. The common people began to demand the dethronement of the King; and continued petitions to this effect were made to the Assembly by the various "sections," or wards, into which Paris was divided. Still the Assembly did nothing. The advanced Radicals, led by Danton, determined to organize a popular rising, like that which had stormed the Bastille three years before. The volunteers from Marseilles and Brest would lend a hand. In all the "sections," except one or two in the fashionable quarter of Paris, delegates were chosen to see the business through. On August 8 the Assembly added the last straw, by voting by a large majority against the proposal to impeach Lafayette. Next day, a deputation informed them that, unless the dethronement of the King were voted that day, the people would rise. At midnight, between the 9th and 10th, the alarm bell was rung, the drums were beaten, and the delegates of the "sections" proceeded to the Hotel de Ville, where they installed themselved in place of the municipal council. The Royalists, on their part, marched as many of the National Guard as they could muster to the palace, and posted the mercenary Swiss Guard to assist in the defence. The insurgent leaders then sent for Mandat, the commandant of the National Guard, to the Hotel de Ville, and ordered him to prison. He was murdered by the mob as he left the building. As day broke on August 10, the insurgents marched on the Tuileries, led by the Marseilles volunteers. The National Guard declined to face the people, and dispersed. The Swiss mercenaries, however, who had no ties with the French, fired on the insurgents killing hundreds. But the whole populace had now risen, and the Swiss, overwhelmed by superior force, were cut to pieces or made prisoners.

It is lamentable that democratic Switzerland should have seen fit to erect a monument at Lucerne to these mercenary soldiers. Certainly they fought with courage that day, as became their profession; but they fought neither for Switzerland nor for France, for no country and no cause, but simply because they were hired to do so by a King who was a traitor to his people. They no more deserve a monument than Turkish Bashi-Bazouks.

The King and his family had taken refuge in the Assembly early in the day. After waiting to see how the cat would jump, the Girondist leaders proposed and carried a resolution suspending Louis from his functions, and ordering that a National Convention, elected by universal manhood suffrage, should meet to decide on the future Government of France. The oligarchic Constitution, in the phrase of Carlyle, was "burst in pieces." Lafayette, on hearing the news, deserted his army, and rode over the frontier with his staff, hoping to reach Holland. He was captured, however, by the Austrians, who, unable to forgive even so constitutional a reformer as Lafayette, threw him into prison, where he remained for some years.

ROBERT ARCH.

(To be continued.)

I deny altogether that idleness is an evil, or that it produces evil, and I am well aware why the interested are so bitter against idleness—namely, because it gives time for thought; and if men had time to think, their reign would come to an end. Idleness, that is, the absence of the necessity to work for subsistence—is a great good.—*Richard Jefferies.*

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Correspondence.

"THE CREED OF NAPOLEON."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I read with interest the letter from Minnie Spencer in the *Freethinker* for January 28, regarding the creed of Napoleon. Like her, I looked in vain for his name in Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. As the point is of some interest, you will perhaps grant me space to quote the verdict of Mr. J. M. Robertson, in his unrivalled *History of Freethought*, vol, ii., 2nd ed., pp. 292-3:—

> As he grew up he read, like his contemporaries, the French Deists of his time, and became a Deist like his fellows, recognizing that religions were human productions.....His language on the subject is irreconcilable with any real belief in the Christian Religion; he was "a Deist a la Voltaire," who recalled with tenderness his Catholic childhood, and who at death reverted to his first beliefs.

After discussing Napoleon's purely political motives in his actions regarding religion and the papacy, Mr. Robertson concludes that "he had, in fact, no disinterested love of truth," and that "Freethought can have no warm claim to such a ruler."

If, however, Bonaparte be really included in the current or some previous edition of Wheeler's *Dictionary*, it will be seen from the foregoing that the inclusion would not be without some justification. For Deism is a form of belief sufficiently attenuated, and sufficiently philosophical, as compared with the average religious creed, to merit the application to it of the term "Freethought"—at least, in the time of Napoleon, if not to-day. For Freethought is a relative term. Even the most anthropomorphic of Theists, if he developed his system independently in a tribe of totem-worshippers, would surely merit the name of Freethinker as truly as does the Atheist or Monist in the midst of a cultured society.

H. TRUCKELL.

"AN END TO LYING."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In a recent issue of the *Freethinker* it was suggested by Romain Rolland that the above heading should be adopted as a motto for all writers during the coming year. If it *was* to be universally adopted, what would be the consequence? Such a revolution even the present War would be unable to compete with.

It reminds me of a play I saw many years ago, entitled "The Palace of Truth," wherein everybody was overpowered by some strange influence which compelled them to speak their minds freely and truthfully. The result can better be imagined than described.

If, in the first instance, this test or motto was to be adopted by the clergy of all denominations, would they be tolerated, or any longer allowed to draw their salaries of £15,000 a year downwards for propagating lies? And if the present European conflict is the direct outcome of two thousand years of Christianity, is it not time to put "an end to lying"? Or, are these miserable superstitions so ingrained in human nature that it is absolutely hopeless to try and eradicate them?

The latter question is suggested in consequence of the writer's experience in nearly all parts of the globe during the last twenty years. Most of the stay-at-home people of these islands appear to have some vague idea that all other races outside Europe are simply heathens, to whom they are in duty bound to send their missionaries to convert them.

If they could only see for themselves, as I have done, the effect of these missions, they would soon cease to squander their money and their time on such foolish and misguided efforts. How can they ever hope to eradicate the inborn superstitious beliefs of millions and millions of Asiatic coolies who never heard of Christianity or any other form of belief, and do not wish to? If ever there is to be "an end to lying," it must begin at home, and their own house must be first put in order.

Take as an instance that great country, China, where I have spent the greater part of the last twenty years. It is almost a sealed book to the great majority of the Western people; but, believe me, it *does* contain some few intelligent people amongst its four hundred millions.

As an example of this, I was much impressed with what one of them wrote some twelve years ago as a criticism of our Western civilization, and which has turned out to be a wonderful prophecy in view of the present conflict in Europe. These are his words:—

> Commercial intercourse between nations, it was supposed some fifty years ago, would inaugurate an era of peace; and there appear to be many among you who still cling to this belief. But never was belief more plainly contradicted by the facts The competition for markets bids fair to be a more fruitful cause of war than was ever in the past the ambition of princes or the bigotry of priests. The peoples of Europe fling themselves, like hungry beasts of prey, on every yet unexploited quarter of the globe. Hitherto, they have confined their acts of spoliation to those whom they regard as outside their own pale. But always, while they divide the spoil, they watch one another with a jealous eye; and, sooner or later, when there is nothing left to divide, they will fall on one another. That is the real meaning of your armaments; you must devour or be devoured. And it is precisely these trade relations, which it was thought would knit you in the bonds of peace, which, by making every one of you cut-throat rivals of the others, have brought you within reasonable distance of a general war of extermination.

If, after this sample, your readers would care to have some more criticisms of their vaunted civilization from a Chinaman's point of view, I should be happy to oblige them.

W. WILMER.

CHASTISING THE DEITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Confined to bed with influenza, I made the hours of illness and convalescence pass more agreeably by reperusing the back numbers of your highly esteemed *Freethinker*. I thus came again across your excellent article, "Another Day of Intercession," in the last year's last issue. In that article, the passage referring to Central African savages thrashing their god for suffering them to be defeated, arrested my attention on this occasion. The passage ended with: "But this occurs only with savages." It is my impression that the European Christian savages are as prone to chastise their Deity for not granting them their prayers as are the Central African negroes. Instances of such proneness are by no means rare, and perhaps I may be allowed to mention a few of them that may interest your many readers.

The first that comes to my mind occurred in Italy before the Italians became a united nation; and, if my memory serves me right, I read a report of it in a foreign journal many years ago. A Neapolitan brigand-chief had decided upon an expedition involving robbery, violence, and probable murder. Whilst passing along a country road, he stopped before a wayside shrine containing a wooden image of Christ crucified, and kneeling before it fervently prayed for divine blessing upon his criminal scheme. He arose confident of success, but as the immortal poet has it: "The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley"—and so it happened on that occasion. The local carabinieri had got wind of the brigand-chief's intentions, and frustrated them. They killed some of his men and caught others alive, but the chief escaped unhurt into the mountains. A short time after, a bullet was found embedded in the wooden image of Christ the escaped brigand had prayed to. Eventually he was caught, tried, convicted, and sentenced to the "pena capitale." Before dying, he confessed that it was he who had fired a bullet into the image of Christ out of revenge.

Another instance of a Christian's revenge upon his Deity occurred in that very Christian and religious country that calls itself Holy Russia, and was vouched to me by trustworthy Russians as genuine and true. It happened during the first half of the nineteenth century, when railways in the dominions of the Tsar were either few or non-existent, roads bad, postal arrangements primitive, and private letters opened and read by official censors. A landed proprietor wrote a confidential letter to a friend residing at a considerable distance beyond the intervening steppe-region, and wishing his letter to escape the lynx-eyes of the local censor, he entrusted the delivery of it to one of his own serfs. This

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moujik, after walking some days, at last tired and footsore, reached the steppe-region. Here an idea suddenly occurred to him, and he forthwith brought out from his bosom a scapulary with a diminutive picture of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of Russia, better known and more prayed to by the lower classes than either the Almighty himself, Jesus Christ, or the Virgin Mary. He prayed to his portable icon for a friendly lift in a casual kibitka or any other conveyance. Not long after, it happened that a stud of horses was being driven across his path not a mile in front of him. One of the horses lagged some distance behind the main group, and thus came almost in touch with our tired pedestrian. The moujik at once saw in the equine apparition St. Nick's answer to his prayer, jumped on its bare back and galloped away as fast as his stick could persuade the horse to do. The steppe, however, was as flat as the proverbial pancake, so the men in charge of the stud were soon able to see the galloping thief. They pursued him, overtook him, bound his legs and arms, and, stretching him on the ground, delivered thirty energetic strokes with their nagaykas upon the back parts of his anatomy. Smarting with pain, the moujik brought St. Nick out again and, with rage in his eyes, shouted at him in his forcible vernacular, which can mildly be translated thus: "You abominable rascal! You unmitigated scoundrel! You contemptible cheat! You have played me a dirty trick, but I'll pay you back for it. If I am to continue my journey on foot, you will have to do so likewise." Saying this, he tied the tapes of the scapulary to his ankle and dragged St. Nick on the ground until he came in sight of his destination.

Another Christian savage did not scruple to cheat the same Deity, for, according to a Ukranian tradition, Ivan Ivanovitch, a poor Cossack, drowning in a rapid river, vowed to burn a dozen extra candles before the icon of St. Nick, hanging in the isba of his humble home, if the saint would only save him from a watery grave. He sank, but timely human help was at hand and the Cossack was rescued, brought to terra firma and restored to consciousness. Walking home, he said to himself: "St. Nick was a good fellow, and deserves the tallow dips; but as no one heard my vow, I'll not burn the candles, and will never bathe again."

B. F. B.

A Modern War Chant.

RALLY round the counters of the Y.M.C.A.
Gather round the counter, boys; quick, without delay.
Rally to the tea-urn, and to the buns and cake,
Remembering 'tis for God on High and his Son Jesus' sake.

See, the door is open wide; Ragtime calls you in.
Do not hesitate to buy; we know you've got the tin.
Tea and coffee, chocs and fags, also buns and blacking;
Free salvation for you all—nothing here is lacking.

You're going out to murder men, your brothers, over yonder.
We cheer you up with a penny cup, and trust you will not wander.
Our aim is Christianity; we know you never doubt it.
Because we realize that you know nothing much about it.

So give three cheers for the great Y.M.C.A.
Rally round the counter, boys; quick, without delay.
Rally to the "Woodbines," and to the tea and cake,
Remembering 'tis for God on high and his Son Jesus' sake.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

In the recent explosion a mission church was destroyed, and another church had its windows blown out. Providence seems as careless of his churches as his children.

The dear *Daily News*, gushing on the Kaiser's birthday, says that "Wilhelm" in his own person represents the thing that is wrong with the world." And the Kaiser is a Christian and a monarch.

The Bishop of Willesden's appeal for drink prohibition was published in a number of papers. This publicity looks as if the Church is learning that sweet are the uses of advertisement.

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, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "Secular Organization: Its Strength and Weakness." Introduced by C. E. Ratcliffe.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, Open Debate, "The Humanizing of the Schools—How to Attain It." Introduced by G. F. Holland.

MR. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Feb. 15, at 7.30.

CANTON HALL (Westminster): February 14, at 8, "Determinism," Mr. Shaller.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales, "Miracles"; 6.30, Messrs. Beale, Saphin, and Kells.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ABERTILLERY (Tillery Institute): 6, Debate, "Has the Church Always Hindered Progress?" Negative, Miss Minnie Palmer; affirmative, Syd Jones.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, A. C. Brant, "Lafcadio Hern, the Japanese-Englishman Author."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street); Chapman Cohen, 3, "The Place of Mind in Social Evolution"; 3, "Can We Have Morality Without Religion?"

WALSALL (Co-operative Hall, Bridge Street): 6.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Self-Reliance v. Trust in God."

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Views and Opinions.

Juvenile "Crime" and Religious Education.

We have had occasion recently to wonder at the sharply circumscribed knowledge of legal specialists. At the same time, it is only fair to add, we have been further impressed by the acuteness of mind displayed in their own department. But outside that, their excursions into the fields of philosophy or sociology have impressed us with their elementary character. That is, perhaps, the price we have to pay for specialists; but at the same time it does indicate a very real danger of departmental knowledge. For however much we may separate life into compartments, yet it functions as a whole, and the labours of specialists only become of their utmost value when the results are properly co-ordinated. And an added danger to specialization is that the specialist, because of his acknowledged authority in his own department, contracts the habit of expressing opinions *ex cathedra* in other directions, which opinions are often received with a deference to which they are not at all entitled.

* * *

A Magistrate's Indictment.

We have been led to the above observations because of a short article contributed to *Reynolds'* newspaper by Mr. Cecil Chapman, one of our Metropolitan magistrates. The subject of Mr. Chapman's article is juvenile criminality—a phrase which in itself requires to be used with extreme care. For "juvenile crime" often means little more than juvenile mischief, although the police authorities call anything a crime which offends some article of the police code. Mr. Chapman divides the causes of "juvenile crime" into two parts—direct and indirect. And it seems to us that, whatever increase there may be, the direct causes enumerated by Mr. Chapman are enough. These are: the excitement induced by the War; the absence of the father and elder brothers from home; the absence of mothers from home, due to their being engaged in War work; the closing of some schools, and the depletion of the school staffs generally. Mr. Chapman also adds a rather doubtful word on the influence of cinemas which show how children can elude policemen, and would picture the villain as the hero of the piece. But even without the last, the other causes seem quite enough to account for any increase of lawlessness that may have occurred amongst juveniles.

* * *

Religion and the Child.

Mr. Chapman's observations as to the direct causes of lawlessness—we much prefer that word to "crime"—are such as would occur to any thoughtful person. It is when he comes to deal with the indirect causes that he illustrates the danger of some men stepping outside their proper sphere. Of the indirect causes he says:—

> I do not think that education in our schools makes for a well-established or well-grounded sense of morality. In the first place, so far as I can judge, religion is only taught at stated periods, and it is taught, not compulsorily, but as something of a by-product, and in the same way as mathematics and chemistry are often taught, only to be forgotten as soon as possible. Religion, if it is to be worth anything at all, must be the basis of all conduct. Religion ought to be the atmosphere of the schools, not a separate lesson at the beginning of the school which children need not attend unless they like. Moral teaching is of little use if it is negative in character. The fact of being told not to do a thing is the very thing which makes you want to do it. Negative teaching of morality is a definite incentive to immorality; at any rate, it does not produce the best conduct. All moral teaching should be on the positive side—loving our neighbours as ourselves, and doing something for our neighbours as we would do for ourselves.

We have no wish to be offensive, but the tenour of this paragraph strikes us as the utterance of a man who considers the subject from the point of view of a preconceived prejudice rather than from that of an impartial study of the facts. For the main theme here is a plea for religion as the basis of morality, with the assumption that no satisfactory teaching of morality can be adequate that is separated from its influence. And that contention is justified neither by theory nor fact.

* * *

Morality and Religion.

Let it be granted, at least for the moment, that our schools do not provide an education that makes for "a well-grounded sense of morality." We think there is a deal to be said in favour of that, but the fault does not lie wholly with the teachers, nor even with the higher authorities responsible for the schools. But we can say with certainty that in the training of the young the schools partly secularized have been more successful than were the schools wholly under the influence of religion, and in which there existed that atmosphere for which Mr. Chapman sighs. Let him take the pre-1870 period, when education was dominated by religion. Was there a higher standard of moral character developed then than now? I do not think Mr. Chapman will answer in the affirmative. Or let him take the Church schools

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and the Roman Catholic schools, where a very definite form of religion is taught, and where one may assume there is more of a religious atmosphere than in Council schools. Is there a higher type of character developed there? We are quite sure that no one conversant with the facts will say there is. If there is one thing plain, it is that neither with the child nor with the adult does religion guarantee any certain development of character. Mr. Chapman, as a police-court magistrate, must have before him, in the course of the year, hundreds of people who have received a careful religious education. What refining influence do these cases show? Would he use a knowledge of the religious convictions of the people charged before him as any guide to arriving at a decision as to their guilt? We venture to say he would not. Or in so simple a case as choosing between affirmation and the oath: Does he find the one who takes the oath more truthful than the one who affirms? Again, we do not think he does. In actual life, whether on the Bench or off it, no one ever takes the presence of religious belief as a sure indication of high moral character. The religious man *may* be an upright person, or he may be a rogue. And we cheerfully admit that the same is true of the non-religious person. The lack of organic connection between strong religious belief and a highly developed character is one of the plainest facts of universal experience. * * *

Negative Moral Teaching.

We quite agree that moral teaching is of little use if it is negative in character. We have also little faith in moral teaching that is positive in character, as moral teaching is usually conceived. In aiming at a paragon, it most often produces a prig. If one will pay attention to a development of sympathy and imagination with children, this, along with a decent social environment, will dispense with any pressing need for stereotyped moral instruction. But, unfortunately, for Mr. Chapman, a moral instruction based on religion does nearly always take a negative form. "Thou shalt not" is the main form of religious moral teaching, as it is the main form of every police code. And, again, we agree that a parade of prohibitions is an invitation to infringement. The suggestion of the opposite is a commonplace of psychology. It is not only the cinema that makes the villain the most interesting person in the piece. That is also a peculiarity of religious morality. There is so much talk of "sacrifice" and of "restraint"—two words that should never, on any account, be heard in connection with moral teaching—it is the villain who is impressed upon the Christian's mind as the only one who has a really good time. The good man has all the suffering and experiences all the sacrifice, and the bad one leads a life of enjoyment—at least in this world. And, quite naturally, many are inclined to risk the next. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush—particularly when the existence of the bush is a matter of uncertainty. * * *

Morality a Weird Fact.

Morality can never be safely taught save as a *social* fact. Base your morality upon God, you do but impose an heavenly policeman on a terrestrial one. Permeate it with religion and you breed difference, discord, hatred, and uncharitableness where there should be nothing but a broad harmony and an enlightened humanitarianism. Morality is a social fact or nothing. It arises out of the natural, the organic relationships of members of the same species. Moral laws are laws of social health, they describe and prescribe the conditions under which human beings may dwell together with both pleasure and profit. And if our moral teaching has not been as effective hitherto as it might have been, secular teachers may well plead that it has never had a fair chance. Vested interests have seen to it that it is more or less allied with religion. Inside the school the teacher may be doing his or her best to turn out a finished character. Outside there is the home, too often sadly defective, and the social environment too often more defective still. The important truth lost sight of by Mr. Chapman is that as the impulse to morality comes from life, not from theory, so it is life which will determine its form and measure the degree of perfection attained. A community less saturated than ours with religious cant would see to it that the work of the teacher was enforced by the pressure of social life, instead of using the imperfections of the social environment—particularly during so decivilizing a period as the present—to belittle the work of education.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Light of Life.

ACCORDING to some thinkers, there are at least two fundamental entities in the Universe, namely, matter and life; life being, possibly, "a real and basal form of existence." The present advocates of this theory are not themselves biologists, and they deliberately ignore the fact that biologists have completely abandoned it. Its chief champion is Sir Oliver Lodge, a distinguished physicist, who goes to the extreme length of declaring that there exists a "central store" of life, out of which all living things have received their respective vital sparks. In a tree or an insect, the vital spark fails to develop into personality, and at death "returns undifferentiated and unidentified to its central store." That is to say, a tree or an insect is not immortal. In man, however, life becomes sufficiently individual, characteristic, or real, to retain its identity, or its individual character, after it returns to "its central store." That is to say, man is worthy of survival. The distinguishing characteristic of this hypothesis is its utterly unscientific nature. Professor Lionel Beale published several eloquent volumes in its defence, but towards the end of his life he was obliged to admit that "the idea that life is a power, force, or property of a special and peculiar kind, temporarily influencing matter, separating and combining, directing, controlling and regulating, but entirely different from, and in no way correlated, or by necessity connected, with ordinary matter or force, has been often ridiculed, and is now frequently rejected as being too absurd to require refutation" (*Protoplasm*, p. 1). Professor Benjamin Moore, of Liverpool, exclaimed, at a recent meeting of the British Association: "Vitalism is dead; but I should like to worship at the shrine of the dead love." Professor Schafer, also, in his famous Dundee Address, affirmed that "Vitalism as a working hypothesis has not only had its foundations undermined, but most of the superstructure has toppled over." "At the best," he added, "vitalism explains nothing, and the term 'vital force' is an expression of ignorance which can bring us no further along the path of knowledge."

What, then, is life? It is a product of evolution; not an entity that enters into matter at a given moment and leaves it at another, but a condition, or process, that always occurs when matter is in the colloidal state. Let it be clearly understood that animate matter is subject to precisely the same laws as inanimate, and that in no essential sense does living matter differ from the not-living. Take any living substance you please, and you will find that it does not contain a single new element. Oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, and phosphorus are found in all living substances, accompanied in many forms of life

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by certain inorganic salts, such as chloride of sodium, salts of calcium, magnesium, potassium, and iron. Now, all these elements, without exception, abound, in various forms, in lifeless Nature. It is safe to affirm that there is no absolute difference of constitution between animate and inanimate matter. The apparent difference lies in the fact that in living matter those elements are so combined as to form what the biologists call a colloidal—gelatinous or glue-like—compound, and the result of the formation of this compound is the state or condition known as animate. For the introduction of life there was no need to create any new principle or entity. Until quite lately it was generally taken for granted that between the living and the not-living there yawned an impassable gulf; but recent discoveries have done something infinitely better than to bridge this gulf; they have even proved that no gulf existed at all except in the imagination of the ignorant.

This theory of the origin and nature of life seems to fit all the facts concerning it which are at present known to us. If life is a product of evolution, and is governed in all its stages by the same physical and chemical forces as inanimate matter, it inevitably follows that to step outside Nature for the interpretation thereof is a radical mistake. To explain Nature in terms of a purely imaginary Supernature is not only an inexcusable blunder, but an act of high treason against Nature herself, a violation at once of the laws of logic and ethics. In what terms, then, are we to interpret life? In terms of the very Nature that has produced it. The first thing to be borne in mind is that life and death are equally inevitable, that organization is invariably followed by disorganization, and that neither life nor death fulfils any ultimate purpose or design. In other words, Nature is neither moral nor immoral, but merely non-moral. The only virtue is conformity to her laws, which she unconsciously rewards, and the only vice consists in vainly trying to break her laws, an action she as unconsciously punishes. The second great truth to remember is that intelligence is an attribute of life in its more refined and complicated forms, which has been won through countless æons of evolution. It is with Nature alone that all living beings have to settle their accounts. The joy of life is the reward of obedience, and misery the inevitable penalty of disobedience.

From those two principles we arrive at two definite and practical conclusions. The first is that life possesses no intrinsic value. To Nature the life of a Plato or a Shakespeare means neither more nor less than that of a fly. All valuations are artificial, and of artificial applications. One may ask, What is the object of existence? To which question a hundred different and more or less conflicting answers may be returned, not one of which could legitimately claim the merit of being true. The riddle of the Universe flatly declines to be read, though millions of attempts to decipher it have been made in all ages and countries. The men of the pulpit give a reading of it which they have the audacity to pronounce infallible, the responsibility for which, however, they throw on the shoulders of a being who has never once spoken for himself. The truth is that existence has no intelligible object, nor serves any known purpose. And this suggests the other conclusion, namely, that its evolved intelligence enables mankind to interpret life in terms of society. The laws of social life are these two, that of self-preservation and that of the preservation of others. Each of these laws is as essential to the welfare of the community as the other. He who does not serve himself possesses no real qualification for serving others. A selfless life would be fully as senseless. Self-service is the best possible preparation for vicarious service. If a father loses his way, how can he act as a guide to his children? In an article in the *Christian World* for February 8, Dr. J. A. Hutton, of Glasgow, says:—

> One fails us and another; but there is One left who will not fail us. We have Christ. Alas, it would seem that we cannot give ourselves to Christ with all the tenderness of the deepest love, until we see his beauty, his deep understanding of us, by contrast with some love of the world which has proved unstable, or mean, or false.

Then he gives the following advice to young people:—

> Permit nothing to become a light within your life, if it in any way obscures within you the light of Jesus Christ. Give to no mere human prospect, however dear, the power to lift you to the heavens, or the power to cast you into the dust. Give no hope or prospect any intimate place amongst your motives, if, when it is strongly in your mind, at the same moment Christ and the faith of your people must be far away.....In all your loves, love Christ.

Now, in direct opposition to that teaching of the pulpit, we venture to set Nature and her laws, than which we know of absolutely nothing higher and worthier of trust. To keep in touch with God and Christ, one must walk by faith all the time: the moment faith goes, they vanish. We prefer to walk by knowledge, by our ever-growing knowledge of our Mother-Nature, for knowledge is the only light of life that never fails. To walk by faith is to be a somnambulist, who sooner or later is bound to be overcome by disaster. To walk by knowledge is to face life intelligently, with indomitable courage and well-grounded confidence.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Freethinkers' Burden.

> Rough work, iconoclasm, but the only way to get at truth.
> —*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*
>
> If Christians would teach infidels to be just to Christianity, they should themselves be just to infidelity.
> —*John Stuart Mill.*

Poets and apostles are ever prophets. Swinburne saw and sang "A Vision of Spring in Midwinter," and long before Shelley asked the question: "If winter comes can spring be far behind?" Happy are the pioneers who can ignore the mistakes of the past and fix their gaze on the promise of the future. For them the darkest night is jewelled with the brightest of stars. For them there is a budding to-morrow in every midnight, and for them there is nothing irrevocable, for their eyes are ever looking forward.

Some time since, Mr. Lloyd George, turning aside from the pettiness of party politics, related to an astonished audience the drawbacks of a political career. He spoke of the calumnies to which a politician was exposed, and, in characteristic fashion, explained the seamy side of politics. After describing the burdens of a politician's lot, he went on:—

> Tradesmen have their worries and anxieties; but suppose that in addition to their ordinary troubles they found a constant mob of detractors standing outside their doors, some doing it for hate and others for hire, yelling into every customer's ears as he entered their shop: "Don't go there, whatever you do. You will be robbed and cheated at every turn if you do business with those fellows. They are all thieves, rogues, and liars." The whole time you are attending to your customers you have to dodge bricks, clods, and worse hurled at your head. Most men would rather give up business than endure this, if they had to break stones for a living.

There is much sad truth in this frank avowal; but if there is sacrifice in the case of a prominent politician,

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what is to be said in the case of the leaders of a really unpopular movement, to whom sacrifice is a science and denial an art? Freethought is a far wider and nobler evangel than a merely political one. It has its roots in intellectual necessity, and, deeper still, in ethical right. It is based on the psychological law of human development, only appended by a few choice spirits for ages, but latterly taking on a new significance and a fresh urgency. Perpetually reaffirmed from generation to generation by unnumbered examples of unselfish martyrdom, from the days of Hypatia to those of Ferrer, it is to-day changing the direction and character of the ideas of the civilized world.

The Freethought leaders are the most potent forces of progress. No other men are discussed so widely as these apostles of freedom, but magnificent as is their life-work, the men are greater. Hissed at by the superior people, stoned and cursed by the vulgar, they have many trials to submit to. Perhaps the hardest which can be mentioned is that of seeing charlatans ride by in their motors; or, in other words, to mark the success of humbug, whilst they find that intellectual honesty is not a paying career.

Yet good and true men and women have had to submit to this treatment. Richard Carlile endured over nine years' imprisonment for championing free speech. Charles Southwell was aged prematurely by his fight for liberty. Charles Bradlaugh suffered defeat after defeat for sixteen years in a battle which was Homeric in its intensity, and his dying ear never caught the echo of his triumphs, a tragic boon which was not denied to Wolfe at Quebec, or to Nelson on the shot-riven *Victory*. Francisco Ferrer, fronting the rifles of his enemies, had to find his triumph in his own heart. George Foote had to listen to the mocking voice of the Christian judge telling him he had devoted his great talents to the service of the Devil. Yet, in their hours of apparent failure, these men had triumphed. They were martyrs who missed the palm, but not the pains of martyrdom, heroes without the laurels, and conquerors without the jubilation of victory, labouring not for themselves, but for the universe and for the coming generations, for them was influence as far-reaching as the utmost reach of the great wave whose crest they sometimes were.

When a politician carries on a campaign against the landed privileges of the nobility, he encounters, necessarily, the resistance of only a portion of the community, whereas a Freethought leader, directing his force against 50,000 priests and clergymen, and their hundreds of thousands of satellites, has to bear the brunt of an enormously greater opposition. No enmity is more relentless, or more venomous, than religious hatred. The abuse directed against the leading politicians is politeness itself compared with the assault and battery made upon the reputation of a Freethought leader. The politician has, at least, the support of half the newspapers of the country, but a leading Freethinker is certain to be grossly insulted by Liberal, Tory, and Socialist papers alike. Accused of almost every crime in the calendar, their actions constantly misrepresented, this well-nigh intolerable animosity, is, in reality, a tribute. Yet the men against whom a hundred thousand pulpits and platforms fulminate abuse will have their reward in the coming time. Thanks to their courage and devotion, heterodoxy is no longer the danger it once was to the citizen. They have forced attention to Freethought advocacy, placed its exponents on a strong platform, organized its forces, and justified its rights to equal citizenship. Through the religious prejudices of our time they have knocked an opening large enough for heretics to pass through in future, and, in very many directions, our lives are easier because of their life-work.

The rights of open-air advocacy in London have been attacked, and there are signs of a recrudescence of bigotry. There was never a time when it was more clearly the duty and the interest of the party to resist the "mailed fist" of the Churches. It is for Freethinkers to stop this plunge into mediævalism. Persecution will offer no insuperable obstacle if we front the enemy with a full war-chest and up-to-date equipment. Forgetting trivial distinctions in the face of our opponents, let us secure the movement from attack. To-day the situation is ominous. Let to-morrow and all to-morrows find it becoming less so, and those who have done their duty be judged worthy successors of those past leaders, who, in the days of peril, thrilled mankind, and raised with swords the form of trampled Liberty.

MIMNERMUS.

The Emergence of Man.

AN immense interval separates a Shakespeare or a Goethe from a savage, yet all the supreme intellects of the ancient and modern world are by universal assent regarded as distant relations of the most lowly of mankind. Still, many who accept this truth without question continue to view our unmistakable kinship with apes and monkeys with feelings of repugnance. Not that the upholders of the Jewish creation fable possess any logical objection to the doctrine of descent, for the obvious reason that they must necessarily suppose that all the innumerable human stocks have evolved from a single divinely fashioned pair. From the first man and woman—presumably Jewish—have, in terms of this theory, arisen, in a few thousand years, the Bushmen, Chinese, North American Indians, and all the various European and other races. So that logically the supporters of the creation theory can urge no objection to the principle of modified descent.

Civilized and uncivilized peoples alike have always detected a caricature of themselves in the monkey tribe. Their hands and faces, their movements and expressions, present ludicrous likenesses to man's. And there exists one small group which more closely resembles man than any other of all the monkey genera, and we distinguish its members by the term "anthropoid," or man-like apes. These animals are tailless, semi-erect, and long-armed, and their nasal organs more nearly approach man's than those of the flat-nosed monkeys of America. The man-like apes dwell in the tropical regions of the Old World, where the forests are densest and a constant supply of vegetable food is assured. These creatures are now well known to naturalists, and comprise the gibbons, small long-armed apes of South-Eastern Asia; the larger orang-utan of Sumatra and Borneo; and the gorilla and chimpanzee of equatorial West Africa.

One has only to compare the skeletons of these apes (and they stand side by side in the Natural History Museum) to realize their striking anatomical resemblance to the human framework. Shortly before the Darwinian doctrine gave offence to the orthodox, Professor Owen candidly confessed his inability to separate man as a thing apart from the animal domain. In 1857, in his *Essay on the Mammalia*, while comparing the chimpanzee with man, the great anatomist declared that the differences between them were simply those of degree, and he continued: "I cannot shut my eyes to the significance of that all-pervading similitude of structure—every tooth, every bone, strictly homologous—which makes the determination of the difference between Homo and Pithecus the anatomist's difficulty." Yet, after the theory of evolution had aroused an array of furious antagonists, as it did a couple of years later, Owen

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practically suppressed the above admission, and alleged an unbridgable chasm between man and ape. As Huxley scornfully comments: "Surely it is a little singular that the anatomist who finds it 'difficult' to determine 'the difference' between Homo and Pithecus, should yet range them, on anatomical grounds, in distinct sub-classes."

The principle of evolution is now granted by all instructed minds. Since Darwin's, or for that matter Huxley's, day, eloquent evidences of its truth have been furnished by all departments of Nature. The birthplace of the human family was probably Asia, and the ancestors of extant apes appear to have originated in the same continent. Millions of years ago, early in Oligocene times, the Propliopithecus left its remains in the Northern Egyptian desert. In succeeding Miocene times, true tree-dwelling gibbons lived in Europe, and continued their residence through the whole of the later Pliocene Period. One of these apes, the Pliohylobates, ranged as far north as the forest regions of Germany. In Miocene days, the Dryopithecus dwelt in France, and the dentition of this ape is similar to that of the orang, while its jaw suggests that of the lowly savage whose remains were discovered at Piltdown, in Sussex, a few years ago. Other fossils are known, but perhaps the most interesting of these is that of Palæopithecus from the Siwalik Hills, an ape that represented a more generalized type, from which the later specialized chimpanzee, gorilla, and gibbon are descended. And it is also suggestive that the upper pre-molars of Palæopithecus approach the human form.

These several extinct man-like apes are, perhaps, not to be regarded as forerunners of man, although Neopithecus and Dryopithecus have been claimed by such eminent experts as Gaudry and Branco either as ancestors or as nearly related kinsmen of humankind. Fuller researches, however, appear to prove that Dryopithecus was an ancestor of the larger contemporary tailless apes, and was not in the direct line of human descent. But if there is little to indicate direct kinship with man, there appears overwhelming evidence that fossil and living anthropoid apes have, in company with ourselves, arisen from common ancestors in highly remote times. Such marks of common origin have been observed in surviving savage stocks, and are still more pronounced in the bony structures of extinct human races. As Professor H. F. Osborn states, in his *Men of the Old Stone Age* (Bell & Sons, 1916), the anatomy of the ancient Palæolithic peoples cannot be interpreted "without a survey of the principal characters of the existing anthropoid apes."

Although all the higher and more specialized regions of the human brain are present in the cranial contents of our anthropomorphous cousins, the brain of modern man manifests a marked advance. Professor Elliot Smith and other competent judges contend that the arboreal environment of the primitive ancestors of man led to the development of—

> quick, alert, and agile movements, which stimulated the progressive advance of the posterior and lateral portions of the brain. The sense of smell had been well developed in a previous terrestrial life; but once these creatures left the earth and took to the trees, guidance by the olfactory sense was less essential, for life amidst the branches of the trees is most favourable to the high development of the senses of vision, touch, and hearing. Moreover, it demands an agility and quickness of movement that necessitates efficient motor centres in the brain to co-ordinate and control such action as tree life calls for. The specialization of sight awakens curiosity to examine objects with greater minuteness, and guides the hands to more precise and skilled movements.

One has only to consider the general build of the human body to realize how admirably adapted it is for life in the virgin forest, and a survey of man's cerebral structures recalls various pictures of his early arboreal life. Those sections of the brain in which the senses of sight, hearing, and touch are seated display a fuller development than our present conditions of life require. If we study a good collection of brains in a museum, or examine a diagram illustrating the evolution of the organ of mind beginning with the chimpanzee and ending with living man (Homo sapiens), this early advance of the posterior regions of the brain stands clearly revealed; while, on the other hand, the relative and absolute increase of the frontal or anterior portions of the organ displays itself more and more as we ascend from the higher apes to Pithecanthropus erectus (the ape-man), and then step by step advance through the Piltdown, Neanderthal, and other primitive types, up to contemporary European races. In other words, the brain centres first evolved are those that minister to the senses of sight, hearing, and touch; while those which furnish us with our higher mental powers are the last to appear.

The ascent of man was largely conditioned by four important factors. The gorilla and other apes are semi-erect, but the rude forefathers of man at last attained the erect posture. A second advantage was the development of the opposable or pliable thumb, which conferred on its possessor enormous possibilities. A third improvement was the expansion of the brain, which, in co-operation with the newly acquired capacity to walk upright, enabled man to cope more successfully with his adverse surroundings. Then, to crown all, his gestures and animal cries were supplemented by the advent of speech, which, however primitive, must have constituted a marked advance over all previous modes of communication. The bipedal attitude enabled man to cultivate the use of his hands, and the rich experiences gained by manual dexterity provided food for reflection, thus giving his mental organ full occasion to exercise its powers. These four progressive modifications acted and reacted on each other, and the advance of one coincided with the development of the rest. Where the hand is partly employed as a foot, as in all animals that move on all-fours, its liberty as a grasping organ is curtailed. In consequence, the freedom conferred on the hands by the attainment of the upright position is enormous. Our antique ancestors were now able to descend from their leafy retreats and explore the adjacent earth, to wander down the streams, and somewhere reach the sea. Such was man as we find him, probably, in late Pliocene times; rude and rugged, but capable, as his after-history proves, of surmounting the risks and dangers that environed him.

Our acquaintance with primitive man is fullest in Europe, and his ancient records are largely associated with the great Ice Age. And science to-day is in possession of sufficient facts to enable us to present a more or less accurate outline of the changing terrestrial and meteorological conditions which heralded the arrival of the strange vicissitudes of that polar period. Authorities of weight differ concerning the duration and extent of this frigid visitation, but the testimony afforded by animal and plant life, in addition to that furnished by various geological phenomena, has convinced all unbiased investigators as to the far-reaching nature of the glacial catastrophe.

During the Pliocene Period, the woodlands of Central France and Northern Italy were composed of trees similar to those that flourish in the forests of the middle United States to-day. The present flora of the Carolinas was well represented in Upper Italy in earlier Pliocene times; while further south, on the margin of the

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Mediterranean, the vegetation was more tropical in form. In the words of Osborn, while we have—

> the bamboo, the sabal palm, and the dwarf fan palm; most interesting is the presence of the sabal, which now flourishes in the sub-tropical rain forests of Central Florida. The sequoia also was abundant. Towards the close of the Pliocene, the first indications of the coming Glacial Epoch were a lowering of the temperature, and in the higher mountainous areas, perhaps, a beginning of the glacial stages.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

A Playlet by a Peripatetic Patriotic Parson.

"MAN in his time plays many parts," and the Rev. A. J. Waldron has already made his bow as a Naval Architect, a Nonconformist preacher, a peripatetic dealer in mongrel politics, a special lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society, a writer of music-hall sketches, a public instructor on questions of morality, Vicar of Brixton, and hooligan opponent of the N. S. S. platform, whose favourite amusement it was to ostentatiously put pebbles into the collecting-bags at the meetings of the Society—therefore, the recent announcement that he was to appear at the Victoria Palace in a sketch perpetrated by himself and a collaborator, entitled "Nature's Call," excited the curiosity of a possessor of an intimate knowledge of stage technique, who desired to see him still further distinguish himself. Desire was gratified. The purpose of the playlet is well and briefly summarized in the following quotation from the *Referee*:—

> It suggested that the Empire's need for a rise in the birth-rate should be met by the abolition of clerical celibacy and the satisfaction of the spinster's maternal instinct without regard to existing conventions.

A youthful spinster, recognizing that there are not enough men to go round, discusses her thwarted natural instincts with a young married man of her acquaintance, who, in turn, submits the problem to the "Padre" (the Rev. A. J. Waldron), who evidently fearing that he should be commandeered to furnish a practical solution, waxes indignant, and declares in a frenzied speech, in which he most effectively "tears a passion to tatters," that he is wedded to the Church and he will not so dishonour his mother (whether he refers to his maternal progenitor or Mother Church is rather uncertain), not even for England! and after this unpatriotic announcement from so patriotic a parson, dashes off, and the curtain descends to a mixed accompaniment of ribald laughter, hisses, and the timid attempts at applause of a few elderly spinsters, who had done violence to their feelings by attending a music-hall performance to support "the late, great Vicar."

Fearing he may have disappointed the ladies by this exhibition of virtue (there *could* be no other reason for his appearance), Mr. Waldron comes before the curtain and proceeds to unsay all he has said in the play by declaring in a long and rambling speech (in which he ranged from his own activities at the Fronts of Belgium, France, and Serbia with a motor ambulance, and without the consent of his Bishop, to the virtuous lives of members of the theatrical profession, of which his knowledge seems to be extensive and peculiar): "I protest against the clergy and bishops who speak about the necessity of filling the empty cradle but do not fill it themselves—no parson should speak about such things who takes the vow of celibacy. Let them show by practice what they mean." (Applause from the lady members of the audience, who appeared to take heart again.) After much more in this strain, the reverend gentleman retired, amid expressions from the audience of a mixed nature, which finally necessitated the compulsory retirement of some of its members also, at the invitation of the attendants.

As to the acting, in fairness to Mr. Waldron, it was announced that he appeared for the first time on any stage, though rumour hath it that in former days he had distinguished himself in that line of business known to the theatrical profession as the portrayal of "dead bodies on battle-fields," and, lest it be thought that this criticism is prejudicial, the following is an extract from the *Weekly Dispatch*:—

> "There be players that I have seen play," says Hamlet despairingly. And yet he can never have seen the late Vicar of Brixton.....At its best, the pulpit style is not for the fashion of the stage, at its worst—as Mr. Waldron does his best to show—it suggests a new terror to the playgoer. The "argument" of the ridiculous piece itself is in keeping with what the poverty of the language compels one to call the acting. No wonder that there was a marked display of disapproval by so many in the audience.

Mr. Waldron had, however, nobly sacrificed his appearance in his make-up for the part. His good looks and graceful carriage, so familiar to Freethinkers, were entirely obliterated; and the Padre appeared as a slovenly, shabby, aged, bald-headed, toothless, somewhat inarticulate dodderer, decidedly shaky in the text. His very hands were made up to represent dirty, raw beefsteaks, over which he cleverly managed to convey that he had lost control, as he wore them alternately crossed upon his breast, or flapping like the ears of an infuriated elephant. But the greatest loss to his acquaintances in his new role was his wonderful personality.

Where was that magnificently pugilistic and defiant attitude with which, in his zeal for his Church, he confronted a London police-court magistrate when charged with assaulting an aged Freethinker harmlessly selling this paper for a livelihood, and trampling on and destroying his stock? Where was the arrogant bearing, the withering sarcasm, the insolent manner, with which he had been wont to overawe his Freethinking opponents? and the effrontery with which he used to repeat his libellous and scandalous misrepresentations of their meetings and their principles? Gone! absolutely gone! and in their stead, there stood before the curtain, a garrulous, shapeless, extraordinarily ordinary piece of humanity, overweighted, overrated, subjected to the ridicule of the audience, whom he referred to as "the most thinking audience in the world."

But let Mr. Waldron be of good cheer. There is always an opening for an original pantomimist, or a seaside nigger minstrel, and a cinematograph performance would cause less pain to an audience who would lose nothing by the omission of the words. But for the legitimate stage—he really ought not to do it again!

Oh, Mr. Waldron! Oh, those hands!

S. V. K.

An old Scotch woman was dying. The storm was raging without, the wind was howling, and the rain dashing against the window panes. Her people and the doctor were gathered round her bed. "I maun dee, doctor; I maun dee," said the sick woman. "Ay, Ay, I'm mickle feart ye are gaun," the doctor replied. "Weel, weel, the Lord's will be done," his patient responded, "but it's an awfu' night to be gaun skirlin' through the clouds."

A minister, some few Sundays ago, astonished his hearers by addressing the Deity, not as "Thou who holdest in thy hands the heart of kings," but as "Thou, in whose hands is he king of hearts."

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Acid Drops.

Apropos of the Church of England's investment of three and a half millions in the war loan, there is one point that appears to have escaped observation. We speak under correction, but we believe that money left to the Church of England is, legally, money left to the State. If this be so, in using this money for the purposes of conducting the War, the State would only be using its own. The capital could, of course, be re-directed at any time to the original purpose for which it was set aside. But to pay interest on what is really its own money, and as the Church of England is part of the State, it is clear that, to pay interest on it, seems much like the State paying the parsons for permission to use its own funds.

We have another suggestion to make with regard to the clergy. While the State hires clergymen, it is justified in paying them. The absurdity lies not in their payment but in their employment. Still, when a call for service is made upon all, and all are asked to place their labour at the disposal of the State and be content with what is at most a living wage, why not put the same principle into operation with regard to the clergy. Settle what is a living wage, and then let the State see that none of its servants—particularly the clergy—receive more than that. The clergy, we feel sure, would not complain. They believe that the essence of Christianity is sacrifice, and would, doubtless, welcome the regulation as a genuine sign of the Christianization of the State.

Defending himself in a recent breach of promise action, a Highland minister, the Rev. M. S. Maclean, pleaded that no importance should be placed on his having kissed the lady in question. Kissing was a Highland habit, he said, and the Macleans were a very affectionate people. The judge, Lord Anderson, said it was a great privilege, and it was a pity it didn't come farther south. But as privileges must be paid for, Mr. Maclean was ordered to pay £200 damages. Perhaps the kissing habit will be less pronounced in the future.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron does not appear to be setting the Thames afire now that he has left the Church. The following remarks were printed in a Sunday paper concerning Waldron's latest music-hall sketch, entitled "Nature's Call," which the paper referred to, unkindly, as "Nature's Bawl": —"I am surprised that the severity of the criticism of 'Nature's Call,' the Rev. A. J. Waldron's very silly 'play,' did not kill it. Last week the Rev. gentleman acted in it at the Boscombe Hippodrome, so I presume it is still on tour. I suggest that while England is so short of war workers parsons do not seem quite in their element on the stage, even if they *are* bad actors."

A number of sixpenny weekly publications have been raised to sevenpence owing to the increased price of paper and labour. All these periodicals are well supported by advertisers, so it is a feather in our cap that the *Freethinker* remains at the same price and size as before the War.

Although the bishops and clergy do not fight—and do not intend to—they like to strut about in khaki uniforms. A newspaper paragraph states that the Bishop of Birmingham sat in the stalls of a London theatre, dressed in khaki. That is about as near to the War as most of these clerical heroes desire to get, but a few are courageous enough to conduct services at a safe distance from the Front.

Sir James Yoxall says 13,000 schoolmasters are serving with the Colours, and 1,000 have fallen fighting for England. What a contrast this affords to the conduct of the clergy, who are exempted from military service.

Mr. W. A. Appleton, Secretary of the General Federation of Trades Unions, said he did not remember many instances during thirty years in which the Church had sought to find which side was right in disputes between Capital and Labour. Just so! And he might have added that the Church is notorious for its generous treatment of its own curates, organists, and church helpers.

"Women of Britain, save your country from possible starvation by the utmost economy." Such, in short, is the appeal of Lord Devenport to the women of a Christian country. Where, however, is the person mentioned in the Gospels, who fed 5,000 persons with a few fishes and loaves?

The story of a singular conscience was told at Sheffield, when an Army absentee, who objected on conscientious grounds, was stated to have been living with a soldier's wife, the husband being on active service. Another example of the elasticity of the Christian conscience is seen in the case of the clergy, who tell people that one of God's commandments is "Thou shalt not kill," and who christen battleships and consecrate regimental flags.

Officiating at Westminster Chapel, the Rev. T. C. Williams, of Menai Bridge, perpetrated the following prayer:—

> Famine will not come to this land unless it is sent by Thee. There is no power on earth that can bring famine to a country unless thou dost send it.

Starvation in this connection is a relative thing, and we have it on the highest authority that there *is* a food shortage in this country as well as in Germany. And if Mr. Williams is correct the food shortage here, and the semi-starvation in Germany is "sent" by God. This, we admit, is "sound doctrine," but, if it be true, it does away with the submarine menace to England, and the peril of the blockade to Germany. It is the Lord who is responsible in both cases.

Here is another sample of Mr. Williams—we cite him because he is really a preacher of standing. He told his congregation that he knew a man who was at the head of a flourishing business when the War broke out. "First his business disappeared, and he was plunged into poverty. Then his two sons enlisted. One was killed early in the War, the other about a month ago. 'And now,' he said, 'I have just taken my wife to the asylum.'" "But," said Mr. Williams, "Christian optimism will ultimately be vindicated. God will never betray the trust of my poor soul." A more fatuous deliverance is hardly conceivable. How on earth can "Christian optimism"—whatever that may be, make up the loss of the man's two sons, and the insanity of the wife? And if God arranges famines, we presume he arranged this kind of thing also? Mr. Williams's God is a cheerful kind of deity. We congratulate ourselves on not believing in him.

"We know that without morality religion is nothing," says the Rev. Dr. Hastings, editor of the well-known Bible Dictionary. We are quite pleased to see the matter put in this way. And the reversal of the order is significant. For it doesn't matter a hang what kind of a religion a man has, there are so many of them, that the choice of one is of not much greater consequence than the pattern selected for a new suit. But it is of the utmost importance the kind of morality a man practices. That is everything.

The Mythology of All Races, in thirteen volumes, at 30s. per vol., hails from America, and the size and price sounds as though it were an important work. We have not seen the work, and, as it costs £19 10s., are not likely to. But from a review of the work we gather that the editor states, "It will perhaps be well to stress the fact that there will be nothing in our series that can be, in Roman Catholic phrase, 'offensive to pious ears'"; and, further, everything is omitted which by modern writers is usually "veiled in the obscurity of a learned language." A *Mythology of All Races*, written with one eye on "pious ears" and the other on Sunday-school teachers, is not likely to be worth anyone's study. The strange thing is that a number of writers should not be ashamed to make such a confession. If pious ears cannot stand the truth, they should be stopped. Any of the Churches will gladly supply the stopping.

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There are few places where religion is unaffected by the War. The Henley-on-Thames Workhouse chaplain's report states: "The religious state of the inmates seems below what it has been. Most take part in the hymn-singing, but the responses and psalms lack fervour, which may be due to inability to read."

The Gospel Temperance Crusade has been at work for generations, with little result; but since the Government took the matter of drink restriction in hand, convictions for drunkenness have been reduced by half. Yet it used to be a favourite boast with pious folk that a nation could not be made sober by Act of Parliament.

Why is it that Christian utterances are usually of the "Bath-bun and glass of milk" description? Lord Selborne has been condemning British foreign policy as anti-Christian. England, he suggests, relies on ships, not on God. Well, that's true. But suppose England relied on God, and other nations on ships; where would England be, with her population depending on foreign food supplies? "Aye, there's the rub!"

The Rev. D. Ewart James, a Congregationalist minister of Southend-on-Sea, has been objecting to Sunday concerts in aid of wounded soldiers. It seems as if the men of God want a monopoly of money-taking.

The Catholic Federation of the Archdiocese of Westminster have been urging their views on education, and have made recommendations for increased science training for children. "Increased" is good, for Catholics, who believe in "transubstantiation" and other marvels, have a long road to travel towards scientific knowledge.

The *Weekly Dispatch* has been discussing the duties of a film censor, and suggests, among other matters, that the cinema be forbidden to show pictures that burlesque the clergy, or that are offensive to religious orders, or present sacred figures. This is very comprehensive, and forbids the screening of "The Private Secretary" and "The Life of Christ." It even excludes Dickens's characters, "Stiggins" and "Chadband," to mention no others. That editor had better try again.

Roderic K. Clark, a well-known Quaker, and director of a Croydon firm, has been sentenced to 112 days' imprisonment with hard labour for refusing to obey military orders. Brother Clark, doubtless, appreciates the benefits of being a Christian in a Christian country.

What Secularists Christians are! The Bishop of Chelmsford, writing to the *Daily News* on a recent explosion in a munition works, asks whether it is necessary for such work to be carried on in crowded districts. Cannot "God" protect people in a large town; and, if not, why not?

"The man who insists on more than two lumps of sugar in his tea deserves the fate of Lot's wife," writes a society journalist. Unhappily, Mrs. Lot was as salt as a herring, so the Bible suggests.

The dear clergy are too proud to fight, and it appears that some of them even object to taxation. A newspaper paragraph states that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is considering applications from churches for an exemption from the entertainments tax. What are these men of God doing in this great War?

The Bishop of Salisbury, whose salary is £5,000 a year, advises the clergy of his diocese to do work on farms, or as postmen, in their spare time. We shall be agreeably surprised at a hearty response from the sky-pilots.

In a recent publication, the *Devonshire House Circle*, there is a good story of the nobleman who took his child to the Bishop of Durham's confirmation: "My lord, this young lady is my daughter. Pray give her a double portion." This recalls the declaration of a French aristocrat of the old school, "God will never damn a man of my quality."

"Germany has dethroned Christ," says the Earl of Selborne, echoing the pulpit nonsense, "and set up a plague-spot of devilry." The Teutons must be "up the pole" to worship a "plague-spot."

The Earl of Selborne says "we must in future take the law of Christ as our law in politics, in international relations, in all the work of life." His lordship must mean a dim and distant future, for Christ enjoined his disciples to love their enemies, and the Beatitudes have little affinity with bayonets.

Mr. Ian Malcolm, M.P., complains that scandalously little religious teaching is given to the children of a nation calling itself Christian. Well, there is no law preventing parents giving all the religious teaching they care to give, nor parsons giving them all the parents will permit. But Mr. Malcolm, like other Churchmen, is aiming at getting the State to force religion on the children, whether the parents desire it or not. Mr. Malcolm says that the faith should be taught from "school pulpits" by men "passionately believing in what they taught." So that not alone is the State to enforce religion, but is also to see that the teachers are of the proper religious type. If these religious cranks had their way, the country would be in a pretty state.

A ticket meeting has been called for the 26th Feb., chair to be taken by "The Right Hon. and Right Rev. Lord Bishop of London," to urge the release of all civilian prisoners of war between this country and Germany. Like the rest of the activities of this bishop, the idea is preposterous. Neither the British or the German military authorities are likely to release men of military age during the war. Moreover, an appeal is made for donations before sending tickets, we are not "struck" with the suggestion, and advise friends of prisoners in Germany to give the meeting a wide berth.

"If I were a journalist," said Mr. Justice Darling, "and I wrote one thing and the newspapers published another, then I think I should give up being a journalist." His lordship might have heard of pen-pushers turning Christian for half-an-hour to write their articles.

Two-and-a-half years after the declaration of War the Pope has delivered an "allocution" condemning all persons who make aerial attacks on unfortified cities. The distinguished theologian was in no hurry to let the world know his disapproval of the murder of defenceless women and children

The dear Nonconformist *Daily News* recently published some headlines, "A Waste of Time. Forty Persons to Try a Man for Stealing Honey." That's a mere trifle in a Christian country, where 50,000 clergymen are explaining the consequences of the theft of an "apple" in Eden thousands of years ago.

The Congregational Churches show another decline during 1916, part of which will, doubtless, be attributed to the War. But the Sunday-schools also show a decline of 633,656, which can hardly be attributed to that cause. And if the Sunday-schools break down, where else may the Churches look for recruits? It is quite useless looking to the world of adults.

The Convocation of Canterbury at its next sitting will consider the question of the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor during the War and for six months after. We wonder if they will include "communion port" in the prohibition?

In his will, a Mr. William Andrews, of Watford, expresses a strongly adverse opinion of "the new theology," and complains that "worldliness" is increasing in the Churches. However, he leaves money to the churches he fancies, but it is refreshing to find that criticism has found a voice in the pews.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

February 25, Clapham; March 11, Birmingham; March 18, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 25, Nottingham. March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—D. Seddon, 10s.

A. MILLAR.—Cheer up! Things *are* a bit black, but the recuperative powers of Nature are great. You are pretty correct in your estimate of popular journalism. If one is built that way, it pays; but it is a poor way of getting a living.

R. MORELAND.—Received with thanks.

E. GREENWOOD.—Received, and shall appear so soon as space permits. Thanks.

MR. W. FITZPATRICK informs us that the Glasgow Branch of the N. S. S. has decided, for the present, to hold meetings on the second Sunday of each month in the Good Templars' Hall, Ingram Street. Glasgow friends will please note.

T. B. HOPE.—Obliged for cutting. Certainly the "blasphemy" of a thing is often determined by who says it, and where it appears. We frequently see in even religious papers things that the writers would stare at even in the *Freethinker*.

B. DUPREE.—Mr. Cohen had already written you. Thanks for lines, which will no doubt prove useful.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Pleased to learn that your Annual Dinner, with Mr. Lloyd as the guest of the evening, passed off so pleasantly.

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. by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

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 regret there was a slight error in our note on the Bowman case last week. The case was adjourned until Thursday, February 8, not the 16th, as there stated. On Thursday (Feb. 8) the counsel concluded their arguments, and all that remains is the judgment. That is, as we expected it would be, reserved. It is far too important a case for judgment to be delivered offhand, and we must now wait for the final word—final, that is, so far as this case is concerned. For whichever way the judgment goes, it is only a stage in the history of Freethought.

We are pleased to have a good report of the new ground broken at Walsall on Sunday last by Mr. Lloyd. There was a good audience, lively questioning, and intelligent opposition. No speaker could desire better. These new places are being attached with the aid of the Special Propagandist Fund, which is doing exactly the work we said it would do. So far as the organizing of the meeting was concerned, that was done by the Birmingham Branch, and the Secretary, Mr. Partridge, writes that Walsall "evidently offers good ground for work." We thank the Branch for its assistance, and we are quite sure its officials feel they were rewarded by the success of the meeting.

With regard to Manchester, Mr. Cohen broke his journey to Liverpool on Saturday, Feb. 10, in order to consult with the members, and, after some discussion, it was decided to take immediate steps to secure a hall for a Sunday's meetings, when another meeting of members could be called to settle the question of reorganization. The old Secular Hall is in need of repair, and for that reason is not, at present, available for meetings. But that difficulty may be overcome once the Branch again settles down to work.

We were sorry to find that the old and present secretary of the Branch, Mrs. C. Pegg, is extremely ill, and has been more or less unwell for some time. Mr. and Mrs. Pegg have a record of thirty-five years of work for Secularism, and the Freethought party is their debtor for all they have done. We hope to hear soon that Mrs. Pegg's health has undergone an improvement, and, though Mr. and Mrs. Pegg may be unable to take part in the more exacting demands of society work, they will have the consolation of knowing that whatever success may attend the work of others, their own thirty-five years has had a share in producing it.

There are not many debates now-a-days, but there will be one this evening at the St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, Kentish Town Road, on the "Sinister Influence of the Catholic Church in Politics." Mr. Friedberg, who has had some experience of the Catholic Church in Spain, attacks, and Mr. Baker, a Roman Catholic, defends. North London Freethinkers will please note.

The South London Branch is continuing its propaganda at Avondale Hall, Clapham, although the severe weather has been something of a hardship to it. To-day (Feb. 18) the lecturer is Miss K. B. Kough; subject, "The God Idea." The lecture commences at 7 o'clock, and we hope there will be a good audience.

Will members of Mr. Howell Smith's Discussion Class please note that this week the meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 21, instead of on the regular meeting night, which is Thursday?

We see that the Sunlight Soap man, Mr. S. H. Lever, has been made a Knight Commander of the Bath. This is quite a case of making the punishment fit the crime.

A correspondent writes:—

> I have again to thank you for my weekly "cold bath." By which I mean the strong and bracing tonic of the *Freethinker*. What you say about war is too true; but there are other forces arising which will make it unpopular. The nations cannot afford it as carried on under modern conditions. The glorious "free" press loses money by it; and the Philistine gets hit in his "little Mary," and never in the heel, as depicted in erroneous mythology.
>
> Meanwhile Europe has, as it were, placed a sieve in the hands of Death, through which pass the young and the sound. Fancy, if any breeder of animals raised stock in that manner! And the "Imperialists," or pirates, of the world scream out for more babies, much as a miller would ask for flour, that he might grind it. Truly, all wise men contend against the same enemies. And they have no worse foe than Christianity, which corrupts the minds of the living through the fears of the dead.

The Bowman Case.

House of Lords Appeal.

THE historic Bowman Case reached its final stage in the House of Lords last week, on Appeal from the Court of Appeal. The day fixed by their Lordships was January 30, the anniversary of the death of Charles I.; this report is written when still no one knows which party shall be beheaded.

Members of the court are the Lord Chancellor, Lords Buckmaster, Dunedin, Parker, and Sumner. The court is sitting in the House of Lords, amid the famous red benches.

For the Appellants there appeared Mr. G. J. Talbot, K.C., and Mr. Price; for the Secular Society, Ltd., Mr. M. Tomlin, K.C., and the Hon. M. M. McNaughten.

The Appeal was opened by Mr. G. J. Talbot, K.C., for the Appellants, who reviewed the Case as carried through the courts below. He quoted from the Memorandum of Association of the Secular Society, Ltd. to show that its object is

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the overthrow of Christianity. He asked the court to go beyond the Memorandum and to examine all the activites of the Society and to declare that its work is dangerous to public policy. If the Society is illegal it cannot receive a monetary legacy in aid of its propaganda. He submitted that the court could not allow such a Society to exist. That was the main burden of the proceedings when they were adjourned for two days.

On Thursday the Appeal was renewed by Mr. Talbot. He claimed that Christianity is part of the common law of England. He quoted the Toleration Act and other Acts in support. He went back to the Stuarts, and earlier times to find evidence for his contention, and outlined the treatment of Jews, Unitarians, and others. He explained the meaning of the word Heresy, Apostasy, Arianism, etc. Church and State never tolerated small cliques, but only large bodies of regular dissenters, and even they were not allowed to meet behind locked doors.

Counsel examined closely the doctrines and principles of the Secular Society and their relation to the law of Blasphemy, and claimed that all Englishmen were still under ecclesiastical law, and declared in answer to a question that even Huxley's essays against Christianity were sold to-day illegally. Atheism was an offence against morality. He quoted judgments to prove it. Not only an offence, but as much subject to ecclesiastical law, the preserver of public morality. All Englishmen are subject to ecclesiastical law doubly, because they are subjects of a king who is the legal head of the Church. The Church can excommunicate still, and offenders against ecclesiastical law could receive six months' imprisonment.

At the third day of hearing Mr. Talbot was continuing his argument when the Lord Chancellor suggested that he might give way to Counsel for the Respondent Company, which he did at 11.45.

Mr. Tomlin then rose and proposed to put his case under four heads.

I.—That the question of the illegality of the Company is not open.

II.—Even if one of the Articles of the Company is illegal that does not make a gift to the Company illegal.

III.—A true construction of section 3 (*a*) of the Memorandum of Association does not involve an attack on Christianity necessarily.

IV.—A temperate discussion of the doctrines of Christianity involves no illegality.

He quoted from the Companies Act of 1862 to show that the Certificate of Registration was a guarantee that the Company was a fully legal entity, and had complied with all the conditions precedent to the formation of a company. The question before the House was not whether the Company was going to use its money illegally, but whether the gift was good or bad in law. He gave a history of the Case in the courts below to show that the legal standing of the Company had stood all tests. If the Company did make illegal use of money left to it then the Company could be restrained by proceedings in Chancery, but not by such an action as this.

Members of the Company claimed the right not to force others to embrace what they did not believe but merely to hold and teach their own beliefs. They wished to apply natural principles to human conduct as we do in such problems as sanitation and the use of chloroform to alleviate pain in surgery, both of which were opposed for supernatural reasons.

Under the fourth head he gave a history of persecution for opinions, dividing the history into four periods as (1) Tribal persecution; (2) Theological; (3) Legal and Political; (4) Social, and was in the middle of his account of Theological persecution when the House adjourned until Monday.

On Monday, Mr. Tomlin faced the assertion that Christianity is part of the law of the land. It is not a scientific phrase, he said, unless it means simply that we have in this country a Christian Church established by law.

In answer to a question Counsel said that he would not ask the House to countenance any doctrine that is immoral, but would ask them to assent to the proposition that while the principles of law remain, results may change. He asserted that prosecutions for blasphemy were modern, and began in the reign of Charles II., and that not one conviction for blasphemy had been obtained without scurrility being part of the offence.

Lord Buckmaster excepted the case of the King *versus* Woolston, with which Mr. Tomlin agreed. The Lord Chancellor decided that the court ought to see the book for which Mr. Woolston was indicted, and asked whether stress was laid on scurrility in that case. Counsel replied that Woolston was charged with deriding the law.

Mr. Tomlin read from the Blasphemy Act to show that the prosecution must be for words spoken, and that the offence must be specific. He thought that the Company must either be charged with criminal illegality or that at the worst, on the other hand, it is merely a Company whose rights the law will not go out of its way to enforce.

At the afternoon sitting Counsel considered the bearing of the word Secular in the Company's title. He gave the history of the word and its connection with Holyoake who declared that Secularism was not necessarily an attack on Christianity.

Lord Buckmaster raised the problem of the Toleration Act and the opposing Counsel's assertion that it removed certain disabilities from two or three classes, but left all the others at the mercy of the common law.

Counsel asked for the authority for this contention while admitting that all who denied the Trinity were exempted from toleration. My opponents say, he said, that the common law is against me. I ask, where and how? They say, Oh, Christianity is part of the law of the land, therefore attacks on Christianity *must* be illegal. I say that no such doctrine exists, but if it does it can be only as part of the rule of public policy. The question turns on the moral interests of the State. But the rule of public policy varies from age to age. Witchcraft was punished by common law, but could not be even proved to-day.

Three hundred years ago, if the court considered certain opinions it would have given a judgment totally different from one of to-day on the same point. He hoped that when their lordships came to decide, it would be in the spirit of the age in which we live. In former days theological discussions would provoke to riot, but not now.

At the end of Mr. Tomlin's argument his Junior Counsel, Hon. M. M. McNaughten, rose and continued the plea, contending chiefly for the absolute legality of the Company and its ability in law to receive and administer a legacy such as this. He contended that the phrase: "for the subversion of Christianity," is merely rhetorical, and has no real meaning before the law.

The court then adjourned at 4 o'clock till Thursday on account of the opening of Parliament.

The Thursday's sitting began in presence of a body of Australian and New Zealand officers and men who were visiting the House of Lords. The Hon. M. M. McNaughten continued his argument for the strict legality of the Company. He submitted that only the Crown could dissolve the Company apart from a voluntary decision of the members. Lord Dunedin thought that the inviolability of a Company was a serious position in law and put a great burden on the Companies Acts.

At about 11 o'clock Mr. Talbot rose to give his final reply to the points raised by the two Counsel for the Respondent Company. He denied that the position of the Company could not be questioned simply because it had been registered. Lord Parker thought that unless he could show that all the objects of the Company were illegal he would not succeed, and in connection with a further contention Lord Parker said that he thought Mr. Talbot was meeting an argument that had never been advanced by the other side.

This Company, Counsel said, declares that the legacy does not constitute a charitable trust, that they are a legal entity, that the Corporation has been properly formed, and they declare that their objects are legal, though I am assuming the illegality of one point in their programme for the sake of argument. The Master of the Rolls has settled the point that one illegal object of a Company will invalidate a legacy. He quoted two cases in support of this contention. In effect the Master of the Rolls says that if one object is illegal the Company is in a dangerous position and must not be helped to carry out any of its objects. If a Company puts into its

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Memorandum one point plainly illegal it cannot complain if that point is held to invalidate a gift. If the opposing contention is true, a Company need but put into its Memorandum only one innocent object and all the others might be illegal.

He contended that the analogy of Restraint of Trade was not sound, because in the case of this Company the one object has not become illegal by acts over which it has no control, but was illegal from the start. He quoted the case of a Company formed to promote a certain commercial process along with certain other objects, but when its main object was found to be impossible and the members petitioned for dissolution the court was obliged to sanction the petition.

He quoted the *Oxford Dictionary's* definition of the word Secular to show that it is held to involve an attack on Christianity, and from the Principles and Objects of the National Secular Society to confirm his contention that the Company existed to overthrow the Christian religion. He declared that, in law, irreligion is like immorality.

The Lord Chancellor pointed to the difference between two propositions, that the law will not enforce certain rights, and that the law will not declare certain objects illegal; and suggested that the point had never been met in the courts. In reply to this Mr. Talbot agreed that it might be a new point in equity.

Lord Dunedin said that he could not accept Counsel's dictum of irreligion being immoral in law, not in the sense meant by Counsel. He thought that Counsel's argument required him to find a middle course between the two.

Lord Parker instanced Shelley's *Queen Mab's* case as the nearest approach to Counsel's position, and the summing up in this case was read to the House.

Counsel admitted that no conviction had ever been obtained without the presence of scurrility but he asserted that the more we look into the distinction between scurrility and temperate discussion the more we see that the distinction is untenable.

The Lord Chancellor could not understand how Mr. Talbot could say that there was no distinction, and Lord Dunedin thought that Counsel was bound to admit a difference. Lord Buckmaster said that it is possible to use language in two ways, one good and one bad, both expressing the same thing.

Later, Lord Buckmaster raised the problem of the Jews, and the Lord Chancellor inquired whether a Jewish sermon, in a synagogue, against Christianity, would be illegal. Counsel thought it would be so, strictly considered. The Lord Chancellor asked a similar question as regards Mohammedans, and Counsel gave the same reply.

Counsel then read a long essay by Sir James Stephen criticizing Lord Coleridge's judgment in the Foote and Ramsey case to the effect that Christianity is the basis of English law and that temperate criticism is more dangerous to Christianity than scurrilous attacks; he also read the same writer's criticism of other judgments, especially in the Queen *versus* Hetherington, which reaffirms the principle set forth in the King *versus* Woolston.

After the interval for lunch, Counsel contended that it is unjust to draw a distinction between temperate discussion and scurrility because the scurrilous opponent of Christianity is often quite honest and sincere, and is merely speaking the language that most of his hearers understand. Why should he suffer more than the other?

Lord Buckmaster showed, against this, that, for instance, physiological facts might be put scurrilously or modestly: are both methods therefore equal?

Finally, Counsel held that the legacy must be declared illegal because its reception could not be enforced. Not one case can be quoted to prove that it could be enforced in law. What justification exists, therefore, for the making of a new law? Why change the old principles of public policy? Only an insignificant minority will regard the operations of this Company with approval. These people attack Christianity at the root, and the smallness of their support demands that no alteration in the rule of public policy shall be made in their favour.

The learned judges in the courts below have done that; but, I ask, said Counsel, how far is this to go? Are all the foundations of public policy to be changed simply because we live in changed times? The courts below have torn up the old rules, and if that is allowed, why not tear up the Common Law so far as it rests on public policy?

The Lord Chancellor inquired here whether restraint would not do more harm than good, and a little later said that he would be sorry if the judges had to decide matters of personal opinion.

After some further discussion Counsel brought his case to a close with a request that if the House decided against his clients they should be allowed their costs out of the estate in dispute.

The Lord Chancellor announced that the House would take time to consider its judgment and then rose at 3 o'clock.

H. V. S.

Religion in Russia.

II.

CHRISTIANITY.

(Concluded from p. 87.)

As Christianity, in one form or another, has for several centuries been the dominant religion in Russia, I shall only *mention* the Mohammedans, Buddhists, and other non-Christians, except that something must be said concerning the Jews.

The exact date of the introduction of Christianity into Russia is doubtful. Some writers place it in the ninth century, about 868, when the Patriarch of Constantinople, it is supposed, had permission to found a church in Kieff, one of the oldest towns on the Dnieper. Others, while implying or admitting the possibility of an earlier introduction, are inclined to take the tenth century, about 988, as giving a more satisfactory date for the definite founding of Christianity in Russia. There seems little doubt that the first Russian duke, or king, to make Christianity his State religion was Vladimir (988). His wife, sister to the emperor of Byzantium, gave her patronage to Greek missionaries, who were allowed to found schools and churches in the dominions of Kieff, (See S. Reinach's *Orpheus*, p. 270; J. M. Robertson's *S. Hist. Christianity*, p. 213; N. Orlaff, M.A., *The Russian Church* in *Rel. Syst. of the World* pp. 418-422; Moshiem's *Ecclesiastical History*, Reid's ed. (1848), p. 289, sec. 4; Wallace's *Russia*, p. 364, vol. i.).

To this day the majority of Russian Christians belong to the Russian section of the Orthodox-Catholic Eastern Church, and the Church of Rome has no State influence in Russia.

Ever since its early days the Russian Church has been a centre of ignorance and superstition. Perhaps no body of clergy has remained as ignorant as the Orthodox Russian. The influence of the Church in Russia has been anything but uplifting both in the lives of the peasants and of the aristocracy.

This is not to be wondered at, when so much faith is placed in the miraculous power of Icons, or pictures of Jesus, the Madonna, and many of the saints. Nor, in view of their ignorance, is it surprising that the peasants are to-day not by any means rid of belief in the old pagan deities and spirits, many of which have simply been transformed from friendly into harmful beings. Both in private and in public Icon-worship holds sway to such an extent that important Icons are often lent out, to people in great trouble, by many of the churches. In this way a good deal of revenue is secured. Stepniak, when writing of the popular worship of Ikons, says: the people "believe that the icon feels pain and pleasure, resents insults, and is gratified by kind treatment, just as a human being would be." (*The Russian Peasantry*, 1 Vol. ed. (1905) p. 361). Forlong mentions that an Icon of the Iberian Chapel at Moscow earns as much as £10

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per day, by being sent out to the sick. (*Faiths of Man* vol. iii.; p. 209, art. "Russia.") Stepniak says (as above, p. 375) "our churches are not houses of prayer, but houses of plunder," and states that many a churlish orthodox priest will refuse to bury the dead, if a poor peasant is unable to pay the exorbitant price he asks. It is of this church that the "Holy Tsar" is the head—and right well does he use it to keep his subjects in subjection. He is "known as *Jembla Bogh*—"The God on Earth," etc. (Carl Joubert's *Russia as it Really Is*, p. 1 and p. 296). But we must now take a glance at the Rascolniks or Dissenters. Schism appeared in the Russian Church, probably, two centuries prior to the appearance of the Rascolniks in the time of Patriarch Nicon, about 1659, but the earlier dissent does not seem to have been very numerous.

Nicon, along with Tsar Alexis, determined to alter the ritual and improve the text of the mass-book. To this a large number of the people objected, believing that any alteration in mass-book, or ritual, would be detrimental to salvation. Consequently, the substitution of the use of three fingers, instead of two, when making the sign of the cross; the alteration of the spelling of Jesus from "Jsus" (an abbreviation long in use) back to "Jesus"; and instructions that the Hallelujahs should be sung three times instead of twice, led to rupture in the Holy Russian Church. Matters of doctrine as distinct from ritual were left untouched, and yet thousands of people seceded from the orthodox pale of the Church. Because they objected to changes in ritual, and corrections in the spelling of words, many thousands became fanatical and met death at their own hands or those of others. The revolt against the innovations was gradual, but as time went on it brought out a great deal of bitterness on both sides. The dissenters not only frequently gloried in destroying themselves, but persecuted with as good a heart as did the orthodox.

Whatever explanation of the Rascolnik movement we may adopt, it is clear that Christianity had failed to improve Russian life, whether social or religious, in such a way as to make progress possible on the lines of peaceful co-operation by those who had accepted the "Divine Revelation."

As a result of this great movement of dissent a large number of sects ultimately came into being, but here we have not room to mention many. (For details on "The Rascol," see Wallace's *Russia*, vol. i., p. 337, etc.; Stepniak, as above, p. 385-490; *Ency. Brit.*, art. "Russia" —Sept. ed., 1914, p. 20). Belonging to the general movement of dissent, but probably preceding the date on which the appearance of the Rascolnik is usually fixed, are the sects known as the Chlists.

About 1645, a peasant named Danilo Filipovitch, claimed that God the Father had become incarnate in him. In time he established a number of sects in the province of Kostroma. These sects spread to various parts of the empire in the form of secret societies. They called themselves "Christs," but owing to their habit of self-flagellation becoming known the orthodox gave them the name of "Chlists," that is "whips." Some of the Chlistic sects were also in the habit of exciting sexual feeling at their meetings, and when the lights were extinguished a promiscuous orgy was indulged in. Doubtless the sanctity of human nakedness was deemed to be gracious in the sight of the "Lord," to whom there is no darkness. Even now a good deal of excitement is indulged in, although some of the Chlistic sects have sobered down a little. "At their prayer-meetings the Khlysti dance to the accompaniment of hymns, the dance gradually developing into a wild dervish-like spinning which is kept up till they drop, foaming at the mouth and prophesying" (*Ency. Brit.*, art. "Russia," Sept. ed. 1914, p. 21).

Among the Skoptsi a reaction against the Chlistic indulgence in sexual promiscuity set in. On the other hand, they formed the habit of castrating themselves after having one child. The male and female were mutilated usually at midnight. (See Forlong's *Faiths of Man*, vol. ii., p. 317).

A division took place in the sects of the Rascolnik proper at an early stage of their history. Two sections were found: the one consisting of the Popovzy, or those having priests, the other consisting of the Bezpopovzy, or those without priests.

In turn each of these main divisions became subdivided into sects having slightly different forms of ritual. It is interesting to note that many sects of the Popovzy were content to accept, as their priest, one who had been turned out of the Orthodox Church for drunkenness or wrong-doing. A washing in the baptismal water made him fit to act as priest again. To many of the Popovzy the being able to perform certain rites was more important than moral living.

A sect of the Bezpopovzy, which needs to be mentioned, is the Ikonobertsi. This sect refuses to have anything to do with images and pictures in connection with religion. A feature that is not outstanding either in the official Russian Church or the Rascolnik.

A few words must now be said concerning the Dukhoborzy and Molokane. According to Stepniak: "the Molokane seceded from the Dukhoborzy during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and the Dukhoborzy is much the elder." (*Russian Peasantry*, 1 Vol. ed., p. 505.) There seems to be no knowledge as to the origin of the latter sect, but it has been suggested that they were in some way connected with the Ikonobertis, as they reject Icons. The doctrine of the Dukhoborzy is of a theosophical turn. The Deity is the soul of the world, a kind of reasoning principle which is superior to the world, but dwells in and is inseparable from the souls of men. In fact, it is through man alone that the Deity is able to reveal himself. He is incarnate in the faithful, each one of which is a "Son of God," inasmuch as he possesses the indwelling spirit. The "Fall" is repeated every day in the wrong-doings of men. Man's soul is immortal, according to the Dukhoborzy, but only in the sense that it is inseparable from the indwelling "soul of God." There is neither hell nor paradise, the soul is able to transmigrate at the death of the body. Christ was only a good man, and all Scriptures should be interpreted by the "inner light."

The Molokane are mentioned as far back as 1765. This sect is Christian and not theosophical like the Dukhoborzy. The Bible is accepted as the rule of faith and conduct, and is to be understood according to the spirit and not the letter. A great deal of indifference is shown towards outward forms of worship, and the sacraments. Most of the Christian doctrines are believed by the Molokane, but a fair amount of latitude is allowed for individual interpretation. As a rule, the members of this sect live good and quiet lives of mutual help.

No small measure of persecution has been the lot of both the Dukhoborzy and the Molokane. Stepniak says: "the penalties inflicted on the political offenders of the educated classes – from the Decembrists to the Nihilists—reflect but a faint image of what the guileless Dukhoborzy and their younger brothers have had to undergo almost uninterruptedly for the space of about sixty years." (*Russian Peasantry*, 1 Vol. ed., p. 520.)

In relation to the Jews in Russia, there has been, for a long time, a frequent and energetic application of the

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higher ethic of Christian brotherhood (Matt x. 34-36). No ferocity, no humiliation, has been deemed too Christian to apply to the Jews. For details concerning the sufferings of the Jews in Russia, I must refer the reader to the section on the subject in C. Joubert's *Russia as it Really Is*; to Israel Cohen's *Jewish Life in Modern Times*, per Index of Subjects, p. 366; and to the section on "The Jewish Pale," in Victor Berard's *The Russian Empire and Czarism*, pp. 125-177.

It is the lot of the Jew in Russia to be restricted to his "Pale," that is, "the ten provinces of the kingdom of Poland, and the fifteen frontier governments of Lithuania, White Russia, and Little Russia, where he had formerly been planted by the Lithuanian-Polish conquest (Berard, as above, p. 127). But this is not all. Within their "Pale" the Jews must be content to exist, huddled together chiefly in hovels, in the towns and small market-towns. They are usually very poor, the men and women being glad to work for very small wages, a fact that should explode the theory that the Jew can always "get on" and make money.

In the universities and regular schools the Jew suffers from many restrictions, if he has the good fortune to be allowed to enter. But, in spite of this, the majority of Jewish children receive better instruction than is received by the average Russian peasant's children. The Jewish schools do much to make up for the loss in education, caused to their people by the Russian official restrictions.

This systematic persecution of the Jew is also carried out in the Army, which he must join if fit. Although usually a good and loyal soldier, he is dealt with in a humiliating manner, and can never become an officer or even a bandmaster. But, to crown all, the Russian Jews have frequently been butchered to death by thousands, the Christian populace having, in many cases, been set on them at the instigation of the priests.

For some time past there have been rationalizing forces at work in Russia, but the day when the cloud of Russian religion shall have vanished seems to be a long way off.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Compulsory Religion.

WHAT must we do to be saved from bigotry? Who shall cast out for us the devil of fanaticism? Charlotte Bronte described bigotry as "that parent of crimes." Injustice is ever heedless of its effects. See how petty rulers and magistrates, "clad with a little brief authority," abuse their positions. It matters not to them that in their community there may be Rationalists, Jews, and Mohammedans; they persist in using their official names and official positions to fortify the Government religion. A clergyman is installed in a new cure, and the least that can be done to mark his arrival are *civic* welcomes, *civic* addresses, and *civic* soap. An overseas Premier gets the freedom of a town, or has a University degree conferred upon him; the proceedings in each case must be opened with prayer. A statue is unveiled to a statesman, an explorer, a scientist, or a man of letters; here again the man of God must take precedence of all others and invoke the Divine blessing on the ceremony. Sessions of Parliament and Town Councils cannot begin without pious orisons. The clergy regard themselves as State officials who are indispensable to the nation's welfare. This they certainly are not. On the contrary. But they must be recognized as astute advertisers, and keenly alert in looking after their own interests. And so long as they can secure belief in their pretensions to the possession of supernatural commissions, they will continue to exploit the common people. A "Divine call" gives them a confidence and an assertiveness which human credulity regards as well founded and well justified. They are a peculiar people, set apart by an all-powerful God to execute his purposes—separate from "sinners"—made of a different clay from Tom, Dick, or Harry. And in the human poultry-yard they go about rooketty-cooing and swelling their chests like the vainest and most arrogant of pigeons! How these two-forked radishes waddle and wallow in their dignity behind dog-collars, cassocks, aprons, and surplices! How sweetly benign is their condescending smile; how Turveydropian their gentle, cat-like deportment! How the pearls of wisdom gleam as they drop from their holy lips! Could any outlawed infidel imagine that these portals of grace would ever frame a big, big D, ever curl with the sneer of pride, or ever pout in baffled petulance? Nay, the priest, like Agag, walks softly. As he surveys the crowd of gaping, unthinking believers, he assures himself that the bitterness of death for his profession is past.

Yet time and again it has been demonstrated to unprejudiced minds that his profession does not fit in with his practice. It is proverbial: "Don't do what I do; but do what I tell you." People are beginning to realize that all his work is *talk*. The house of priestcraft is founded upon sand. The priest may not perceive that the numbers of those who do their daily work and enjoy their daily recreations without reference in any sense to God or religion are increasing year by year. The clergy may still be "first oars" at the crowning of kings, the christening of battleships, or the dedication of colours; but the *spade-work of life* is done to-day better, more strenuously, with more effective and more beneficent results without any tinge of religion or religious association. For years we have been told that everything that was not mixed with religion was accursed. Gradually the people are beginning to see that everything that is not "mixed with brains" and commonsense is destined to failure. The priests warned us that all our human talents must be employed in the service either of God or of the Devil. There could be no middle course. What advancement humanity was to make, and the way in which, and the means by which it was to be made, were to be determined by the clergy.

Is it so now? May Freethinkers not congratulate themselves that it is only the ignorant, unthinking, and uninformed who concede such claims? Over the Christian Churches of Britain may be inscribed in gigantic characters the word "Failure." All the galvanizing methods in the world cannot bring back life to moribund sects. Men are thinking more profoundly; aspiring far higher; looking far further—both backwards and forwards—than ever they did before. Religion tries to keep the scales on the eyes of Humanity; Reason pierces them with a light that heralds the coming of Freedom. Religion has never succeeded yet where it was not imposed by compulsion of some sort. The mediæval weapons were physical and mental torture—the Inquisition, the dungeon, the rack, the stake, and the thumbscrew. The modern weapons are social ostracism, business boycotting, and the sedulous sowing of the idea that unbelievers are filthy-minded, dirty-living pariahs, home-wreckers, and social subverters, with no sense of personal honour. However the suggestions may be gilded, that is the meaning of the attitude of the Christian to the Atheist.

Religion depends upon compulsion; if not the compulsion of terror, then of some other sort. But physical force and money cannot for ever stand against the assaults of knowledge. What mockery to bleat in the parent's ear as he watches his beloved child in the

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grip of consumption, that "God's in his Heaven; all's right with the world"! What lunacy to preach the doctrine of non-resistance to the man who sees a tiger springing upon his own mother!

Ecclesiastical corporations can survive only so long as they can make religion compulsory. This cannot be too much emphasized. From the pages of a weekly paper, friendly to the Faith, we cull the following paragraph, which is an interesting commentary upon the compulsory system of religion which prevails in our Army:—

> A young B.Sc., who has served as a private in Gallipoli, and latterly in France, sends us an interesting story of the way in which religious matters are treated by the ordinary soldier. He remembers incidents happening at the usual Church parades as follows: The Church of England men were marched off to service. Then the Wesleyans and the Presbyterians. When the turn of the United Board came there were only three, and they were dismissed. On the following Sunday the three had grown to a dozen, and again they were dismissed. The third Sunday there were thirty, and they were then marched off to the Y.M.C.A. tent, where a chaplain of the United Board gave them a two-hour service. On the fourth Sunday the numbers declined to the original three. There the story ends.

It is wise not to underrate the forces opposed to Freethought. Religion is buttressed by powerful and wealthy interests. Willy-nilly we must pay for the maintenance of the Government religion. Clerics of the Church *of England* still sit upon the Benches of the Parliament *of the United Kingdom*. Willy-nilly we must consent to be called Christian when we are nothing of the kind. But one is entitled to expect that State servants and State officers shall study to cultivate and preserve, in so far as their official capacity is concerned, the grace of a correct and strict neutrality. Unfortunately, too many of these gentlemen go out of their way—though they must be well aware of the many divergent faiths and philosophies represented in the British — Empire to advertise the inestimable benefits of the Christian religion. Why should Viscount French, for example, have, at the opening of a Salvation Army Club, descanted upon the high and ennobling ideas which young soldiers had been taught by the Salvation Army? There are thousands of people in the real Army, and out of it, who entirely deny that Christianity is in any respect a *sine qua non* to a high and noble life. Lord French, like some other State officials who are given to masquerading on religious platforms, would be well advised to "stick to his last" and leave the professional religionist to his.

IGNOTUS.

Obituary.

A staunch old Freethinker, in the person of Mr. George Kemp, passed away on Friday, February 9, in his eighty-sixth year. He was the father of H. A. Kemp, who, with the historic prisoners, G. W. Foote and W. J. Ramsey, was prosecuted for blasphemy in 1883, and received a sentence of three months' imprisonment as publisher of the *Freethinker*. The veteran Mr. Kemp, who preserved his mental activities to the last, was a well-known propagandist in North-East London, and never tired of relating how he had met Mr. Bradlaugh, as a boy, at Bonner's Fields; had seen all three Presidents of the N. S. S. come into the Movement; and how, in one of the Hyde Park riots of 1878, his shoulders served Mr. Bradlaugh as a platform from which "the Chief" put and carried a resolution in favour of peace. A constant reader of the *Freethinker*, his enthusiasm and loyalty for the Cause never wavered. The funeral takes place at Chingford Mount Cemetery, at 4 o'clock, on Saturday, February 17, when a Secular Burial Service will be read.

E. M. V.

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, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "The Sinister Influence of the Catholic Church in Politics." Affirmative, P. Friedberg; negative, R. O. Baker.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, Miss Kough, "The God Idea."

MR. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Wednesday, Feb. 21, at 7.30.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales, "Christian Hypocrisy"; 6.30, Messrs. Beale and Saphin.

COUNTRY.

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Views and Opinions.

After the War.

"After the War"—that is the magic formula with which some enthusiasts for reform console themselves for the mental, moral, and social sacrifices that are being made during the War. "When the boys come home" is another variant of the same theme; and, when honestly used, indicates a quite pathetic faith in the reconstruction that is to come when the work of destruction is concluded. First, the War was to end war. For nearly a year that phrase did duty. We pointed out the absurdity of the phrase when it was first used, and now it is universally rejected. Everybody now realizes that the cessation of this War will mean an increase in the size of the Armies and Navies of the world, and the world will be fortunate if it remains in a state of armed peace until such time as it has become sufficiently civilized to store its weapons of destruction in a museum. But after the War—then the squire and the farmer will take to their hearts the agricultural labourer and make him a co-partner in the land he laboriously tills; the capitalist will treat the workman as a brother beloved; the peer will hob-nob with the plebian; the men who have fought together in the trenches will return home determined on building a better England; labour will give of its best to capital, and capital will share its all with labour. All this will occur—after the War. Pity it is that shipowners, coal owners, trading corporations, and financial magnates have not shown some clear indication of the coming change while the War is in progress.

* * *

The Education Question.

Among other things that are to be revolutionized after the War is education. And that is a matter which seriously concerns the clergy of this country. It concerns them, not because they are interested in education, as such, but because their concern lies with controlling education so far as is possible. An education in which the clergy had no hand would, indeed, be a very good thing for the country, but it would be a very bad thing for the Churches. So the Bishop of Oxford, addressing a meeting of the Education Committee of the House of Laymen of the Province of Canterbury and the Mothers' Union, said (we quote from a summary given in the *Schoolmaster*):—

> He dreaded Churchmen appearing before the country as the opponents of the new democratic programme of educational reform. He desired that no such disaster should happen as that Churchmen should associate their claim and appeals for the proper place of religion in education with opposition to the educational programme of the democracy. He thought the democracy was going to be fairly in earnest in the demand for educational reconstruction of the most expensive kind. He believed it was absolutely just, necessary, and good, and he desired that every Churchman should be an enthusiastic advocate of this educational reconstruction. He had never seen working people so determined about anything as they were about not letting the parsons in on this subject. They were determined that the religious question should not be allowed to trouble the mind. Churchmen should associate what they had to say about religious education with an unmistakable enthusiasm for educational reconstruction, and not with a merely niggardly attitude of opposition or criticism towards it.

The Bishop's purpose is quite clear. He, of course, wishes religion to be at least kept where it is in the schools, and, if possible, he wants its position strengthened. But he warns his followers that working-people are determined about this question of education. And as it would be dangerous to oppose them, Churchmen are advised to go with the tide and display "an unmistakable enthusiasm for educational reconstruction." They are to "enthuse" by command. Of course, an enthusiasm that is produced by the order of the Mothers' Union, because it would be dangerous to show lukewarmness may impose on some; but, one hopes, not many. If the clergy were really enthusiastic about education, it would scarcely need the advice of the Bishop of Oxford to make that much plain to the general public.

* * *

The Clergy and Education.

Now the clergy have not, and never have had, as a body, any genuine enthusiasm for education. That lies on the face of the history of elementary education in this and every other country. Spain and Russia, the two countries in which the clergy have most power, are also the two most illiterate countries in Europe. In this country the measures taken by the Churches—established and dissenting—in founding schools during the early part of the nineteenth century, were so many instruments for gaining converts or for keeping a hold on such as they had. Look at the full title of the National Society, and this is as plain as daylight. It was "The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Church of England." That was the Alpha and Omega of Episcopalian interest in education. And the dissenters used their schools as so many inducements to get children away from the Church. Not till 1833 did the English government grant a miserable £20,000 to help

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education. Had the education given in such schools as then existed, entirely under religious influence, been of a passably satisfactory character, no government measure for the education of the nation's children would ever have been introduced. But on the evidence of a Royal Commission it was found that the education given by churches and chapels did not warrant an annual expenditure by the State of even £20,000. For centuries the education of the people had been in the hands of the Christian Church, and the result was a population ignorant and brutalized. For seventy years churches and chapels between them controlled elementary education, and could see no more in it than an instrument for sectarian aggrandisement. The Churches had had the whole position in their grasp, and their complete failure as educationalists, their unscrupulous exploitation of the schools as so many instruments of sectarian advantage, became so notorious that the secular government was compelled to take the matter in hand. And now to avoid losing all hold over the schools the clergy are advised to "enthuse" at once. What supreme faith these clerics have in the stupidity of the British public!

* * *

The Prostitution of Education.

The Bishop of Oxford thinks the democracy will be in earnest in its demand for educational reconstruction of the most expensive kind. That may mean little or much. Education may be reconstructed without its being of the right kind. It may be expensive without being profitable. The vital question is, whether the people of this country are really alive to the value of education as a humanizing, a civilizing, a progressive force? Can we answer *that* question in the affirmative with any real assurance? True, we have heard a deal lately about the importance of education. But what end, what ideals, are involved? Our statesmen (one is bound to call them that, if only by courtesy), until the other day, were blind to the value of education even as a commercial asset. Since the opening of the War, these same leaders have told us our people must be better educated. To what end? To capture German trade; to beat the German competition in the world's markets; to increase our manufacturing output; to pay a larger return on invested capital, etc. They have awakened to the lofty conception that an educated workman (by which they really mean a trained workman) is a more profitable piece of machinery than an uneducated or untrained one. We are to be better educated, but in the interests of trade. Education is to be made subordinate to the needs of the workshop and the counting-house, and to the demands of the dividend hunter. We have seen how the commercializing and militarization of German education has resulted in a world-wide catastrophe. And we are invited to embark on the same voyage, as though it could possibly lead to any other destination, however long the journey may be.

* * *

Education—The Right Line.

I have no hesitation in saying that an educational reconstruction born in that spirit is damned before its birth. All real education will have a utilitarian value, but to frame an educational system with a view to that end is to fail even in that object. The only worthy purpose of education is to teach how to live. And you cannot find out how to live by discovering how to earn a living. You will better find out how to earn a living by discovering how to live. The eagerness of a carpenter to get a living will never teach him the best use of hammer, saw, and plane. But the delight of a man in the skilled use of these tools will enable him to earn a living with ease and pleasure. And what is true here is true in all directions. Education divorced from its higher ends becomes a social danger instead of a public benefit. Just as in science the finer results, the greater discoveries, have been reached from a pure love of knowledge, so in education the best results are attained by the cultivation of a sheer delight in the skilled use of human faculties as an end in itself. The best teachers have already discovered the pernicious influence of prizes, and have demonstrated that better results can be obtained by creating a healthy interest in school work. It is once more a question of ideals, and we, for one, should feel much more certain about the benefit of this educational reconstruction if we heard a little less of "increased outputs," "capturing trade," "new markets," in connection therewith, and a little more of education as a purely humanizing force.

* * *

Clear Out the Clergy.

But in one thing we hope the Bishop of Oxford is correct. That is in the determination of working-people not to let in the parsons on this subject. That is an essential condition of educational progress. For the parson is not there as an educationalist. He is there as the representative of a sect, to guard the interests of his order, to prepare the children for exploitation in after life. And let us make no mistake on this point. Every Church in existence fights to the utmost extent of its power against a perfectly free and open education. With each it must be an education which permits its sectarian interpretation to be placed upon life. That is the only possible meaning of their fight for a voice in educational administration. And the remedy for this lies in the hands of the people themselves. Let them look at the record of the Churches and learn its significance. Let them realize also that for the past fifty years the greatest obstacle to the betterment of education has been the sectarian influence of church and chapel. Let them realize their own needs, that the modern State is a Secular State, based upon secular needs, and dependent upon secular knowledge. The power lies in their hands. All they need is knowledge and how to use it. And if the Bishop of Oxford is right, that knowledge is becoming theirs in a rapidly increasing measure.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Religion After the War.

THE clergy confidently predict the triumph of Christianity after the War. Two years ago they were equally confident that the War had already brought the people back to God. Churches and chapels were crowded, and the men of God proudly declared that the day of Atheism was gone for ever. As a matter of fact, the people did not return to God, and the places of worship soon emptied again. At present religion is at a very low ebb indeed, but we are assured that once the War is over it will be all-victorious. When the young men return from the Front, there will occur the greatest religious revival the world has ever seen. Mr. Arnold Bennett is bitterly denounced for his unpardonable audacity in expressing "the conviction that the War has finally demonstrated the authenticity of an event which in importance far transcends the War itself—namely, the fall of the Christian religion." One says that, by Christianity, Mr. Bennett seems to mean that form of it which he knew in the Five Towns many years ago, whereof we read in his stories; but that is a mistake. Methodism, which the great novelist is supposed to hate, is, perhaps, the most prosperous form of Protestant Christianity in existence; and yet even Methodism is considerably less Christian to-day than it was half a century ago. We agree with Mr. Bennett,

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and boldly affirm, without fear of intelligent contradiction, that the War is a convincing proof that Christianity is a dead religion, that the God of love is as great a myth as Zeus or Dionysus, and that the people generally have abandoned the faith of their ancestors. Consequently, we hold that after the War there will be less religion than there is now, and that the time is coming when there will be none at all. It is true that many people have been forced by the War to grapple seriously with dark and difficult problems, but it is also true that in some cases, at least, the only possible refuge has been found in unbelief. An intelligent young man confessed the other day that until this bloody conflict began he had never faced the facts of life, and had, in consequence, shared the popular faith, but that now, after much deep reflection, belief in God has become absolutely impossible to him.

We are told that "the War has brought a new sense of the reality and splendour of spiritual values, which means the bankruptcy of the old materialism and the old dogmatism." What "spiritual values" stand for we do not know; but the phrase is generally used by those whose theological views are somewhat hazy. If by "spiritual values" we are to understand "the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth," we must regard them as figments, real only to those who believe in them. The sense of their reality is not in us by nature, and it puzzles us to know how the War can bring it to anybody. They who assert that the War "has brought a new sense of the reality and splendour of spiritual values" frankly admit that there has been no revival of the older forms of faith and ritual. "Up to the battle of the Marne," they say, "the churches were filled with eager multitudes, but the tide receded and has not returned." They also admit that "still less has the War brought a triumph of liberal faith, as that word is usually employed." That is to say, neither the Old Theology nor the New Theology has been benefited by the War. "Nor has the expected recrudescence of superstition arrived as so many feared." Now, such admissions surely signify that Christianity has gained nothing by the savage slaughter of millions of young men which has been going on on land and sea for two years and a half, and we are convinced that had it not been for Christianity it would not have taken place. And yet, despite such admissions, this is what we read:—

> The unseen world to-day seems very near, its gates thronged by a host no man can number of the bravest and the best who offered their lives for the things that make life dear. Death, so multitudinous and overwhelming, has brought immortality to light. For many, as for Sir Oliver Lodge, its silence is broken by the soft accents of familiar voices, and for all the assurance is doubly sure that "life is ever lord of death and Love can never lose its own."

That extract is extremely illogical and misleading. The unseen world, if it exists at all, is no nearer in wartime than during the reign of peace. Besides, all living things die. Death is the end of individual existence; and in all cases death is either natural, pathological, or accidental. Life is *never* lord of death, and love *does* lose its own. Death is always "so multitudinous and overwhelming"; but to declare that it brings immortality to light is to lay a false claim to knowledge. It is absolutely incontrovertible that death does not and cannot bring immortality to light. In the New Testament, Jesus is represented as having performed that feat; but he did it, not by dying, but by rising from the dead; that is, by abolishing death for himself. Very few now believe even that statement; but the idea that death brings immortality to light is infinitely absurd, all that we know about it being that it brings life to an end. In that same extract the truth of Spiritualism is taken for granted. It is positively stated, indeed, that, for many, the silence of death is "broken by the soft accents of familiar voices."

The fact that all the belligerents believe in and fight under the banner of the same God, and pray to him for victory, betrays the utter stupidity of religion. The Kaiser ascribes every boasted success of German arms to the gracious intervention of the Almighty on their behalf. The British clergy are equally certain that the loving Heavenly Father befriends our Army and Navy, and will ultimately crown them with glorious triumph. If God existed, he would certainly make himself known, and no men would have the requisite courage to speak in his name. Since he is simply an imaginary being, whose silence has never been broken, speaking in his name has become an exceedingly well-paying profession. No matter what the subject may be, if you mention it to one of these professionals, he will undertake to inform you what God's thoughts are upon it. It is the easiest and safest of all the professions, for God never interferes, never finds fault, never contradicts. In this country alone, his ambassadors have supplied us with all sorts of contradictory accounts of his relation to the War. The majority, perhaps, agree that he brought it about to serve his own purposes. The Catholics maintain that he sent it in order to punish France for her opposition to the Holy Catholic Faith. Some Anglicans regard it as a penalty for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church in Wales. Others assure us that it is an expression of the Divine anger against worldliness, pleasure-loving, Sabbath desecration, neglect of public worship, and so forth, endlessly. Each has his or her say, and God takes absolutely no notice. Is it any wonder that people are turning their backs upon the pulpit in ever-growing numbers? Is it surprising that the Christian religion is dying out? For two hundred years it has been gradually losing its hold upon the minds of men and women, and for about twenty years most of the Churches have had to record annual decreases of worshippers. We are convinced that already the War has done irreparable damage to religious belief and practice, and that it will be followed, not by the destruction of Christianity, but by a very general feeling of distrust in it, and by a rapidly developing attitude of indifference to all its claims.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Smile of Voltaire.

> Voltaire was a stupendous power.—*Lord Morley.*
>
> Of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire.
> —*Lord Macaulay.*

FRENCH literature has been one blaze of splendid scepticism from the days of Abelard to those of Anatole France, but no name has inspired such terror in the breasts of the orthodox as that of Voltaire. Indeed, Victor Hugo regarded Voltaire as the protagonist of Freethought, and, in his epigrammatic way, said "Voltaire smiled, Christ wept." And that smile of Voltaire's cost him dear, for none had been more hated, none more reviled by pious folk. The reason is simple. He attacked bigotry and superstition, not in the dull and heavy fashion of professors writing for the few, but with wit and pleasantry which survive the winnowing of generations. He made priests appear ridiculous as well as odious, and those who felt the sting of his lash denounced him as a literary Mephistopheles, whose writings all should avoid as they would a plague. All whose interests were bound

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up with orthodoxy stigmatized Voltaire as a shallow scoffer, railing at all things holy and of good repute.

In his own time this jaundiced view of Voltaire was very prevalent. Dr. Johnson, not at all a bad-hearted man, has voiced this prejudice. In a conversation with Boswell he said, "Rousseau, sir, is a very bad man. I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years. Yes, I should like to have him work in the plantations." "Sir, do you think him as bad a man as Voltaire?" inquired Boswell. "Why, sir," returned the Doctor, "it is difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them." In artistic circles one meets the same abuse. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in one of his most popular pictures, introduced Voltaire as the personification of sophistry. The clergy, of course, made him the target of innumerable insults. He was the helot of countless homilies, and served to point multitudinous morals. The parsons lied to such purpose that whole generations of innocent Christians firmly believed that Voltaire was responsible for the French Revolution.

In England there is still great prejudice against Voltaire, which, said Buckle, only ignorance can excuse. The shouts of friends and foes still fill the troubled air, and the dust of controversy is blinding. One turns with a sigh of relief from books about Voltaire by enemies and partisans alike to his own letters and books. Here one finds the man himself, no mere jester, but a sensitive nature, bent on the destruction of cruelty and intolerance, and striking at the superstition of which these vices are the outcome. His keen eyes saw the atrocities and absurdities bound up with Christianity. He saw it was essential that the religion in which intolerance had its root should be proved detestable and ridiculous. Men, he said, will not cease to be persecutors until they have ceased to be absurd; and, more than any other man, he caused the European world to smile at its own absurdities.

> Aye, sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed
> Imposture, thro' the armour-joints to death.

Voltaire's motto was, "Straight to the Fact." He brought, smilingly, all creeds to the test of truth and common-sense. Was it true or not that Omnipotence had chosen Oriental barbarians as his peculiar people? Was "God" born of a virgin? Did he, indeed, ascend from the earth "like a balloon?" To ask these questions, and to cross-examine priests, was to provoke inextinguishable laughter. And, mind you, Voltaire was not a mere mocker, but a man of serious aims. He had profound convictions, and employed his exquisite wit as a weapon. There is no case of Voltaire mocking at any men who lived good lives. He did not gibe at the English Quakers; but he was merciless when he attacked the murderous priests of France, who invoked the laws to destroy their opponents. A Protestant pastor, Rochette, was hanged for merely exercising his functions in Languedoc. The Protestant Calas was broken on the wheel, because his son was found dead, and someone chose to say that the father had killed him, to prevent him from turning Catholic. Even Calas's widow and children were put to the torture. La Barre, a lad of eighteen, was condemned at Amiens, for multilating a crucifix, to have his tongue and right hand cut off, and then be burnt alive, a sentence which was commuted to decapitation. It was Voltaire who exposed these judicial murders, and, to quote Carlyle's memorable words, "The whole man kindled into one divine blaze of righteous indignation, and resolution to bring help against the world." His services in undoing such foul wrongs will never fade from the memory of men.

Voltaire was thoroughly equipped for his work. A perfect master of the French language, he wrote with that ease with which a bird trills out his song. His versatility, too, was marvellous. "Monsieur Multiform" was his witty name for D'Alembert, and he himself had an equal right to it. In the eighty volumes of his collected works, he has proved his mastery as historian, poet, essayist, thinker, humorist, tale-teller, letter-writer, and critic. So strong is his appeal to literary men that Macaulay, one of the most omnivorous of readers, selected Voltaire's works for his reading on his lengthy sea-voyage to India.

Among Voltaire's works *Candide* is, perhaps, the most characteristic. Nowhere has he displayed to such advantage the happiest features of his extraordinary genius. The news of the awful horrors of the dreadful earthquake at Lisbon, in which 40,000 people lost their lives, roused Voltaire like a blow in the face. Moved, as he always was, to reproduce his strongest feelings in his writings, he cast his protest against Optimism into the two very different shapes of a poem and the novel of *Candide*. Both amply prove that beneath the caustic cynicism of the author beat a heart aflame with sympathy for his fellows.

Frankly, the English translations cannot be said to add to Voltaire's charm, for any one who reads French. There is lost so much of Voltaire's sprightliness and piquancy. In the original, *Candide* is the wittiest book in the world. In this gay little masterpiece he brought out all his batteries at once, and he faced the foe with that terrible mockery, that bantering jest, and that deadly levity which few could meet and live. Voltaire's laugh withered the cheap, current, convenient optimism. In that searching fire the comfortable dogmas blackened and died, and the optimists were shown forth as laughing-stocks, The master's wit is as facetious to-day as when it was written, and it still trips and dances on untiring feet. It all reads like the fresh and unflagging work of superabundant youth. Yet Voltaire was actually sixty-four years of age when he wrote it —a time when most men are dreaming of slippered ease. The story is, briefly, that of a young man brought up in the belief that this is the best of all possible worlds. He meets with a hundred adventures which give it the lie. Life is a doubtful bargain, but one can make the best of it. That is the moral of *Candide*. "What I know," says Candide, "is that we must cultivate our garden." In the last resort, "with close-lipped Patience for our only friend," be it remembered, Voltaire's philosophy was Secularistic.

Voltaire was ever an apostle of common sense. One is as much struck with the soundness of his judgment as by his felicity of expression. A book might be written on his anticipation of modern thought. In a pre-scientific age he accepted the view of man's savage origin. He derived the belief in ghosts from dreams, and discerned the magical nature of early religions. He anticipated most of the social and political problems of our time. Before Malthus, he stated the population question, and helped to clear the way for modern science. He saw through the central myths of the Bible a century before the clergy were forced to recognize them.

For sixty years Voltaire waged unending war against the Great Lying Church, and when he died the priests refused him burial, hoping that he would be thrown into the gutter like the famous actress, Adrienne Lecouvreur. But he had carved his name too deeply on his country's roll of honour, and his remains now rest beneath the dome of the Pantheon, with its front glowing with the splendid words, "*Aux grand hommes la patrie reconnaisante.*" Here he sleeps undisturbed, and by his side rest the ashes of Rousseau. Shoulder to shoulder, these great

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soldiers of the Army of Human Emancipation rest under their magnificent tombs:—

> With the sound of those they wrought for,
> And the feet of those they fought for,
> Echoing round their tombs for evermore.

MIMNERMUS.

The Emergence of Man.

II.

(*Continued from p. 102.*)

As the Ice Age approached, the ancestors of our modern forest flora were in the ascendant in Central France. The oak, poplar, larch, beech, and willow were well represented. These floral organisms successfully surmounted the ordeal imposed by the Glacial Epoch, but all the distinctly American plants succumbed to the cold, and are now restricted to the temperate areas of the United States.

The anthropomorphous apes that lived in the forests of Europe in Pliocene times either disappeared altogether or became very scarce. But the lower monkeys related to the baboons, langurs, and other surviving species still remained, as their relics testify. So far as the palæontological record informs us, Asia must be regarded as the site of man's origin. But this reservation is requisite, that if the still hotly contested eoliths ultimately prove to be genuine products of human or pre-human manipulation, then it is quite possible that man developed from a simian or semi-simian form in or near Europe itself.

The fossil remains of Europe, both animal and vegetable, have furnished so many surprises that it is reasonably conceivable that man's association with our continent may extend to periods far more ancient than any formerly suspected. The old Stone Age weapons and implements are demonstrably of human manufacture, and are more rudely fashioned than those of the later New Stone or Neolithic Period. We are therefore entitled to anticipate the discovery of flint instruments even more primitive than those of the Palæolithic or Old Stone Age. Now, the disputed eoliths are unearthed from deposits slightly older than those of the Palæolithic, and extend from Oligocene to Pleistocene times. Obviously, then, if the rugged eoliths are authentic memorials of intelligent design, they point to the presence in Europe many hundreds of thousands of years ago of the human or semi-human creatures who shaped them.

Animal life in Europe in Pliocene days displays signs of derivation from very distant migrations of mammals from Northern America, as well as more recent invasions from Southern Asia. Oriental organisms settled in Europe embraced rhinoceroses now peculiar to Sumatra and adjacent areas; various mastodons related to those then dwelling in the Far East; primitive tapirs, horses, gazelles, antelopes, and other mammals. Flesh-devouring beasts of Asiatic type abounded in Europe, and included hyænas, pandas, sabre-toothed tigers, and other fierce cats. Monkeys, both of Africa and Asia, were well in evidence among the trees. During this genial period the hippopotamus found a home in the rivers, and, having wandered northwards in early Pliocene summers, it gradually established itself in various parts of Europe. The Italian deposits of this period are rich in mammalian remains, and the woodlands and river margins of the Arno valley have yielded the fossils of all the just-mentioned forms, as well as those of quite modern types of cattle, elephants, horses, and at least one monkey. All these animals appear to have come to Europe either from Africa or Asia. These migrants mingled with the quadrupeds already in possession of the soil. Among these last were the lynxes, wild boars, and savage cats and foxes. Beavers and otters related to living forms dwelt in the streams, while moles, hamsters, shrews, and hares favoured the mountain rocks.

As the Pliocene Period reached its close, many of the animals more suitably adapted to the uplands of Africa retreated to that continent. These included gazelles, antelopes, and hipparion horses. At least in Western Europe, the climate, while remaining warm, had become moist, and the spacious woodlands and wide watercourses environing rich pastures formed an ideal habitat for great herds of deer, cattle, elephants, and horses. From the nature of the flora of this period, Western Europe enjoyed a mean annual temperature of 62 deg. or 63 deg. F., some twenty degrees above that now experienced in Europe as a whole.

There is clear evidence of a fall in temperature as the Pliocene approached its end in the departure southwards of our monkey relatives. In the earlier Miocene rocks, the remains of apes are found as far north as Eppelsheim, in Germany; in later times they appear to have retreated to Southern France; while in times still later they seem to have wandered to Italy. They lingered in Southern Europe until the increasing coldness compelled them to seek shelter in more tropical climes. The land bridge which then connected Sicily with Africa doubtless facilitated their departure, while the land route of the period between Turkey and Asia in its turn permitted the migration of numerous types of Indian animals into Europe, and provided a passage for the most primitive human stocks.

Currents of very cold water from the chilly north now commenced to flow along the shores of our south-eastern counties. Molluscs of arctic character left their shells on the Norfolk coast, proving the transformed state of the dwellers of the sea.

This frigid visitation was apparently less severe than those that were to follow in Europe. But west of Hudson Bay, in North America, a giant ice-cap was formed, whose ice sheets extended as far south as Nebraska and Iowa. In the forests of Nebraska, the presence of various cone-bearing trees points to the appearance of a temperate flora which preceded the actual glaciation. "In the Swiss Alps," states Professor Osborn,—

> the snow descended 1,200 metres below the present snow line, and in Scandinavia and northern Germany the first great ice-sheets were formed, from which flowed the glaciers and rivers conveying the "Old Diluvium," or the "oldest drift." Accompanying the cold wave along the eastern coast of England we note, in the famous fossil deposits known as the "Forest Bed of Cromer," which overlie the Weybourn crags, the arrival from the north of the fir tree. This is most significant, because it had hitherto been known only in the arctic region of Grinnell Land, and this was its first appearance in Central Europe. Another herald of northern conditions was the first occurrence of the musk-ox in England, which is attributed to the "Forest Bed" deposits.

Thus, while the British Isles were but mildly affected by this early glacial visitation, the cold wave came on an imposing scale in Canada, the Alpine area, and in the Scandinavian peninsula. In Switzerland the glaciers swept the valleys probably 4,000 feet below the present snow-line, and the immense ice-sheet of Norway and Sweden mantled the Baltic and grasped the sites of modern Hamburg and Berlin in its boreal embrace.

That a prolonged period of low temperature was experienced in our Isles is proved by the transformed state of the flora and fauna of both France and Britain. Vegetable life donned a more modern dress, while numerous animal organisms that were plentiful in the preceding Pliocene Period either departed or became

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extinct. Still, the majority of mammalian animals accommodated themselves to the modified climate. This seems to indicate that, although special areas were glaciated, there remained sufficient open spaces to afford sustenance and shelter to the faunal life of Western Europe.

This sullen period was succeeded by an interglacial stage termed the "Norfolkian," during which the atmospheric conditions were warmer than those we now normally experience in these latitudes. The name "Norfolkian" arises from the circumstance that this interglacial interval was originally detected in Europe in the rich deposits of the Cromer Forest Bed, which have yielded a very precious record not merely of the floral life of this period, but have revealed a splendid array of the mammalian fauna indigenous to our Isles and to France in Norfolkian times. Although our outstanding contemporary forest trees were the predominating forms of this period, the fossil beds disclose the presence of several exotic species. That these last were able to thrive in England has led to the conclusion that the climate was slightly warmer than at present. But the secrets betrayed by these deposits show that the earlier arctic visitation had eliminated many botanical forms which flourished in the genial Pliocene climate of Britain.

France furnishes evidence of the Interglacial Stage, where it is known by the name of the "St. Prestien." Not that independent testimony is confined to France, as it comes from Italy and elsewhere. But at St. Prest, in the Paris basin, the memorials of departed floral and faunal life have been most completely preserved. This deposit was once regarded as of Pliocene age, but recent studies indicate that it is really an ancient Pleistocene record. A few French authorities considered St. Prest as dating from the closing stages of the Pliocene because among several surviving representatives of that period discovered there were those of the sabre-toothed tiger, Etruscan rhinoceros, and a primitive horse. But it is now ascertained that these and other Pliocene forms unquestionably lingered in Europe until long after the first interglacial stage, and some of them probably persisted down to the dawn of traditional times.

Early Pleistocene days are distinguished from the latest years of the Pliocene by the absence of organisms previously abundant. All the higher apes had vanished, and very few of the monkeys remained. The tapir departed, in company with the mastodon, from Europe, with the increasing cold. The haunts of these and other southern animals were now occupied by new arrivals from the frozen north. The stag, the giant deer (Megaceros), and many other members of the deer family migrated into Western Europe. The grazing animals encountered powerful enemies in the carnivorous quadrupeds that dwelt in their vicinity. The wolf, wolverine, bears, foxes, martens, and the fish-loving otters abounded. And at this period primitive wild cattle and the bison put in their first appearance. In the running waters, which were of ampler proportions than the rivers of our day, resided enormous numbers of hippopotami, and their banks were the favourite resorts of the Etruscan rhinoceros. Then there was that colossal creature, the mammoth, which attained a height of more than twelve feet, about a foot above that of the largest living African elephants; while that sanguinary beast of prey, the machærodont, or sabre-toothed tiger, was distributed over Europe into Africa and Asia. The animal geography, apart from independent geological evidence, indicates an intercommunication of faunal forms from the valley of the Thames to India, a distance of 6,000 miles. And 2,500 miles south-east from the Himalayas, similar animal genera to those that roamed from Europe to India, although they were in an earlier stage of development, populated the island of Java, which was then united to the continent of Asia.

The early Pleistocene era, particularly during the First Interglacial Stage, found the European land-mass at its maximum elevation above the level of the sea. No ocean or river barriers existed to hinder or prevent the free migration of animal organisms to or from Europe, Asia, or Africa. The coasts of the Mediterranean were 300 feet above their present level. Africa was joined to Europe at Gibraltar and across the island of Sicily. The Black Sea and Mediterranean were then vast lakes, and the waters which now wash the Isles of Greece were solid land. The United Kingdom formed a continuous land surface, and was connected with the European continent to the south and east, while it was united to Iceland to the north. It now remains to consider how these phenomena relate to the advent of man.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

"Will China Come In?" is asked in an article in last Saturday's *Observer*. China has, it is said, broken off diplomatic relations with Germany, and now, it is hoped, that there will be a formal declaration of war. What on earth China can do to aid the Allies—in a military sense—it is difficult to see. But if China does "come in" it will be another step in the militarization of China, another indication of the evil influence of Christian nations on the Chinese people. For China is the one nation in the world with peaceful traditions. Its governing philosophy—Confucianism—is a philosophy of peace. The Chinese have always asked but one thing of the foreigner—to live at peace. And the one thing the Christian foreigner would not grant China was peace, save at the price of spoliation and insult.

All the Christian nations, Britain, France, Germany, and others have, at some time or other—often collectively—robbed and insulted China. They have demanded that their own people should be superior to the civil laws of China, and have extended this exemption to natives who sought this protection under the guise of religious concession. Great Britain herself declared war on China for the purpose of forcing upon her the sale of opium. Hong Kong was taken from China as an indemnity for that war, and remains an infamous monument to the influence of the West upon the East. And from time to time other nations have played the same game. China was a peaceful nation, and the Christian nations have not yet outgrown the ideal of force as the arbiter of national destinies, or of mere size as a proof of national greatness.

Europe has preached peace and brotherhood, has practised war, and roved the whole globe on missions of plunder. China preached peace—based on human considerations—and has remained the one nation free from militarism. But we are afraid it is coming. The Christian nations will not be content until they have dragged non-Christian nations along the path they are now treading. If they will not tread it from love of imitation, they will be forced to do so from motives of self-defence. Where Christian nations can plunder they will. That is the other one lesson of history. Appeals to justice are powerless. It is force alone that will avail. China, we fear, will be compelled to learn that lesson in the end, if it has not already learned it. And if one can imagine the shade of Confucius looking down on China we can well fancy it saying: "Well would it have been for China had the foot of a white Christian never been permitted to desecrate its shores."

A Christian apologist informed a Secularist lecturer, the other day, that the Genesis story of the Fall is clearly an allegory; but he forgot to state that the orthodox Church interpreted it in terms of history until science triumphantly

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proved it to be utterly unhistorical. He also ignored the fact that the late Canon Driver laid it down as a principle that it is a story which the Christian teacher should "understand in the sense which science will permit." The Church has never abandoned a supernatural position anywhere except when forced to do so by the irresistible pressure of natural knowledge.

The Lower House of Convocation has passed a resolution in favour of drink prohibition, except in the case of wine used "for religious purposes." Are the dear clergy always to be exempted from everything?

Mr. George Lansbury has published a book on the occasion of the "National Mission," in order to propagate the idea that equality is an essential part of Christianity. We shall believe this when Cardinals receive the same pay as curates, and when woman is no longer regarded by the orthodox as "the weaker vessel."

The amount of brotherhood developed by Christianity has been exhibited in the selection of a Unionist candidate for West Perthshire. Colonel Stirling was the gentleman; but considerable opposition has been developed on the ground of his being a Roman Catholic. We have no knowledge as to Colonel Stirling's qualifications, nor do we care. They must, however, be very small indeed if they do not entitle him to sit in the House of Commons—which appears to be running the Church hard as a refuge for mediocrity. But it is a public scandal that religious belief should be made a test question. We wonder what chance an avowed Atheist would stand in Perthshire. The "unco' guid" argue they cannot trust Colonel Stirling *because* he is a Roman Catholic. The Colonel retorts that they are acting unjustly because they are Protestants. They may both be right. But right or wrong, it is an example of the distorting influence of religious belief on moral judgment.

Colonel Stirling said in his defence that there were two things which every decent man wished to keep out of politics —Religion and the Throne. But the latter is almost certain to play a larger part in politics than it has done of recent years. This War has served to make thousands of people disgusted with kings and kinglets, and republican feeling has greatly increased during the past two years. And if a man really believes in his religion, how can he keep it out of politics? To do so is to assume that it is of no consequence. *We* believe that religion should be kept out of politics because it is a distorting and profoundly evil force. But we desire to sweep religious considerations on one side altogether. Will Colonel Stirling advocate the same thing?

The Edinburgh Town Council has granted the use of the Synod Hall, with financial aid, for the holding of *Sunday* concerts for overseas soldiers. Oh, Edinburgh!

We congratulate Mr. W. Hall Caine—we think he is a son of the novelist—on giving the members of the Douglas (I.O.M.) Debating Society some home truths on the influence of Christianity on woman. Mr. Caine pointed out that prior to the introduction of Christianity woman's position under the old Celtic law was higher than it afterwards became, and added (we quote the report in the *Isle of Man Weekly Times*):—

> Yet a preacher without apparently the very least knowledge of Celtic lore and a surprising forgetfulness of Bible truths, had in a recent Mayoral Sunday sermon declared that "non-Christian religions had never regarded woman as fit for independence—she had been treated as a minor, and was never free. But as soon as Christianity took a dominant place in the life of nations, woman began her ascent and is still ascending." That such discourse should be bestowed on a congregation, drawn together solely as a witness to civic unity, was, in the lecturer's judgment, a grievous offence to good manners. The Christian attitude towards woman was a natural inheritance from Judaism. Did the reverent Mayor's chaplain know that the modern Jew's daily prayer was "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God! King of the Universe! who hast not made me a woman"? Most Christian writers attribute the depreciation of the character of women by Christian ecclesiastics to the influence of Judaism. Nowhere in the Bible is polygamy prohibited, and Christianity still recognizes an office of "purification" for a woman after the birth of every child, the significance of which is none the less when we realize that it was twice as long in the case of a female as of a male child.....In the New Testament the ideal of marriage is debased to the level of those only who "burn" and "cannot contain"; while at the Council of Macon a bishop raised the question as to whether woman really was a human being capable of being possessed of a soul, questions which the learned prelate promptly answered in the negative! The whole foundation of Christianity rested upon a degraded idea of woman. It was woman who produced "the fall" for which only the blood of the sacrifice of the Cross could atone. So that not only did woman begin sin, but she was directly responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus.

Some of the members present must have opened their eyes on having what was virtually a *Freethinker* article thrown at them in this manner. But we congratulate Mr. Caine on his candour.

Mr. Caine asked, in concluding his address, suppose some catastrophe were to destroy all the books in the world save one, and we had the choice of one, Which should it be?—

> Some would instantly reply, "The Bible of course." But reflect. We have no grudge against those who are to come after us. Rather, we wish them well. Brave men are laying down their lives for that world that is to come after us—men of Protestant England, Agnostic France, Catholic Russia. The religion that binds the Allies is the religion of humanity. The Bible has been a printed volume for some five hundred years, but what a tale of suffering it has laid to its charge Think of the Inquisition in Italy and in Spain. Think of the 300,000 women and children who suffered martyrdom under the bull of Innocent VIII. against witchcraft. Think of Wesley's shameless defence of all this cruelty largely by reason of these words of Exodus xxi. 18. No, you dare not pass on to another age a book that has been the cause of such appalling bloodshed. The two commandments of Jesus which should unite man to man and man to God are all in the work of a great Englishman—the greatest of all Englishmen, that "Pagan Poet," as Wesley called him—Shakespeare. Enshrined in the pages of Shakespeare are the commands of Jesus, the commands of Moses, and others of immense far-reaching importance—fidelity to truth, and temperance to the limit of abstinence.

A fine conclusion to a fine address. Other public men, please copy. If only twenty-five per cent. had the same courage of speech the world would soon be transformed.

A soldier was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for breaking into the Church of Scotland Guild Institute, and stealing therefrom 1,050 cigarettes, thirteen pictorial post-cards, and three New Testaments. We should have thought stealing the New Testaments would have quite justified him in setting up a plea of kleptomania, or, say, temporary insanity.

A number of the Free Church clergy are interesting themselves in the pleasing subject of prostitution, and the dear *Daily News* announces a "Save Our Soldiers Campaign." The Rev. F. B. Meyer suggests that prostitutes should be arrested, and that they should be forced to work in munition factories "under the wise and kind surveillance of the Church or Salvation Army." Does it not all seem like an attempt to foist cranky Christian ideas on the public under the cover of the War?

The impertinence of the clergy knows no bounds. While everyone is called upon, and if under military age may be forced, to sacrifice all he possesses to the prosecution of the War, the clergy are firm that nothing must be allowed to interfere with the interests of the Church. That insufferable person, the Bishop of London, has kindly consented to the clergy under his control volunteering for some form of National Service, providing it does not interfere with carrying on the work of the Church. Even doctors are being commandeered for the Army; but the clergyman must be left alone. The old complaint against the Church of Rome was that it set up an independent power within the State. The War has shown that we have another Church which substantially claims the same right.

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Dr. W. R. Sorly tells us that "the Agnostic is always in difficulty when he attempts to draw the line between the knowable and the unknowable." Spencer tried to trace that line, and lived long enough to know that he had miserably failed. No great Agnostic since has been foolish enough to make the attempt. The reason is that *no such line exists*. The only existing line lies between the known and the unknown, and this is being pushed further back every day. There is no region which we can legitimately call unknowable. Science works on the assumption that Nature is knowable, with the result that what is unknown to-day becomes known to-morrow.

The *Christian World* is astonished at Bishop Gore saying that "the working classes are determined not to have Christianity at any price," and replies that "Democracy, as we know it, is the child of Christianity, especially of Protestant Christianity." We beg to observe that Bishop Gore was far nearer the truth than the *C. W.*, whose statement is just nonsense. Modern Democracy is the child of those secular changes set going by the Renaissance, and immediately by the French Revolution, also what has become known as the Industrial Revolution. There have been Christian Democrats, as there have been Christian astronomers; and the organic connection is about equal in both cases.

The Archbishops have appointed a Committee of bishops and others to report upon the sanctions and restrictions concerning the ministration of women in the Churches. You can always trust dear Old Mother Church to be several centuries behind public opinion.

Two little children were starved to death in a flat at Westminster beside their mother, who had died of heart failure. The eagle-eye of Providence can only detect the fall of the sparrows.

What receptacles of clerical wisdom the parish magazines are, to be sure. In the *Southend Church Chronicle* a notice of a mothers' meeting concludes with the touching words: "There will also be songs and light refreshments—and a moon."

"The sorrows of this sad time have been borne with wonderful dignity and courage by the clergy," says a writer in a Parish Magazine. This is so, but one must remember that the clergy's heroism consists in seeing the soldiers off at the railway station.

Christianity, says the writer of the weekly religious article in the *Times* (it is remarkable that in proportion as it has fallen lower as a newspaper the *Times* has taken a more direct interest in religion) "says all men are the children of God." Well, and having said it, what is its practical value? It does not prevent his children slaughtering each other all over Europe. It does not prevent his children murdering each other all through the ages. It has never made people treat each other more decently than they would have done otherwise, and it never will. It is one of the many cant phrases by which men forge for themselves excuses for not exercising their faculties on the world around them.

The 105th anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens brought a number of wreaths to Westminster Abbey, many with pious inscriptions. Few of the donors appear to have been aware that Dickens was a Unitarian, and, therefore, was as much outside the Christian Church as Thomas Paine or Voltaire.

From the *Observer* of February 9, 1817:—

> Heury Topping, found guilty at the last Session of stealing greens, was on Friday whipped a distance of 100 yards, near to Mr. Alport's nursery, on the Hackney-road. He is an aged man, and seemed deeply affected by his ignominious punishment.

Some of the London churches assisted at a war loan demonstration by sending surpliced choirs. It would have been better had they sent their surplus cash.

The promised revival of religion does not appear to have raised the price of gods. A statue of Buddha figured in the King's Bench Court recently, and was the subject of a claim for £300. The unkindest cut, however, is that Buddha figures on the lids of cigar-boxes, in company with lithographs of gaudily dressed females. Christians would be excited if the Second Person of the Trinity figured on a cigar-box lid, or in a tobacco advertisement.

Rev. J. H. Dickie writes to the *Glasgow Herald*, saying that it is "men's men" who are needed at the Front as chaplains. The women's men can apparently stay at home. Of course, it may be that the soldiers would rather the women's men left with them.

Dr. Brest, American Bishop of the Philippine Islands, says he is quite certain that our cause in the War is "the cause of God." It is a pity God is not able to look after his own cause, and so do away with the necessity for so much human bloodshed.

Part of the cemetery at Carisbrooke (I.O.W.) is to be used for the growing of potatoes. As this is consecrated ground it will be a matter of some interest to note the influence on the crop of episcopal blessing.

We have recently read some half-dozen new essays on the international situation by men who would profess some sort of a religion, and a curious feature of them all is that nothing at all is said about religion and its influence. Why is this? One of two things must be true. Either they conceive religion to be of no force whatever in the determining of international relations, or they think it too dangerous a subject on which to say anything. For our part, we do not believe that the first is true. In spite of all that has been done, religion, both organized and unorganized, still exerts a real power, and it is stupid to ignore the fact. It is nearer the truth to attribute this silence to a fear that religion is best left alone—for the writer's sake. It is this feeling that makes our home politicians—even when Freethinkers themselves—forbear mentioning religion in connection with politics. And while this is the case we need not marvel that progress is so slow and so uncertain. Life, as we have often pointed out, functions as a whole, and the writer who thinks he can safely ignore the power of the Churches, and the influence of religious belief, should devote his abilities to the writing of nursery rhymes.

A newspaper paragraph announces the forthcoming appearance of a new book on theology, entitled *God the Invisible King*. Deity seems to be falling in the social scale. Formerly he was visible, and, at the cheapest, "the King of kings."

Writing on the question of Sabbath Observance, the Rev. Thomas Elliott, of Southend-on-Sea, asks: "Who says that this 3,500 years-old law is binding on us in England to-day? It is said to have been given to a wandering tribe of escaped slaves in the wilderness of Sinai." Perhaps Mr. Elliot's ministerial colleagues will oblige with an answer.

"When the war is over the Church will find itself 'up against' millions of men—yes, and of women too—who have slid farther than ever away from it—people who have looked death in the face many times. These people will have been hardened, made sceptical by their experiences. The war—it is no good trying to disguise the hard fact—is making Atheists by the thousand. How does the Church propose to set about reclaiming these people? What is its policy, its plan of campaign for the fight it will have to make after the war? Has it any plan of campaign at all?"—*Richard George, in the "Daily Mirror."*

The clergy don't fight themselves, but they know how to exploit the brave fellows who do. The erection of "war-shrines" throughout the country is part of the method, and another way is to display in the churches lists of men who have given their lives "so gallantly and Christianly" for their country.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

February 25, Clapham; March 11, Birmingham; March 18, Leicester; April 1, Portsmouth: April 8, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 25, Nottingham. March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.

WILL Mr. J. Callaghan, who sent stamps to cover cost of copy of the *Freethinker* please send full address. The name of the town has been omitted.

J. A. DAWSON writes that his experience in the Army has been the reverse of that described by many Freethinkers. He was first put down as a Wesleyan because his friend belonged to that body. After attending Church for some weeks he decided that even fatigue duty was preferable to sitting in chapel, and when he was removed to another part of the country, had himself entered as an Atheist. For nearly twelve weeks he has now had his Sundays quite free. We are pleased to hear this, but, as Mr. Dawson says, it all depends upon the officers that are over one. Gentlemen make allowances, bigots won't.

ANNO DOMINI.—Pleased to see that Ogilvie's *Encyclopædia*, under *Masterpieces of Eloquence*, gives Ingersoll's address "At a Brother's Grave" and "At the Grave of a Child." The editor evidently knew a good thing when he saw one.

A. R. W.—Capital! Will prove very useful.

J. LOMAS.—We think you greatly exaggerate man's fear of death. Men will risk death for all sorts of objects. As Bacon says: "Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honour aspireth to it; grief dieth to it; fear pre-occupieth it." The fear of death, so far as it is real, is largely an artificial product. In this respect nothing has done so much to make man a coward in the face of death as Christianity. Its want of success need not blind us to the fact of its influence.

G. DIXON (Accra).—Thanks for papers. We note the endeavour of the Salvation Army to open operations at Accra. If, as you say, the Accra natives have too much self-respect to patronize "such a tin-can religion," that is something to their credit. And of one thing we may be sure. If the Salvation Army doesn't find Accra financially profitable, it will soon be given up.

A CORRESPONDENT writes to say we are in error in identifying the S. H. Lever, recently decorated with an Order of the Bath, with the Sunlight Soap Works. We were evidently misled by the name, for which error we beg to express our regret.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. G. FINLAY.—We hope to use later. It deserves more than a passing paragraph. We agree with you as to the hypocrisy of the whole thing. And for hypocrisy British Christianity still holds with ease a premier position.

J. BREESE.—We have handed the article to Mr. Lloyd, and noted the rest of your letter. We shall hope to see you soon.

R. OGDEN.—Cuttings very useful.

Mr. J. T. WATKINS writes:—"Words cannot express the pleasure I derive from the *Freethinker* every week." We are pleased to hear it, and take for granted what is unspoken.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—F. Marschel, 10s. 6d.

T. H. ELSTOB.—Pleased to hear from you, and to know that you are well and safe. MSS. will be useful. We await the result of the Bowman case with confidence, but, as you say, win or lose, the fight will go on.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 (Feb. 25) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Avondale Hall, Landor-road, Clapham. His subject is "Christianity and the Logic of Life." Avondale Hall may be easily reached by 'bus and tram routes, or by the Tube (Clapham Road Station). We hope Freethinkers will induce their Christian friends to attend. The meeting commences at 7 o'clock.

Mr. Lloyd visits Nottingham to-day (Feb. 25) for the first time—as a Secularist speaker. We cannot say with certainty in what hall the meeting will be held, as the local friends have omitted to send particulars; but we expect it will be in the Mechanics' Institute, and at 7 o'clock. We believe that the local friends have been working hard to make the meeting a success, and we trust not without avail.

The Secretary of the West Ham Branch, N.S.S., sends us the following:—

> At the Annual Meeting of the West Ham Branch, N.S.S. held on Thursday, February 8th, it was unanimously agreed to send you the heartiest congratulations of the members on your able editorship of the *Freethinker* during the past year of exceptional difficulty. We, as workers in the same "good cause," sincerely appreciate your work, and feel every confidence in the continued success of the paper. We feel, also, you and your staff deserve our gratitude for the high tone maintained throughout the articles.

Everybody connected with the *Freethinker* has done his best to keep the flag flying—so far with success. But we are not out of the wood yet, although if industry and devotion—both on the part of the *Freethinker* staff and a large body of its readers—will achieve success, the end of the War will see us in an even better position than did its commencement. We greatly appreciate the good wishes of the members of the West Ham Branch.

We have received the following from Mr. R. H. Rosetti, and we feel that many of his London friends will be pleased to read it:—

> DEAR MR. COHEN,—I have been on the Continent a fortnight now enjoying the arctic conditions prevailing here.
>
> We, that is my draft, have been under canvas the whole time, but as there are fourteen in a tent we keep warm at nights despite their severity.
>
> We wash and shave when we can, but ten washing and four shaving in one pint of water has so far been the limit.
>
> Nobody doubts, of course, that Providence has wisely ordained the War, but why it—Providence—should freeze water and allow its soldiers to go unwashed is a part of the divine plan which we poor mortals cannot hope to solve.
>
> I am quite cheerful and happy, getting much amusement from the crowded condition, which brings out many funny incidents.
>
> Religion is well catered for, but voluntary customers are few.
>
> Take the hut I am writing in, for instance, there is a small room called a "Quiet room" for devotional purposes only, but every evening at 7 o'clock a preacher comes into the main structure filled with men, many writing, some playing draughts, dominoes, or reading and talking, and announces a service, starting with a hymn. In that way religion is thrown at those present.
>
> Still, I am doing my bit for the Cause in my tent and out of it. I leave the *Freethinker*, which I receive every week, in different places. Your article in January 28 was read by many who seemed very much interested in it. It was quite a red-hot article for this place, and I watched the paper as it travelled round.
>
> The favourite topic here for the preachers who conduct the services is a reminder to all present that they may shortly be in eternity. It amuses me to hear them whine such things.
>
> I fully realize the dangers and horrors I must face in the very near future, but I am in no way depressed or dismayed. I shall face them; it shall not be said an Atheist flinched from the horrors of this world, after Christians had had its chief administration for nearly two thousand years.
>
> Remember me to Mrs. Cohen and the family, also to any friends in the Cause interested in my whereabouts, and permit me to remain—Yours very sincerely, R. H. ROSETTI.

Amongst the papers which we are pleased to see are weathering their stormy period, is the journal of the Humanitarian League, the *Humanitarian*. It has now

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resumed its regular monthly appearance, and we hope it will continue. In the February issue there is an article on the "Simple Life," which properly castigates those who mistake a phrase for a fact. Another article dealing with conscientious objectors, under the title of "The Penalizing of Conscience," is well worthy of attention. The price of the publication is one penny.

The Secular Education League holds its Annual Meeting on Friday, March 2, at 19 Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C., at 5 p.m. We hope that as many members as can make it convenient will do their best to be present. Although the War has prevented the League being as active as it might otherwise have been, the Society has neglected no opportunity of placing its objects before the public, and its membership has been well maintained. But there is no reason why this membership should not be strengthened considerably, and we trust it will be in the very near future. A larger membership means larger influence, and, what is important at the moment, increased income. We trust Freethinkers will take the hint in both directions. The Secretary of the League is Mr. Harry Snell, 19 Buckingham Street, Strand, London, W.C.

Some years ago we expressed a hope that someone would see fit to republish *Sketches of the Philosophy of Morals* by Sir T. C. Morgan. Whether that suggestion fell on fruitful soil or not, we are unable to say; but our desire has now been realized by a republication of the volume under the title of *The Moral Philosophy of Freethought* (C. W. Daniel, Ltd.; 5s.). The chief criticism—the only one the book calls for, in fact—is that the publishers would have done well had they given some slight sketch of the author, and had seen to it that, in addition to the author's notes, others by a present-day editor had been introduced. For every reader will not always bear in mind the fact that the book is now nearly a century old, and through not doing that is likely to fall short of doing the author the justice and giving him the credit he deserves.

Sir T. C. Morgan was a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and husband of the well-known Lady Morgan, authoress of one or two volumes of travel of considerable ability. Sir T. C. Morgan was also a friend of the famous Sir William Lawrence, Professor of Anatomy and Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons. In 1819, Lawrence published his famous *Lectures on Man*, a volume of outstanding merit, expressed in terms of a thoroughgoing scientific Materialism and an evolutionary suggestiveness quite noteworthy when one bears in mind the date of the publication. Lawrence's *Lectures* were delivered as part of a reply by him to attacks on previous lectures because of their anti-Christian or anti-religious tendency, his chief opponent being the famous Dr. Abernethy. It is interesting to note that Lawrence was refused copyright in his *Lectures* because of their anti-religious tone, which, by a strange nemesis, led to their greater reproduction in a cheap form.

Sir T. C. Morgan's *Philosophy of Morals* appeared in 1822, and there are echoes of the Lawrence controversy throughout the work—that and attacks on a preceding work, entitled *Sketches of the Philosophy of Life*. It is to its freethinking character that one must attribute the fact that the *Philosophy of Morals* dropped out of the public mind. It became a tabooed work, although far inferior ones have been frequently reprinted, and in the history of moral philosophy it certainly deserves a honoured place.

"The Philosophy of Morals," or, under its new title, "The Moral Philosophy of Freethought," is what one may justly call a *wise* book. Its comments and observations are shrewd and to the point—particularly so in the chapters on "Right and Obligation," and "On the Influence of Institutions on Morality," and it is quite free from that ethical rhapsodizing which strikes one as so much cant. Much that Sir T. C. Morgan has to say on the nature of morality, and of the motives of conduct, would, of course, be expressed differently to-day, and the influence of the social factor would receive greater emphasis. But, in the main, the author's contentions are sound and well based. Conduct is a function of organization, and a moral code "well constituted, would be a deduction from physiology, political economy, statistics, and experience of the operations of conduct on society." And, however differently expressed, these things serve as the foundation of a rational moral code for all scientific thinkers. With the immense power of the sub-conscious on human conduct, Sir T. C. Morgan could hardly be expected to deal, but such modifications of his teaching which have been rendered necessary by time, will not affect one's estimate of the intrinsic merits of the work.

The publishers state that the book is an exact reprint of the edition of 1822, except a few unimportant notes have been deleted. So far as we have compared the two editions, there is no fault to be found with the statement. We are glad that the notes have been retained, because some of the author's best pieces of writing are contained therein. A sentence such as: "When an individual imagines that he has conquered a passion, it is usually found that he has only been deserted by it," is one to be remembered. We are also glad to find that the lengthy note on the deaths of Voltaire and D'Alembert has been retained. The *Christian Advocate* had published one of the usual Christian legends concerning the death-beds of these famous "infidels," and Sir T. C. Morgan promptly wrote to the doctor who attended Voltaire, and to a friend of D'Alembert who was with him at his death, and received prompt and decisive proofs of the *Christian Advocate's* falsehood. These communications are reprinted, together with the author's scathing rebuke, which is well worth reproducing:—

> The origin of such stories as those here refuted, is easy to comprehend. If true, they prove only that a man, worn out by disease, has not the same force of character as when in the plenitude of health. But true or false, they are perfectly suited to the mental calibre of gossiping bigots, who measure humanity in all its aspects by the standard of their own impertinent imbecility; and who arrive at the pleasure of a strong sensation, though a strain upon their limited imagination, to which they could never attain through their still more limited understanding.

That fits the by no means few representatives of the *Christian Advocate* as well as ever.

Critical Chat.

A Dutch Voltaire.

ANYONE who has contracted the excellent habit of turning up biographical information in that "Acta Sanctorum" of Rationalism, Mr. J. M. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, must have noticed that the names of Dutch Freethinkers of the nineteenth century occur not infrequently. Unfortunately, Mr. Wheeler seems not to have been in the way of getting many interesting details of the life and works of these evangelists of Freethought. My intention here is to supplement his always valuable, if slender, array of facts by calling attention to the work of the greatest of Dutch Freethinkers. Eduard Douwes Dekker, whom M. Anatole France calls the Voltaire of the Netherlands, "is one of those exceptional writers that say what they think. Of this sort there are few in Holland, as elsewhere. In every country, and at every period," says M. France, "the number of thinking men is small; the number of those who say what they think is still smaller. Nowhere are they encouraged, for candour is the least sociable of virtues." Dekker, who wrote his books under the pseudonym of "Multatuli," is, of course, hardly known at all in England, except, perhaps, to those of us who find pleasure and instruction in noting the less obvious currents in the stream of European literature. In this there is, no doubt, nothing to wonder at, for in intellectual matters we English have so good a conceit of ourselves that we are apt to regard with contempt ideas which may be offered to us from the outside. Even when Nietzsche had been reacting powerfully for years on Freethinkers, he was here either unknown or despised. For a long time we had only a meagre and

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deprecatory account of his philosophy in the *Britannica* to set over against the authoritative exposition—an exposition long enough to make a decent sized volume—in the *Grande Encyclopedie*. It is much the same, or even more so, with Dekker. The fullest account we have of him and his work is a half a column signed "E. G." in the *Britannica*; but Mr. Edmuud Gosse, who suffered much in his youth from Calvinistic repression, seems not to appreciate the virulent irony and sarcasm with which Dekker scourged the official Protestant hypocrisy of his time. In the cheaper encyclopædias, *Harmsworth* and *Everyman*, Mr. Gosse's article is presented stripped of any individuality it may contain. At the present moment I know of no trustworthy criticism of Dekker's work, and, what is even worse, no translations, with the exception of an inaccessible version of *Max Havelaar* published in 1868, and a few translations of shorter pieces made by that indefatigable scholar, Mr. Paul Selver, whom we have to thank for introductions to many an out-of-the-way writer. In France they manage things better; there is an excellent volume of selections made by the Dutch writer, M. Alexandre Cohen, who is, or was, on the staff of the *Mercure de France*, and who writes French with ease and distinction. As I have no Dutch, it is to his version, with its introductory essay on Dekker, that I am indebted for most of the material in this article.

Dekker was born at Amsterdam on March 2, 1820. His father, who was a sea-captain, appears to have meant his son to have a business career. But young Dekker had a generous, high-spirited youth's contempt for commerce, with its ethic of low cunning and calculating mendacity. Instead of being a huckster in sugar or coffee, he found a post in the Dutch Colonial Civil Service, and went out to Batavia in 1838. He went rapidly through the different departments, and in 1851 was appointed Assistant-Resident of Amboina, in the Moluccas. In 1856, he was given the same post at Lebak, in the Presidency of Bantam, Java. It is here that he had the experience which was to give a new direction to his life. He had many opportunities of seeing the seamy side of the Dutch system of Colonial Government. He had discovered that the miserable condition of the population of his district was due to the exactions of the native Governor. He felt it his duty to show that these malpractices had been noticed. He could get no satisfaction from the native Governor, the Resident, or the Governor-General. After receiving a notice that he had been transferred to another district, and that his continuance in the Colonial service would depend upon his future conduct, he sent in his resignation, and left for Holland, after being refused an audience by the Viceroy. Here his political friends were unable or unwilling to help him.

In 1860, four years after he had resigned, he published his *Max Havelaar*, a violent indictment of Dutch Colonial Government, in form of a novel. By the politicians and pastors its appearance was saluted with factitious indignation and very real anger. What irritated them most was its ironical exposure of the Protestant and pious hypocrisy of the average Dutch citizen. The book is a description of what the author saw in the eighteen years of his life in the Dutch Indies. It was translated into English, as I have mentioned above, in 1868, and into French in 1876. In Holland its effect was counteracted by a conspiracy of silence. Those who were concerned did not mention it. But, unluckily for these pious hypocrites, it was only the introduction. His next book contained an open letter to the Governor-General, in which he gave proof that the barbarities of the native Regent were winked at by his superiors, to one of whom he was in the habit of supplying women.

In 1861, he brought out his *Love-Letters*, an imaginary correspondence between the author and Fancy; that is to say, his imagination, or fantasy. Here, we are told by an orthodox journal of the day, he attacks everything that humanity holds sacred, parades the most perverse of moral doctrines, tramples under foot all that the nation had learned to love and venerate, denies God, the Bible, the Gospel, and every doctrine of religion, and has respect for nothing save his own precious personality. It is the sort of criticism one would expect from the sworn enemy of truth, the pious Protestant burgess who had just witnessed a violent attack on his "sacrosanct Trinity—Religion, Property, and the Family." And it was this sort of moral hypocrite who could raise the cry of immorality against an independent thinker for venturing to suggest that the exporting of obscene watches (lascivious pictures were painted on the inside of the inner case) to Japan was not in accordance with Atheistic principles of ethics. If the Christian could square it with his notions of morality, the unbeliever's objections were but proof of his perversity, his want of respect for long-established institutions; for the one supreme virtue, wealth.

For the effectiveness of his attack on popular superstitions, Dekker could not have chosen a better form than the parable or story. "He lived among and wrote for a nation of Protestants brought up on Biblical and evangelical texts. No other form would have been a more appropriate setting for the propagation of his ideas than the allegorical." His long residence in the East had developed in him a love of metaphor, of what I may call the picture-story in prose. One example will show what I mean better than a ream of description. This is the "Second Story of Authority" from *Love-Letters*:—

> Voltaire said: "If God did not exist, he would have to be invented!" That is so. All power comes from God. All power implies God. Whoever finds it necessary to exercise power or authority creates for himself a God. This was the way of Moses, Confucius, Zoroaster, Numa, Columbus, and Cortez. This is also the way of all demagogues, augurs, magicians, priests. Even today this is the way of anyone who wishes to dominate others. The number of gods is as great as the number of appetites. For every new appetite, a new god.
>
> Holloway deifies unknown doctors who order you to buy his pills. "Thus says the Lord," said Moses, and "thus Dr. So-and-so," says Holloway. Obey and buy. And both of them add: "so that your souls may be saved."
>
> A nursemaid was taking out her master's children for a walk. She was told to look well after them. But the children were disobedient, and ran so far away from her that she had no control over them.
>
> Then she created out of nothing a black dog which bit all the children that ran away. And the children were afraid of the black dog, and became very obedient, and stayed near their nurse. Communing within herself, she looked upon the god she had created, and found that he was *useful*.
>
> But because of the black dog the children became stupid with terror.
>
> And they have remained stupid to this day.

Another "story of authority" reveals to us the origin of religious faith, which is pictured as a slip-knot recommended by a pious hermit as an infallible remedy for intractable wills. In these little witty and ironic parables he decomposes every belief, every doctrine, every principle which the good Protestant of that age, and indeed of every age, has looked upon as fundamental. The seven volumes of *Ideas* (1862-1874) are a collection of his miscellaneous essays and parables, in which we get the same virulent irony of the *Love-Letters*, the same ardent love of truth, the same conviction that moral and intellectual life is a struggle against *all* error, not merely one or two forms of it, the same disassocia-

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tion of accepted ideas, of those commonplaces of religion, ethics, and politics which the interest or sentiment of mankind has raised to the dignity of logical truth.

It is not strange that he should have found Holland an uncomfortable dwelling-place, or that he should have spent most of his life in Germany, where he died in September, 1887. From this vantage-ground he scourged the pastors, alike orthodox and "modernist." For both of these he was the enemy of God, and the corrupter of youth. It was not only religion that his mordant irony dissolved. He ridiculed the idea of a monarchy in his play, *A School for Princes*. He decomposed everything upon which the public prided itself—national representation, liberalism, patriotism, virtue, chastity, and respect. He found, or thought he found, that the commonly accepted virtues had an eesentially economic character. And it may be that he was not far out.

M. Anatole France tells us that Dekker reminds him of the French philosophers of the period just before the Revolution, and this in virtue of his intellectual freedom, vivacity of expression, and vein of irony. But for some of us he has a still greater affinity with the late Remy de Gourmont, who has attacked with smiling and contemptuous irony every smug commonplace of religion, ethics, and politics.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

The French Revolution.

IV.

THE REPUBLIC.

(Continued from p. 92.)

THUS, in August, 1792, for the second time in the Revolution, the middle classes had been forced to depend on the physical force of the Parisian proletariat to protect their conquests; and this time the democracy, exasperated with three years of hopes deferred, refused to be thrust back into insignificance. If the nation was to be consolidated in face of the foreign danger, it was necessary to organize it democratically. The history of the next two years is the history of attempts by successive leaders to do this.

The Legislative Assembly, taking the executive power into its hands, recalled Roland and the Girondist Ministry to office. Danton was given the Ministry of Justice, as a concession to the Radical insurgents. The royal family were confined in the Temple. It was now necessary to take instant measures, not only to cope with the enemy on the frontier, but to deal with Royalist conspiracies at home. Vacillating as ever, the Assembly would take hardly any precaution until threatened or bullied into it by the new rulers of Paris—the delegates of the "sections," who now formed the municipality. Under pressure from them, an elected tribunal was established to try Royalist traitors. In the Tuileries, after the insurrection, had been found a number of most incriminating papers, proving the collusion of Louis and Marie-Antoinette with the enemy and their ferocious designs against the democrats, and implicating the Royalist party in the Assembly. The latter had now to make themselves scarce, or prepare to face the new tribunal and the guillotine. (This instrument of punishment had lately been introduced, for humanitarian reasons, to replace the old-fashioned gallows. When we are told of the vindictive proceedings of the French Revolutionists in this connection, we must not forget to compare them with the English laws of that date, which hanged men, women, and children by hundreds every year for petty offences, such as sheep-stealing.)

The war went from bad to worse. After Lafayette's flight, the Prussians and Austrians advanced through Lorraine and Champagne without a check. Longwy fell, probably by the treachery of the governor, on August 24, and Verdun was besieged. Brunswick seemed in a position soon to make good his threat. The new municipality of Paris took the lead of the wavering Assembly in matters of defence, as well as in those of police. It set to work appealing for men, finding arms for them by searching from house to house, and melting church plate into cannon. Danton superintended these measures, becoming the true leader of France in this awful crisis. The nerveless Roland ("a nice old gentleman for a quiet tea-party," as Parnell said of Justin MacCarthy) was pushed into the background. The Girondist leaders actually urged privately that the Government should leave Paris to the enemy, and withdraw to the south of France; and only the opposition of Danton prevented this base act of betrayal.

The new criminal tribunal did not give satisfaction. After condemning two or three Royalists to the guillotine it showed a disposition to leniency, which reached the limit when it acquitted Montmorin—an ex-minister of the king, who had actually had charge of the papers which had subsequently been found in the Tuileries. This was on August 31. On September 2, a premature report of the fall of Verdun (it actually fell that day) roused the population to uncontrollable fury. The alarm bell was ringing; the drums beating; volunteers were enlisting and setting out for the front; Danton was at the bar of the Assembly, explaining the measures taken, and uttering his historic sentence: "Il nous faut de l'audace, et encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace." That afternoon a party of non-juring priests were being driven in closed carriages to the prison of the Abbaye as "suspects." A raging multitude, including some of the Marseilles volunteers, on some slight provocation, dragged the priests out and killed them, with the exception of one—the head of the Deaf and Dumb Institution, for whom one of the crowd intervened. They then broke into the Abbaye and began killing the other Royalists detained there. The municipality—which had not, as is constantly alleged, planned the massacres, though it had foreseen them and warned the Government that they would come, as a result of the misplaced lenity of the tribunal—at once notified the Assembly, and, after vainly trying to calm the people, did what it could to mitigate the bloodshed by improvising a court to try the victims. On the proposal of Marat and Panis (secretary to Danton), the Watch Committee ordered the different gaolers to separate petty offenders from the prisoners accused of conspiracy, and sent nominees of its own to try the latter. These judges were able to save a large number from death. But the fury of the crowd rendered it hopeless to intervene on behalf of certain classes of prisoners, *e.g.*, members of the Swiss Guard, non-juring priests, notorious accomplices of the Court, and forgers of paper money. Over a thousand persons were abandoned to the vengeance of the people, including the Princess de Lamballe, confidant of Marie-Antoinette. The state of public feeling may be judged from the fact that neither the respectable citizens of Paris, the National Guard, nor the volunteers cared to interfere. Men said: "What would the Prussians and Austrians do to us if they came to Paris? Why should we march to the frontier and leave a swarm of traitors snugly lodged here in Paris, at the public expense, ready to break out and murder our wives and children?" There is, of course, no ethical defence for the September massacres; but it is necessary to understand their psychological motive if we are to appreciate history justly.

The horrid work lasted three or four days. The Government, which could not have stopped it if it had wished, excused the people to the Assembly as well as it

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could. The Watch Committee, Marat and his colleagues, satisfied in their own consciences, issued a circular to the local authorities throughout France, stating what had happened, and recommending them to take similar measures. Happily, except on a small scale in one or two places, their advice was not taken.

Meanwhile, in the midst of such excitement, and under the shadow of invasion, the elections took place to the National Convention, which was to replace the discredited Assembly. Universal manhood suffrage was now in force, but the indirect method of election already mentioned still obtained, and gave the polls a Conservative bias. Those departments which were threatened by the enemy, *i.e.*, in the north-east and east of France, returned deputies in favour of a strong democratic government, organized with a view to defeating the enemies of the Revolution. In the south and west, however, the war does not seem to have been really felt as yet, and members were returned in favour of constitutional methods and "business as usual." All, however, recognized that to restore the king was now impossible, and accepted the necessity of a Republic.

In the army, Lafayette had been followed by Dumouriez, who succeeded in arresting the invasion. Heavy rains in September hampered the Prussian movements, and on September 20 an attack made by the enemy on Dumouriez's army at Valmy was unsuccessful. This was the turning point of the campaign. Brunswick had to retreat, and soon the soil of France was, for the moment, free.

The day after the battle of Valmy the National Convention met. The Girondists, who were now the Government party, sat on the right. Their chief object, now that the monarchy was gone, was to stop the Revolution from going further, and return to constitutional government. They had to accept universal suffrage, but they were nearly all obstinate *laissez-faire* theorists, and would not admit the necessity of exceptional war measures to cope with high prices, unemployment, and the like. They feared and hated the working-class of Paris and the large towns, and wished to see them kept in their "proper place," and the well-to-do supreme and secure. Of this party, Brissot was still the Parliamentary wire-puller; but the inspiring influence was Madame Roland, wife of the Minister of the Interior. Under her influence, the Girondists were joined by some former Radicals, such as Barbaroux, who had brought the Marseilles volunteers to Paris; Petion, the Mayor of Paris; and Buzot, another former associate of Robespierre's, who had fallen in love with Madame Roland, and could be twisted round her little finger.

At the other extreme were the Radical party, the "Mountain." This section, confined to a few members in the Legislative Assembly, had grown considerably, thanks to universal suffrage. Paris had returned an almost solid block of "Montagnards." With Robespierre and Danton at their head, they were for cementing the alliance between the middle-class Revolution and the working-class, and demanded accordingly the regulation of prices, the relief of distress, and the dictatorship of the democracy, at least for the period of the war. Marat had been elected for Paris. He, and a few other extremists perhaps, wished actually to extend the Revolution into the economic sphere, and to work towards social equality. Others, again, were militant Freethinkers, and advocated the disestablishment of the Church and "dechristianization." These tendencies, however, were not favoured by Danton, Robespierre, or the majority of the "Mountain." Robespierre, in fact, was fanatically religious in a Deistic sense, and loathed Atheists with a deadly loathing. He was a sort of "Nonconformist Conscience" to the Revolution. For the present, however, these divergent tendencies within the "Mountain" were latent only, and all were united in demanding a strong provisional Government, democratic in sympathy, and charged with the exclusive duty of defending the Revolution against enemies without and within.

The great majority of the Convention never belonged to any party, but, seated in the lower part of the hall, between the Girondists and the "Mountain," received the nickname of the "Plain" or the "Frogs of the Marsh." This doubtful majority represented average middle-class French opinion, which, though ready to support any measures that seemed necessary to win the war, remained fundamentally Conservative, and was resolved to take the first opportunity that offered itself of escaping from its uncongenial adventure in democracy. Many members of the former Assemblies, reactionaries at heart, sat silent in the "Marsh," waiting for the day when, national independence once assured, they could once more trample on the democracy, and secure the reign of the well-fed and the prosperous.

Just before the Legislative Assembly dissolved, it had granted French naturalization by way of compliment to several distinguished foreign friends of freedom. Two of these were elected to the National Convention—Anacharsis Clootz, a German baron by birth, but an enthusiastic Republican, Internationalist, and Freethinker; and our own countryman, Tom Paine. Clootz sat with the "Mountain"; Paine is generally reckoned with the Girondists, but was assuredly a more advanced politician than most of that party were.

As soon as it met, the Convention abolished royalty, and declared that official documents should henceforth be dated Year I. of the Republic. There unanimity ended. The Girondists, or Ministerial party, instead of calling a party truce and getting on with measures necessary to the national defence, wasted time in a number of frontal and flank attacks on the Radicals. The September massacres offered the chief means of attack. Though the Girondists had not condemned the massacres at the time, and some of their newspapers had even approved of them, they now, after three weeks, appeared suddenly to awake to their iniquity, and accused not only Marat (who really was compromised) but Danton and Robespierre, who had had just as much, and just as little, responsibility for the massacres as the Girondists themselves.

While these bickerings went on in the Convention, the French armies, after freeing France of the invaders, carried the war into the enemy's country. General Custine invaded Germany, and occupied Speyer, Worms, Mainz, and Frankfort in the name of the Republic. Dumouriez entered Belgium, which was then Austrian territory, and won the battle of Jemmapes (November 6, 1792), after which the French entered Brussels. The Republican parties in Belgium and the German cities (for, since 1789, all countries bordering on France had been simmering with democratic movements) welcomed the French with open arms. The Girondists, being the party in power, gained strength from these successes. They proposed and carried a resolution which declared that all peoples were the friends of France, and offered French help to any nation that wished to rise against its rulers. This resolution looked all very well on paper, but would obviously, if adhered to, have involved France in everlasting wars. It was the initial step on that dangerous road of militarism which ultimately led to the despotism of Napoleon. It also frightened England, and had much to do with this country's entry into the war against France.

ROBERT ARCH.

(To be continued.)

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Correspondence.

PROSECUTION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A few weeks ago a spiritualistic medium was prosecuted and fined £50 and costs of £30 on the ground that her practices were fraudulent. I carefully read the evidence given in the daily newspapers, and there certainly seemed to be nothing more inane or silly in her communications with the spirits than in those quoted by Dr. Oliver Lodge in his notorious book *Raymond*.

If any harm to the public, justifying legal restraint, is done by an obscure medium, surely this harm is greatly enhanced by the support and sanction of an eminent scientist.

It seems to me that the silly victims of spiritualistic fraud have only themselves to thank for being so easily gulled; they attend the seances of their own freewill, and, doubtless, the majorty of them consider that they get good value for their money in the solace they derive from communication with their dear departed ones.

All the religious periodicals are urging the prosecution of these mediums, and the editor of the *Month* justifies this on the ground that they can furnish no guarantee of the truth of their communications. But what guarantee can the minister of any supernatural religion furnish of the truth of his statements about the unseen world? In the region of the supernatural everything is wrapped in an impenetrable mystery, so that no guarantees are possible. It would seem, indeed, that this combination of the warring sects against Spiritualism is inspired by a common jealousy and fear of competition in the domain of the supernatural, which has hitherto been the special preserve of the various Churches. We Freethinkers, who stand outside *all* the Churches, should, I think, protest against the prosecution of Spiritualists as being an invasion of that liberty of thought and action which we have attained so dearly and should value so highly.

When such highly trained scientists as the late Alfred Russel Wallace and Dr. Oliver Lodge are among the advocates of, and believers in, Spiritualism, and against whom any charge of wilful fraud is plainly absurd, surely legal restraint of their investigations is to be deprecated?

G. O. WARREN, Major (retired).

Oh, for Ten Thousand Tongues to Sing!

WHEN I survey the fearful dross
Laid thick upon the altar piece,
I fain would make the clergy cross
And write a hymnal masterpiece!
A hymn that every babe could sing,
A song for man to harmonize
With verse and tune of wondrous swing
To knock dead gods from out the skies.

To knock dead gods from out the skies!
Strange that the task remains undone,
Strange that mankind defends the lies
Which rob its heart and tie its tongue.
Oh, for a song to clear the skies!
To tear each falsehood cleanly out,
To breed a courage which denies
The drivel man could do without.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

An Edinburgh man brings this tale from the West Highlands.

In the village church one Sunday there was an unlettered, uncouth fellow, full of good intentions and odd piety, who persisted in bawling the Psalm tunes at the top of a very raucous voice.

After toleration bordering on the suicidal a gentleman visitor ventured to intervene, approaching the offender with a courteous request to sing quietly and in moderation.

"You go to blazes," was the almost savage retort, "I'm here to praise the Lord!"—*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.*

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, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "The Origin of the Human Race." Introduced by J. K. Harris.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, Chapman Cohen, "Christianity and the Logic of Life."

MR. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, March 1, at 7.30.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales, "Christian Hypocrisy"; 6.30, Messrs. Beale and Yates.

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Views and Opinions.

The Supremacy of Truth.

Truth, like murder, will out. It may be suppressed for a time, but it turns up in the most unexpected manner. It is difficult for even the most confirmed liar to avoid spoiling his record by sometimes lapsing into truth. Perhaps it is because perpetual lying is a greater strain upon one's memory and upon one's powers of invention than is merely speaking the truth. If eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, eternal carefulness is the condition of unblemished lying. Moreover, truth will out, because facts cannot be eternally suppressed. We may ignore them, but they remain; demanding, and eventually receiving, recognition. Sooner or later, the man who has been loudly asserting that two and two equal five is compelled to admit that he cannot make the sum more than four. Even a goat engaged in butting a brick wall will presently see the immovability of the object. Truth may not be all-powerful, but it is eternally insistent.

* * *

Outgrowing Religion.

One of the truths that will out is that human development is away from all forms of religion, orthodox or heterodox. Thousands of clergymen are for ever protesting that religion is an indispensable and indestructible element in human nature. Hundreds of writers with an over-developed sense of the marketable value of the unthinking and the credulous, emphasize the same proverb in articles and novels. And yet the fact of the world growing less religious is always before us, the fact of man having got rid of an "indestructible" element is continually demanding recognition. And every now and again this recognition is forthcoming. The other day, the writer who supplies the *Times* with a weekly essay on religion remarked, at the opening of an article on "The Modern Distrust of Religion," that "Many people of all classes have now a deep distrust of religion, as if it must imply some kind of dishonesty, moral or intellectual." This frank admission is worthy of note, not merely because it is true, but because its truth is becoming so obvious that even religionists cannot ignore it without making themselves ridiculous.

* * *

A Significant Phenomenon.

It is certain that a "deep distrust" of religion has not developed without some very powerful cause. To realize this, one need only recall how powerful are the inducements for people to at least profess a faith in religion. By prescriptive right, religion enjoys a position such as is possessed by no other social force. Its reign has been long and, until yesterday, unquestioned. The ignorant still accept it as a matter of course, and another class protects it from motives of self-interest. The avenues of promotion are still largely controlled by religion, and an army of professional defenders are always busy in its defence. Many thousands who do not really believe in religion hesitate to openly express dissent, and others pathetically cling to the name long after all it properly stands for is surrendered. Like Madame de Stael and ghosts, they do not believe in religion, but they are afraid of it. The social dice are heavily loaded in favour of religion. There are few inducements to break with it; there are many favourable to the maintenance of friendly relations. Consequently, for us to have reached a position when even defenders of religion are compelled to acknowledge that a deep distrust exists "in all classes of society," is a striking illustration of the way in which the logic of facts overcome the logic of theory.

* * *

An Impossible Creed.

So far as Christianity is concerned, that is becoming an impossible creed for multitudes, and a difficult one for all who think. Its doctrinal scheme, its "plan of salvation," its whole theory of man and the world, is simply ridiculous in the light of modern knowledge and modern needs. What has the world of to-day to do with its special creations, its miracles, its blood atonement, its virgin-born and resurrected saviours? These things do not belong to our world at all. And how can any civilized and educated man or woman fail to see the savage behind it all; to realize that these things belong to the age of a flat earth, a solid sky, and a world of supernatural beings actually concerned in the doings of mankind? But the world of to-day no longer *questions* whether these things are true. It knows they are false. Not alone do laymen know they are false, best part of the clergy also know it. Try how they will, they cannot square their teachings with modern knowledge. They may explain, and trim, and modify; but the salient features of their creed is too plain. And can it be wondered that when men see this horrible divorce between knowledge and faith, they have a "deep distrust" of religion, and feel that its profession implies "some kind of dishonesty, moral or intellectual"? Stupidity or dishonesty; the choice of the professing Christian is rapidly becoming a choice of one of these two. He may escape the one charge, but only by pleading guilty to the other.

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The Disease that Kills Religion.

Of all the diseases to which religion is subject, there is but one that is fatal—that of being found out. And, quite beyond question, the world is finding out religion. It has seen all its claims to world supremacy shattered one after the other. Its claim to act as a law-giver in the world of the physical has been broken beyond possibility of repair. Science to-day treats religion with complete indifference—sometimes with absolute contempt. This world, say the clergy, is God's world, but by a strange irony no one goes to God's agents on earth to find out anything about it. How could it be otherwise? The teachings of Copernicus shattered its claims in the world of astronomy. The physics of Galileo and Newton killed its pretensions in another direction. Lyell in geology, and Darwin in biology met it with shattering results in other departments. The heavens no longer declare the glory of God, the earth no longer shows his manipulative skill, they bear witness only to the all-conquering intelligence of man. "God" is to-day a discarded hypothesis, an atrophied organ of the body social. Gods are useless in a world where human intelligence has reached maturity.

* * *

Outgrowing Religion.

The world is outgrowing religion. That is the plain, unvarnished truth. Let us emphasize this fact of growth, because it is that which makes the future of religion hopeless. People do not, in the overwhelming majority of cases, discard religious belief as the result of a reasoned process. In the main, they outgrow it. The pressure of life is perpetual and insistent. It is neither a party nor an organization that religion has to fight to-day. It is the pressure of a whole civilization that is the real enemy of religion. And how can any Church, or combination of Churches, fight that? Once before in the history of the world Christianity was able to overthrow a civilization, but that can never happen again. The fault of the old civilization was that culture was confined to a few. Books were few, and the means of transmitting knowledge limited. To-day knowledge has been democratized. Books exist in their myriads, and something of a sane knowledge of the world is the property of all. Civilization may experience reverses, but a complete overthrow is beyond the bounds of reasonable probability; and nothing short of that catastrophe can give religion a new lease of life.

Chapman Cohen.

The Futility of Theodicies.

Christians generally assume the existence of God and the absolute perfection of his character, while professional theologians have always made vigorous attempts to prove the former and to vindicate the latter. Apologetics is the most fundamental and important department of dogmatic theology; and it is profoundly significant that every age, as it comes, must formulate its own apologetic system. The famous *Theodicy* elaborated with such rare distinction by Leibnitz, is practically valueless to-day. We still read it with unstinted admiration for the genius of its author; but no one believes that it possesses much, if any, practical value for us of to-day. And yet the facts of life are the same now as they were then, and have been since human history began. To doubt is natural, while vitally to believe is the most tremendous of tasks, and while the facts remain essentially unchanged, fresh aids to belief are required almost every year. The significance of this phenomenon is usually overlooked, even by the divines. The belief is that the human race is the offspring of a Supernatural Being who loves and cares for it, but to keep that belief alive tens of thousands are set apart to interpret, justify, and defend it, otherwise it would soon die out completely. These officials put forth their utmost efforts to perpetuate it, but in spite of their most faithful ministrations, its constant tendency is to fade away. This is a fact which no one can gainsay.

Let us face the problem anew in company with a twentieth century apologist in the person of the Rev. Francis E. Powell, M.A., Vicar of Bromyard Parish Church. Judging by one of his published sermons, entitled "The Father-Heart of God and the World Agony of War," which has fallen into our hands through the kindness of a friend, we infer that Mr. Powell is a broad-minded and fine-spirited gentleman, who has the courage to think for himself, and who enjoys the privilege of being under a bishop who has often been branded as a dangerous heresiarch. In the sermon just mentioned the reverend gentleman ridicules the idea that the War "is sent as a punishment," saying:—

> What folly, then, to throw blame upon Germany. For the Kaiser and his myrmidons have been but the puppets of the Divine Will. According to this view, the real author of all this misery and woe is God, who has sent it to punish the world.....And upon whom has the punishment fallen? Are Belgium and Serbia so very much worse than Holland and Denmark? Does the Continent of Europe need chastisement more than that of North and South America?

Mr. Powell has no faith in prayer as a means to bring the War to an end. He alludes to the audacity of a bishop who was not ashamed to state in St. Paul's Cathedral "that God was, as it were, sitting on the fence to see which side would importune him most." Then he adds:—

> A father sitting on a fence watching his children rob and rape, and maim and slay in fraticidal warfare! No wonder people find religion—or that which passes under its name—to be so unsatisfactory, and that, in consequence, so much indifference abounds.

In equally scathing terms the preacher dismisses the angels of Mons as utterly unworthy of credence, saying, "If angels at Mons *during* the War, why not angels at Berlin and Vienna *to prevent* the War?"

So far as the negative position of this discourse is concerned, we are in hearty agreement with it; but when Mr. Powell undertakes to discern the traces of a Divine Father's heart in the existing European situation, we find ourselves in uncompromising opposition to him. He affirms that "there are two ideas in Fatherhood which we do well to keep apart." Why must we keep them apart? Simply because the one gives the lie direct to the other. The two ideas are "the communication of life and the outpouring of love." As the communicator of life, God "stands for the great world-process which seems to us so ruthless, unfeeling, and harsh; for those tremendous elemental forces which are stern as fate, absolute as tyranny, and merciless as death; which are too vast to praise, too inexorable to propitiate; which have no ear for prayer, no heart for sympathy, no arm to save." By "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," we are to understand Nature and her various processes. Mr. Powell says:—

> This is the scientific conception of God, true in all its awful force and grim rigidity. The name stands for that stream of tendency by which all things seek to fulfil the law of their being. For, as Herbert Spencer once most truly said: "Amid the mysteries which are becoming more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the absolute certainty that we are ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed." Of such a Father, who is only stern Nature personified, whose will are the universal uniform-

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ities we call Nature's laws "which shall not be broken," we may well exclaim :—

> Who dares to name his Name,
> Or belief in him proclaim,
> Veiled in mystery as he is,
> The All-Enfolder!

What we maintain is that this is not the scientific conception of God but an unscientific conception of Nature. To call Nature God is a most deplorable instance of misnaming. Science, as such, neither affirms nor denies the existence of God, but simply ignores it, treating it as if it were not. Science confines itself exclusively to Nature and her laws, knowing of nothing above or beyond her. The poet may, and does, personify her, as students of Shelley, Keats, and Meredith are well aware. Meredith, indeed, now and then uses the theological name "God," but he takes care to explain that by it he only means Nature's "firm laws" of heredity and environment. But Mr. Powell believes in and preaches a God above and beyond the God of Nature. He takes special pains to impress upon our minds that there are two Fathers, namely, "the Father of Revelation and experience and the Father of science and philosophy," though he naively confesses that he does not know how to reconcile the two. The truth is that they cannot be reconciled, being in their very natures opposed to each other. We have no means of ascertaining to what extent the reverend gentleman is loyal to the Thirty-nine Articles; but if he is at all orthodox he bows down to two different and antagonistic Deities. The Father of revelation is tender-hearted and compassionate, while the Father of science is stern and unbending; the one forgives, the other does not; the one visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto many generations, the other drowns the law of causation in the river of redeeming grace. Now, evidently, and of necessity these two hostile Fathers cannot possibly co-exist; and since Nature and her laws do exist, and we are inextricably under their sway, it inevitably follows that the other Father, the Father of revelation, must totally depart, as there is neither room nor need for him.

Mr. Powell is convinced that it is in the spiritual and not in the physical world that we find this higher relation of Father and Child. That is to say, the reverend gentleman must have a Gospel of salvation by faith to preach to a fallen and sinful world, and because there is no such Gospel to be got out of Nature, he adopts an imaginary supernature wherein dwells and reigns the God of love, who sweeps Nature aside, transcending her and crying: "I am all in all." Whence issues this supernatural Gospel? Confessedly from the Gospel Jesus, who is said to be God manifested in the flesh; an impracticable teacher of ethics whom his own professed followers have never taken quite seriously; a visionary who was never in living touch with time and earth, but who spoke continually of the Father's house beyond the stars into which he would enter at death, and from which he would return erelong for the express purpose of taking his own back with him there to live for ever above the world and its woes. That is the admitted source of the Christian Gospel which has been in the world, like a beautiful but ineffectual dream, for nigh two thousand years. Has it redeemed the world from its evils and wrongs? No. Has it justified its existence by the moral miracles it has performed? No. The world is still the battle-field of opposing forces.

Towards the end of his discourse Mr. Powell substantially admits this himself. After all his glowing descriptions of the teaching, life, and, above all, the personality of Jesus, which leads him to claim that "whatever else God may be he is, at any rate, all that I can see is good in the personality of Christ"; after his glorification of the spiritual world as the sphere of superhuman forces which sweep down into the interior of humanity with the object of transforming it, this is the key in which the oration closes :—

> It may be that this Universe is that in which the Father-heart is seeking, amid difficulties of which we can have no conception, ever more and more to realize itself, much as the sculptor is doing with the marble upon which (all unconscious, too, as it is of his difficulties) he is expressing his craft. The process is slow and painful; but, comparing the capacity of the human spirit for love and wisdom now with what it was, say some thousands of years ago, it is most emphatically sure. For Creation is yet in process, and the process is one of struggle towards the sure and certain triumph of the far-off Divine event towards which the whole is moving even while it groans and travails together until now.

This is virtually a falling back upon evolution as the only ground of hope for the future of humanity. It is by human struggle alone that progress is being achieved, and apart from struggle no improvement has ever taken place. The cant about the Father-heart of God as having been at work from the beginning until now betrays its hollowness the moment we glance at history, and particularly at "the world-agony of war now upon us in all its frightfulness and heart-breaking horrors." Man's only hope lies in himself, and a general realization of this truth would result in an all-round advance. Far too long has been the period of our nerveless passivity, and the time has fully come for the commencement of a new period of energetic, whole-hearted activity, of the manifestation of the will to growth and development of that brother-heart which will make the whole world kin, abolishing nationalities and establishing that universalism under which alone the enjoyment of perpetual peace and prosperity will be possible.

J. T. Lloyd.

Seers at Sea.

> The vain crowds wandering blindly, led by lies.—*Lucretius.*
>
> The carpenter said nothing but
> The butter's spread too thick. —*Lewis Carroll.*

Agreeably to the law of supply and demand, prophets have in all times arisen to foretell events, smooth and otherwise, at prices absurdly cheap considering the value of their services. From the days of the Roman augurs, who, it is said, could not look one another in the face without laughing, down to those of the present-day fortune-teller, who giggles in her dainty sleeve until an infidel magistrate usurps her calling, and prophesies that she will spend some months in prison, an unbroken line of more or less inspired personages has existed.

The universe has been ransacked for information on coming events. The stars that glitter millions of miles in the empyrean have been thought of as deeply interested in the careers of the inhabitants of Dunghill-on-the-Snazle, and the sediment at the bottom of a paltry tea-cup, has been held to be fraught with profound meaning to blushing maidens and proud suitors. Comets have been imported into the solar system for the purpose of warning people of approaching disaster, and insects commissioned to prepare persons for approaching dissolution by "tapping" in the woodwork of old houses. Even dogs consent courteously to hold weird conversations with their distant friends in the "wee sma' hours" for the same dread purpose.

The apparently inconsequent nature of the events that befall mankind engendered the idea of a super-

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natural control which, of course, according to the prophets, was to be bribed. The rain-doctors and prophets of uncivilized peoples, however, are kept to their contracts. They are expected to bring rain when it is required, and if they do not the consequences are summary and unpleasant. But the prophets in civilized countries retain all the advantages of their savage prototypes without any of the risks and dangers. The civilized dupes allow the prophet to play his little game on the principle "Heads I win, tails you lose." If the prophet is unsuccessful, they ignore the mistake; if he is correct, they put it to his credit, or he puts it to his credit—which is much the same thing.

The phenomenon is not unknown in this country, and we can estimate the cases of some notorious folk more correctly than those of the lesser luminaries. In the early years of the nineteenth century, Joanna Southcott was a well-known prophetess in the time when the great Napoleon was identified as the "beast" in "Revelation." Joanna was a bold lady, and she predicted that she would be mother of the Messiah—a prophecy that proved to be due to the mundane disease of dropsy. Before she died she left plenteous examples of her artful prophecies, of her long-winded wranglings with Old Nick, and of the intolerable verse that flowed from her saintly pen, that not even divine inspiration could make tuneful or grammatical.

Another nineteenth-century Messiah was Lieutenant Richard Brothers, a half-pay naval officer, whose portrait was engraved with rays of light descending on his crazed head. The word came to Dick that he would be revealed to all men as the King of Jerusalem and Ruler of the World. But the message fell on stony ground, and the world proved obdurate. After Richard had invited King George the Fourth to deliver up his crown, and had ordered the Houses of Parliament to meet for receiving his message, the Messiah was led away into that house of bondage where so many sons and daughters of high Heaven have suffered restraint at the hands of unbelieving keepers and sceptical doctors.

Innocent folk of a later generation reverenced the utterances of that portentous prophet, the Rev. Dr. Cumming, who demonstrated that the Biblical prophecy of the locusts, whose sting is in their tail, was fulfilled by a Turkish general having used a horse's tail as a standard. Dr. Cumming also contended that the Pope was "Anti-Christ," and that the French people were the persons aimed at in "Revelation." This modern Jeremiah preached before Queen Victoria, and the avenues of his church were as crowded as the approaches to a theatre. But nemesis came at last, and he fell from his pinnacle of popularity. In a moment of religious recklessness he named the year 1861 as that in which most awful events were to take place. The year was not uneventful, but it failed to fill the prophet's programme, and from that time his fame declined. His dupes subscribed handsomely to place him above difficulty and want, and he passed his last years in peace and comfort, "basking in the sunshine of the countenance of God."

There was still money in the prophetic business, and Cumming's mantle was soon on the shoulders of another man. For many years the Rev. W. Baxter's name was a household word in religious circles. To multitudes he was a heaven-sent seer, commissioned by a benevolent deity to receive the light of prophecy and throw it over a naughty world. Good people reserved a warm corner in their hearts, over and above their loyal obligation to the House of Hanover, for a spiritual guide who taught them precisely to whom they might point as "the whore of Babylon," and the "beast" of "Revelation." That quintessence of nonsense, *Forty Coming Wonders*, was purchased with unabated credulity, although the error of Baxter's pretensions to be regarded as a prophet were proved again and again by the logic of facts to the satisfaction of reasonable persons.

Few prophets would find it easy to go on year after year delivering a succession of silly prophecies destined to utter failure. But Baxter's dupes were the most greedily credulous of their kind. The prophet gravely announced the ascension of 144,000 Christians, without dying, in 1896, and the great Persecution from 1896 to 1901. The Second Advent of Christ was fixed for the same year. The prophet once had an amusing adventure with the City Corporation. He applied for the lease of a site for a newspaper office, and it was pointed out to him that he had asked for a lease extending a quarter of a century beyond that he had fixed in his prophecies for the end of the world. But nothing daunted the prophet, who was familiar with thrones, principalities, and powers.

These are notorious cases. Cumming and Baxter found fortune-telling a pleasant and profitable hobby. They did not advise ladies how to find husbands, or furnish any of their congregations with the names of "winners." They made bolder dashes into futurity, and their courage met with its golden rewards. But they were as much imposters as race-course fortune-tellers. They pretended to possess which neither they nor other people possess. So are thought-readers, clairvoyants, mediums, and the whole troublous tribe of dabblers in the alleged "super"-natural. But whereas an ordinary person who tells fortunes is fined or sent to prison, the same fraud may be practised with impunity if one uses the jargon of the Christian religion. The Vagrancy Act provides that all persons professing to tell fortunes shall be liable to a fine or to imprisonment. Such is the modern and merciful form of the Divine commandment; "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Selden, in his *Table Talk*, says that the old laws against witchcraft do not prove witchcraft to have existed. That is so, for it never did exist. As a fact, tens of thousands of women, perfectly harmless and innocent, were legally murdered on fantastic evidence, which ought to have been incredible, for doing what was physically impossible, in supposed obedience to a legendary command of a doubtful deity.

Fortune-telling to-day means fines and imprisonment for poor vagrants, but the careers of these clergymen show how it may be turned to the best account by Christian gentlemen who remember the soothing fact that a large number of their co-religionists are uneducated and foolish.

Mimnermus.

The Emergence of Man.

III.

(Continued from p. 118.)

The clear thoroughfare afforded by the uninterrupted pathway into Europe from Asia and Africa, which permitted a wealth of floral and faunal life so vast to enter our continent is not devoid of interest with respect to the advent of man. The discovery of the fossil remains of a representative of the Trinal race in Java, which dwelt among animals nearly akin to those of the lower Himalayas, and more distantly related to the faunal organisms of Southern Europe, has an important bearing on the problem of the origin of the human family.

The Dutch surgeon, Dubois, in 1891, discovered, near the Bengawan River in Java, a tooth which he thought to be that of an ancient type of ape. A further exami-

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nation of the deposit disclosed the presence of part of a skull, another tooth, and a left thighbone. These were the long-buried relics of the now world-renowned Pithecanthropus erectus—the erect ape-man. Dubois declared that this creature represented "the transition form between man and the anthropoids which the laws of evolution teach us must have existed. He is the ancestor of man."

Whether Pithecanthropus is an ancestor or not, he is certainly a near relative. The geological stratum in which these fragments were found was considered by Dubois to be of Pliocene age. In this conclusion he was supported by other scientists, while some regard it as a little more recent. In summing up all the now available evidence, Professor Osborn states that:—

> Subsequent researches by expert geologists have tended to refer the age to the early Pleistocene. According to Elbert, the Kendeng strata overlying the Pithecanthropus layer corresponds to an early pluvial period of low temperature and, in point of time, to the Ice Age of Europe. For even in Java one can distinguish three divisions of the Pleistocene period, including the first period of low temperature to which the Pithecanthropus layer is referred.

A careful comparison of the fossil mammals preserved in the deposit which yielded the remains of Pithecanthropus nevertheless seem to sustain the soundness of Dubois' original judgment. The many animals disinterred from this deposit are distinctly Pliocene in character. The various data as a whole seem to warrant the conclusion that the geological antiquity of the Trinil ape-men is either extremely late Pliocene or of very early Pleistocene date.

The discovery of Pithecanthropus, the at present only known representative of what was presumably a widespread stock, proved the occasion of an animated controversy. Some hailed the Java ape-man as the confidently awaited missing link; others asserted it to be the cranium of a long extinct giant gibbon, and denied that it was in any sense human. Then dispassionate science stepped in to pronounce an opinion, and it was pointed out that the top of the skull carries an unmistakable resemblance, both when surveyed sideways or when viewed from above, to the long-departed Stone Age men of the Neanderthal race. That very competent anatomist, Professor Schwalbe, contends that the cranium of Pithecanthropus much more closely approaches the skulls of this ancient stock than those of the superior apes. Schwalbe likewise insists that all the primitive human peoples were dolichocephalic, or long-headed; while all contemporary apes are broad-headed. Whether an ancient progenitor of modern man or not, the ape-man was a member of the human group, however humble, and was far nearer the apes than any other known variety of extant or extinct mankind.

Efforts have been, and are still being made, to augment the fragmentary discovery of Dubois, but so far with scanty success. "The Selenka expedition of 1907-8," we are informed,—

> brought back a human left lower molar as the only result of an express search for more Pithecanthropus remains. Dubois is also said to possess the fragment of a primitive-looking lower jaw from the range known as the Kendeng Hills, at the southern base of which lies the village of Trinil.

The cranial capacity of the Javan ape-man was smaller than that of any savage race recently or long since extinct, while it was distinctly superior to that of any of the apes. But the animal had evidently gained the erect posture, thus emancipating its arms and hands for nobler purposes than those of mere progression. The extended demands put upon the lower limbs as organs of support and locomotion led to their strengthening. Their powers of movement being thus amplified, we may accept the conclusion of Professor Elliot Smith that—

> these upright simians emerged from their ancestral forests in societies, armed with sticks and stones, and with the rudiments of all the powers that eventually enabled them to conquer the world. The greater exposure to danger which these more adventurous spirits encountered once they emerged in the open, and the constant struggles these first semi-human creatures must have had in encounters with definite enemies, no less than with the forces of Nature, provided the factors which rapidly weeded out those unfitted for the new conditions and by natural selection made real men of the survivors.

The Interglacial Stage in Europe already mentioned was succeeded by a second glacial invasion. Various land areas began to sink, and cold currents from the arctic regions swept over the seas. Professor Geikie estimated the decline of temperature in Western Europe during this time at about 20 deg. F. This second Ice Age was far more severe than any of the others experienced either in the Old or the New World. In the Pyrenees, glaciers of colossal dimensions were formed. Ice rivers flowed from the Pyrenees southwards into Spain for nearly forty miles from their original home, while to the north they occupied the Garonne valley in France for a distance of forty-five miles. It is considered that, even where it had spread out at its lower levels, the Garonne glacier retained a thickness of half-a-mile.

But the greatest European ice-sheet came from the bitter north. The tremendous Scandinavian glacial wave swept over our Island, filled the valleys of the Vistula, Rhine, and Elbe, and closely approached the Carpathians. So intense was this frigid invasion that insignificant hills were crowned with an icy covering, and even the Atlas range in Africa was glaciated. In North America, the vast ice-sheet descended much further south than in the antecedent or in any subsequent glacial time. Centuries came and went, during which the Northern Hemisphere was held in bondage by ice and snow. Then the harsh grip was relaxed, and milder conditions returned. A prolonged period of genial aspect followed, and this era is distinguished by the first unequivocal evidence of man's residence in Western Europe. This is the epoch of the Heidelberg race, as yet identified by one jawbone given up by the Mauer deposits near Heidelberg in 1907.

That the second Interglacial period was of immense duration is manifested by the extent of the channeling and denudation of the "drifts" transported southwards both in Europe and America during the preceding Ice Age. In the opening stages of the decline of the intense cold, the climate of the Northern Hemisphere was raw and damp. But as the ice retreated, the atmospheric conditions became warm and dry; so much so that the glaciers of the Alpine regions terminated at points much higher than their present levels. Flowers bloomed in the highlands of Central Europe which require a temperature equal to that enjoyed on the sunny slopes of the mountains of Northern Italy to-day. In Southern France, plants such as the warmth-loving laurel and sweet bay were flourishing, while the fig survived the winters then prevailing. Yet, despite the persistence of these southern forms of vegetation, the animal life discovered south of the mouth of the Neckar in the strata disclosing the remains of Heidelberg man indicate that the general conditions were of a temperate character. In proximity to the human relics, the fossils include those of elephants, rhinoceroses, horses, wild pigs, many members of the deer group, oxen, bears, lions, wolves,

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and beavers. Schoetensack, who found the jaw of Heidelberg man, referred these numerous mammals to the First Interglacial Stage, and this conclusion was supported by Geikie. Osborn, however, dissents from this view, and contends that:—

> The presence of the Etruscan rhinoceros would appear to point to such great antiquity, but the evidence afforded by this primitive animal is overborne by that of three mammals which are highly characteristic of Second Interglacial times; these are the straight-tusked or ancient elephant (E. antiquus), the lion, and the Mosbach horse. Excepting only the Etruscan rhinoceros, all these species frequenting the ancient stream Elsenz, and deposited with the "sands of Mauer," occurred also in the forests and meadows of the region now known as Baden, where the fossil mammal deposits of Mosbach, near the Neckar, are found.

Although a debatable point, it appears probable that the earliest human race so far recorded in Central Europe resided in Germany at the commencement of the Second Interglacial Stage. The animal fossils indicate the presence of wide woodlands as well as spacious pastures. The Heidelberg savages must have been of a very low type, judging from the jaw discovered. The teeth are distinctly human, but the protrusion of modern man's under-jaw, which makes possible the chin, is entirely absent. Apart from the very regular teeth, so extremely dissimilar to those of any living or extinct ape, the jaw would have been regarded as unquestionably simian. The dental organs are so small in comparison with the brutal jaw, that they could scarcely have been used for fighting purposes. And as regards the remarkably retreating chin, the crania of the ancient Neanderthal and other prehistoric peoples "rank exactly half-way between the most inferior races of recent man and the anthropoid apes."

The more an organ is exercised, the more fully developed it is likely to become; and judging from the circumstance that the contemporary Eskimos, and the surviving or recently obliterated native races of Australia and elsewhere, were known to employ the jaws as tools, it is a fair inference that the Heidelberg folk utilized their mandibles for a like purpose. This in some measure explains the abnormal development of the Heidelberg jaw. Doubtless, as further relics of this savage stock are made known, the upper part of the cranium will denote an intellectual advance beyond that of the ape-man of Java.

The arrival of man in Europe, then, was apparently during the mild interval which separated the second Great Ice Age from the third Glacial visitation. The mammalian fossils of later deposits indicate the return of colder conditions. The northern reindeer gradually spread over continental Europe, and it may have migrated as far south as the borders of Spain. American testimony is of a kindred character, and all the available data conspire to prove that after the advance of the glaciers of the Second Ice Period had been stayed, and their recession had begun, the climate remained moist and chilly until a more genial stage supervened. Throughout this very temperate time forests flourished, but the warm interval was succeeded by a period of cold and dry conditions, which in its turn gave way both in Northern Europe and America to the raw, perhaps foggy, and most certainly frigid, epoch known as the Third Glaciation, which, according to Penck's extremely conservative calculation, commenced about 120,000 years since, and lasted from its opening to its close for at least 20,000 years. This would consequently carry us down to Europe and America as they existed only 100,000 years ago.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be concluded.)

Death of a South African Freethinker.

There died a little while ago in Cape Town, Mr. G. W. Martin, who for many years kept the Freethought Flag flying here. Mr. Martin used to speak every evening under the statue of Van Richuh, near the water's edge, and as near the spot where the first Governor of the Cape landed as could be ascertained. Among his audience were many who were very regular in their attendances, while the casual passer-by was frequently attracted by the truths that fell from the speaker's tongue. They were the wiser men who took heed; not like Goldsmith's fool, who came to scoff and remained to pray. Without being an eloquent speaker, Mr. Martin made up for that lack by efficiency and earnestness. He was a great admirer of the *Freethinker*, and frequently read from it at his meetings. On one occasion he attended the funeral of a lady friend of his, the obsequies, or whatever the clerical term is, being conducted by the Rev. William Balmforth, a Free Unitarian, who is a Socialist and a man who does not revile another because the one's doing is not his. Mr. Martin remarked to Mr. Balmforth: "I would like you to be at my funeral. If you pray over my coffin and I don't get out of the shell, you will know I am dead." Well, Mr. Balmforth was at the funeral. If he prayed, Mr. Martin stayed in the shell.

This much must be said of Mr. Martin, he lived a clean and honest life. On week-days he was a good worker. He was free in dipping his hand into the pocket where his money might be. On Sunday evening he spoke in the great effort to remove superstition from the minds of the people. Africa has been called the Dark Continent. It is in more ways than one, and in no other more so than in the darkness of religious superstition. The predicants have for years been whispered of as the curse of the country. But few dare to speak aloud. Mr. Martin was one of those who dared.

W. Baxter (Cape Town).

Acid Drops.

We cited at length, last week, from Mr. Ralph Hall Caine's lecture before the Douglas Debating Society. (Mr. Caine is, by the way, a brother of the novelist, not a son, as was then stated.) The *Publishers' Circular* also gives a summary of the address, and to Mr. Caine's statement that, if only one book could be saved out of an assumed catastrophe, he would vote for Shakespeare, and not the Bible, the editor of the *Publishers' Circular* adds the note: "Mr. Ralph Hall Caine appears to forget that but for the Bible there would have been no Shakespeare."

Now, we don't know who the editor of the *Publishers' Circular* is; but whoever he is, we raise our hat to him. For that comment is a gem of the first water. Of its kind it is unsurpassable. Even Prophet Baxter Bottomley could not beat it. Its downright drivelling idiocy, unredeemed by even a reflection of common sense, makes it a thing of joy—something that one preserves in a treasured notebook, only to be glanced at when one doubts whether life is worth living. Many people have written volumes of diluted rubbish claiming how much Shakespeare was indebted to the Bible for ideas, inspiration, imagery, and so forth. But their work has been depressing rather than entertaining, since it was not all nonsense, and the presence of some sense made one resent the nonsense. But the editor of the *Publishers' Circular* beats the band. He will have no compromise. There would have been no Shakespeare at all but for the Bible. Neither would there have been any Chaucer, or Spenser, or Marlowe, or Drayton, or Bacon, or Montaigne, or Newton, or Lyell, or Darwin. We shall certainly keep an eye on the *Publishers' Circular*—if the editor provides us with many feasts of this description.

Now that the world-war is nearing its climax the British clergy, who are exempted from fighting, are anxious to get credit for doing something in order to save their faces. The Bishop of Norwich is advocating clerical help in the cultivation of small plots of ground. If a score or two of parsons

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grow spring onions or cultivate a few potatoes, it will not save the clergy from the reproach that they did nothing valuable in this awful time.

The Bishop of London has been in Scotland, and the account of his visit in the *Church Times* for February 23 is headed: "Revival in Scotland." The advent of his lordship anywhere spells Revival. Simply because the largest church meeting ever held in Dundee took place when Dr. Ingram was there, it is taken for granted that Caledonia is ablaze with new-kindled religious zeal. But the inference is radically false, as the Scottish people well know. The fact that folk rush to see and hear so notorious a man as the Bishop of London is no proof that they are religiously awakened. As a matter of fact, a most remarkable awakening is going on north of the Tweed, but it is of an entirely intellectual character, and it results, to the gratification of many, to the chagrin of more, in the gradual decay of religion in all parts of that interesting land.

The Bishop assured his Dundee audience that the hope of the world is the Church, only it must be a brand new church. How such a church is to be obtained he did not, because he could not, say. He forgets that the Church is old and full of disease, and that it has never been a success, except as a purely business concern, though, it must be admitted that, in this respect, its success has been quite phenomenal. Instead of setting himself up as a purifier of public morals, his lordship would evince much greater wisdom were he to confine himself to the stupendous task of reforming the Church, whose morals need looking after much more than those of the world. It would do the Bishop of London incalculable good if he could realize the truth of the old adage: "Physician, heal thyself."

All the Bishop does is to show that he can be as silly in the far north as in the far south. He is hoping for a new world after the War, but he asks:—

> Have you ever thought what is going to stop wars in the future? Beating Germany? A good preliminary. But what is going to stop the dangers of another war? What if the unconverted Chinese arise in their millions? There is only one way to stop wars. You will find it in the prophecy of Isaiah: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." This can only be arrived at when a successful Church brings the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its hand.

This fear of "unconverted Chinese" is delicious. Who is it but the Christian nations that have made nearly all the wars of the past five centuries? And who but the Christians are trying to drag China into the present War? China unconverted is a danger to none. China converted may become a danger to the world.

At the Leeds Wesleyan Mission Anniversary, Sir William Middlebrook, M.P., said: "No one could realize the amount of good the War had brought about; to-day thousands of men in the Army were leading useful and good lives. The teaching of Christianity throughout this country had laid the foundation of goodness in the hearts and lives of these men." After that one need feel small surprise at the ineffectiveness of Parliament. One can understand people who talk of the necessity for the War, however regrettable it may be. But to talk of the amount of good done by it is either sheer imbecility or deliberate knavery. And at the very moment that we are being told of the good done by the War, and its beneficial effects on the lives of men, the papers are full of accounts of a growing immorality, and committees and judges are warning us of the outbreak of immorality that may be expected when the troops come home. A determination to go through with the War is understandable, so is the conviction that we were bound to enter the War, and that we are fighting for laudable objects. All these things are, we repeat, understandable. But to speak of the present wholesale slaughter of human beings, the ruin of thousands of homes, the sacrifice of one civil liberty after another, and the orgy of hatred, lying, and misrepresentation that the whole of Europe has witnessed for over two years and a half as doing good is, in itself, a decisive disproof of the War's moralizing influence.

The vicar of Burton Wood is annoyed that women talk in church instead of paying attention to his sermons. He advises them that it "is better to knit for Jacks and Tommies in sermon time than to talk, whisper, laugh, and giggle, flirt, and misbehave, to judge our neighbours, to criticize hats, gowns, and fur coats." Perhaps a change of parsons in favour of one who could preach sermons sufficiently sensible to command attention might serve the purpose for which knitting is recommended. But why can't the women do their knitting at home?

The Master of the Temple, preaching in the Temple Church, said he was quite convinced of the existence of an evil spirit, active in the world; but to go beyond that and to particularize on the form of that activity was to enter the realm of superstition. That is, we ought to believe in an evil spirit, so long as we refrain from saying what it is like, where it is, or what the Devil it is doing. That, we admit, is religion. Be hazy in your thinking, and indefinite in your speech, and you will continue religious. And the Master of the Temple is an educated man talking to an educated audience!

"Clergymen will be accepted for agriculture and other forms of national service," says the editor of an evening paper. The trouble is that these Christian gentlemen are so coy in making advances.

A deputation from the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress recently waited upon Lord Derby at the War Office and urged the removal of the exemption from military service granted to the clergy, of whom there are 50,000 in this country. Lord Derby replied that this was a matter for the House of Commons. The men of God will breathe more freely on hearing this.

That the Government religion is hedged around with Acts of Parliament, and is a slave of Parliament, is seen in the Bill now under consideration by the Upper House authorizing the omission of certain services on account of war conditions. And Parliament, be it noted, is composed of representatives of many religions, and no religion.

The Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Bourne, has advised the faithful to continue to abstain from flesh-meat on Fridays. Presumably, those who fail to observe the restriction will have a prolonged fry-day when they die.

The clergy, who are pretending that London's morals are those of Sodom and Gomorrah, have upset some of their own supporters by their hysterical nonsense. Mr. A. C. Cotton, speaking at Southwark Diocesan Conference, said: "I have known London for over seventy years, and I say clearly that, compared with fifty years ago, London is an open-air Cathedral." The clergy will wish Mr. Cotton in the place they so often mention in sermons.

On the one side the clergy have been busily engaged, in their capacity as recruiting agents, in dwelling upon the access of moral strength the nation has derived from the War. On the other side we have been warned—often by the same parties when they have had other ends in view—of the increase of immorality produced by the War. The public may, therefore, take its choice of either view, or adopt both. But on this latter view the eminent surgeon, Sir Malcolm Morris, remarks in connection with the spread of venereal disease: "It is greatly to be feared that these figures, appalling as they are, have been seriously augmented since the War, owing to what can only be described as the wave of immorality which has swept over the country. Excitement, hysterical sentiment, intemperance, unbridled control, as well as lust, have helped to break down the ordinary barriers and safeguards. Opportunities and temptations to indulge promiscuous passion have been multiplied, with most disastrous consequences to the youth of both sexes, but especially to the young, vigorous, and often inexperienced manhood of our country and Empire who have joined the colours." Thus do the moralist and the pathologist administer quite un-

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consciously, a "knock-out" blow to the parson, and at the same time help to kill a piece of cant that must be killed if armed conflicts between nations are to be replaced by civilized intercourse.

The police have been very active of late in dropping down on fortune-tellers, crystal-gazers, and a number of spiritualistic mediums. For our part we do not see that much good at any time can come from such prosecutions. Folly will out, and the real cure for such things is to lift the public above them. And we quite agree with the letter from Major Warren, in last week's *Freethinker*, that, in many respects, the hostility shown towards spiritualistic mediums by preachers and religious newspapers is motived by professional jealousy. Why one person should be prosecuted for claiming to provide messages from the dead, and another person should be allowed to receive money for saying prayers for the benefit of the dead, and others get large salaries for performing, among other things, magical hocus-pocus with a little bread and wine, is puzzling until one remembers what an amount of stupidity is always current.

What essential difference is there between the thaumaturgist in Bond Street and the thaumaturgist in the pulpit? None we can see, save that in the one case the income is precarious and in the other assured. But both trade upon human ignorance and fear, both pretend to a knowledge of the unknown which we are quite certain neither possess. And can it be wondered that while the Churches have done, and are doing, so much to encourage superstition in general, that it should manifest itself in directions not contemplated by those teachers of superstition as established by law. After all, the only true distinction between religion and superstition is that pointed out by Hobbes. Religion is superstition allowed—superstition is religion disallowed.

It is well known that different and more or less conflicting schools of religious thought and practice exist and assert themselves in the Anglican Church. For some months the question of the reservation of the Sacrament has been diligently discussed in the columns of the *Church Times;* and in its issue for February 16, there is a lengthy report of a debate on the subject which took place in the Upper House of Convocation. To outsiders, whose acquaintance with the theme is purely academic, the controversy seems unspeakably silly. The reservation is primarily intended for the sick, and the idea is to set apart at the open Communion in the Church "so much of the Consecrated Bread and Wine as shall serve the sick person (or persons), and as many as shall communicate with him (if there be any). And, the open Communion ended, he (the priest) shall on the same day and with as little delay as may be, go and minister the same." It appears from this that the consecration holds good only for a very short period. The sick must receive the Sacrament on the very day of consecration, or all its virtue will have gone out of it. One night's exposure might destroy it altogether.

The point on which the Church seems hopelessly divided is whether the Reservation of the Holy Sacrament is to be allowed "under such conditions as suggest that the faithful should habitually 'visit' it as an object of devotion and worship." Here the Bishop of Oxford parts company with the Catholic party, which until recently he was supposed to represent. He would prohibit Reservation for any purpose whatsoever other than that of communicating the sick. The Bishop of London favours the idea of reserving the Sacrament in tabernacles or monstrances, to which the devout should enjoy free access. And thus the disputation proceeds, and is entirely concerned with mere shadows, with matters that lie completely outside the sphere of knowledge, with gorgeous illusions which obscure the genuine realities of life, and whose only contribution to human welfare consists of empty ghostliness, as to the real nature of which no two persons agree.

It has often been pointed out in these columns what a large proportion of present-day novelists are Freethinkers, or show a freethinking tendency. In itself it is an illustration of the truth that a virile art is always more or less allied with scepticism. Now, in the *Church Times*, we have the admission, by way of hostile criticism, that a large number of contemporary novelists are hostile to Christianity. We are not concerned, for the moment, to discuss whether the *Church Times*' view of the character of modern novelists is correct or not. It is the admission as to their heresy which is interesting:—

> They have acquired a smattering of psychology, of sociology, of medical science, and believe themselves omniscient. In particular, they display an ignorance of the spiritual factor in mankind that would be ludicrous if it were not tragic. The blunt truth is that a morbid dwelling upon animalism has atrophied their own powers of spiritual perception. They take every opportunity of deriding the Church. They assume that every person of intellect regards it as based upon effete superstitions. They view its clergy with supreme contempt—a contempt which, did those of real life resemble the clergy figuring in these novels, would be amply deserved. They take for granted—as certain society journals take for granted—that churchgoing is a practice utterly outside the normal life of to-day of all people of intelligence.

It no doubt *sounds* serious to be told that one's spiritual nature is blunted; but, as the *C. T.* understands "spiritual," we hardly suppose it will disturb those against whom the charge is made.

Middlesex Hospital has decided to abolish a bye-law which stipulates that the superintendent and officials shall be members of the Church of England. We hope this means that in future no religious test of any kind shall be imposed upon officials. To merely extend the regulation so as to admit all Christian sects and exclude others is not much of an advance, although it is what many Christians court as progress.

In an appeal for funds the Salvation Army states that they are "helping young people to be straight and true." They do not appear to be very successful, for magistrates are overburdened with juvenile delinquents.

Mr. J. H. Shakespeare, President of the Free Church Council, advises ministers to ask their congregations to stay behind after the Sunday morning services in order to discuss the question of food production. Mr. Shakespeare, with a view to the implied desecration of the "Sawbath," says: "They will have no scruples about doing this if they remember that Christ fed the multitude, and that he asked the Pharisees whether it was lawful to do good or evil on the Sabbath Day." This is very ingenious; but we would remind Mr. Shakespeare that Christ did not call a committee to discuss how to grow food; he simply took a few loaves and fishes, and fed a multitude. The job was simple—to him. It is not quite so simple with us. And we do not see that his example helps us in any way. Now, if Jesus were alive to-day, and would repeat the trick as, say, Parliamentary Secretary to Lord Devonport, he would be extremely useful

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In the Divorce Court recently a decree nisi was granted to Mrs. Opie on the ground of the cruelty and misconduct of her husband, the Rev. W. M. Opie. The misconduct took place in a disorderly house near Piccadilly. The clerical mission, which is looking after soldier's morals, had better keep its eyes on the parsons as well.

A sermon by the late Canon Fleming, published in 1892, has realized £1,821, over 70,000 copies having been sold. No wonder a distinguished Frenchman said English people take their pleasures sadly.

Some of the Y.M.C.A. huts have been taken over by the Military Authorities. The soldiers will appreciate the change, for they will not be annoyed continually with inquiries concerning their eternal welfare.

The Temperance Council of the Christian Churches, comprising thirteen organizations, has issued an appeal for total abstinence, based on "Christian Citizenship." When will these parsons remember that the population of the British Empire is over 400,000,000, the overwhelming majority of whom are not Christians at all?

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 11, Birmingham; March 18, Leicester; March 25, Manchester; April 1, Portsmouth: April 8, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.

A. R. W.—Thanks. As soon as possible.

S. Leng.—People in a state of great emotional tension are very much more liable to unreasoning conclusions than when in a normal state. That is all there is in the spiritualistic "boom"—assuming that it exists.

J. Brown.—We note the Vicar of Biddulph has been lecturing on "Why I am not an Atheist." We do not know the gentleman, but we could hazard a reason. But we cannot see why, if the Vicar is able to lecture on the subject in a church, he cannot permit questions there. To meet questioners "by appointment" looks a trifle suspicious.

D. Richards.—We have no knowledge of any preacher named D. Charles Davies ever having debated with Charles Bradlaugh. That Mr. Davies "wiped the floor" with Bradlaugh we can readily believe. It was such an easy thing to do, and so many did it—or said they did. Anyway, we compliment your friend on his imagination.

E. S.—Pleased to know that you think we "got right home" in our notes on the Bishop of Oxford in last week's issue.

E. Greenwood.—The subject *is* an important one, as you say. But we could form a better opinion if we saw a chapter or so of the proposed work.

Ivor.—We have no other information on the matter save such as we have already published. That seems to us quite enough for any unprejudiced person. We hope you will succeed in giving the pietists a lively time.

"Veritas."—We fail to see any connection between the teaching that "thinking good" helps and "thinking evil" injures—which are only valid as general truths—and the philosophy of "Christian Science." In your sense the teaching is wrenched to an illegitimate use. And in its legitimate sense it will not fit your teaching.

Miss Rhoda Lynd writes:—"I have read with pleasure the article in last issue by Mr. George Underwood. The example he quotes of Dekker's apologues is very interesting; but why did he not quote more of them? A page or so of the original would be more informative than ten times the amount of criticism. Not that I wish to undervalue Mr. Underwood's criticism which could not be bettered by any of the writers in the professedly literary weeklies. By the way, will you allow me to ask him if he will be so kind as to recommend me a few works of fiction in which freethought is given a prominent position; in which it is represented sympathetically or unsympathetically? I believe many of our novelists are, nowadays more or less freethinkers, but they do not seem to use their art to further the good cause. Is not that so?" We pass the suggestion on to Mr. Underwood.

Our last Australian post brought us two very flattering letters, one from an old subscriber, Mr. S. Brooking, who writes that "The dear old paper gets better than ever."—Another, a new subscriber, Mr. J. Jackson, writes: "I wish to add my appreciation of your paper, which is the best I read. I have been free from religion for two years, and the *Freethinker* is my principle food for thought. Its standard is a credit to you." We are very pleased to have such cordial support from old readers as well as new ones.

A. F.—Thanks for reports of Professor Alexander's lectures on *Space and Time*. We have read them with great interest, and we shall look forward to their publication in book form.

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. by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

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.

Next Sunday (March 11) Mr. Cohen lectures in Birmingham. The Town Hall has been engaged, and as this is a very large building, capable of seating several thousands, we hope that all local friends will do their best to make the meeting a success. The meeting will be, of course, well advertised, but personal effort is very effective on such occasions, and those who would care to help in any way should apply to the Secretary, Mr. J. Partridge, 245, Shenstone Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham.

The timidity of many English Socialists where religion is concerned is well known to most people in England, and it has earned the contempt of the majority of advanced thinkers—in the Socialist and other movements—abroad. And now we seriously ask our readers' opinion of the following incident reported to us by one whose word we have no reason whatever for doubting. On a recent Sunday some copies of the *Freethinker* were exposed for sale at two I.L.P. meetings in Liverpool. The sight was too much for many of the members. At one of the meeting-places some threatened to resign if the paper was permitted to appear there again. At the other place a heated discussion took place at such an outrage on the susceptibilities of members, and by an overwhelming majority vote it was decided to burn all unsold copies. Really, if burning copies of this paper gives the Liverpool members of the I.L.P. any pleasure, we shall be pleased to quote them special terms for large quantities.

But, again, we ask our readers, and especially those who are Socialists, what is *their* opinion of conduct that even a great many Christians would be ashamed of? The state of mind disclosed by such conduct is more than pitiable, it is contemptible. And if that is the temper developed by the I.L.P. teaching and associations, what is its value as an instrument of social reform? We could feel some little respect for these people if we believed they were really Christians. But we do not believe they are. Their conduct is dictated by mental cowardice, which lacks even the pitiful justification of convinced religious belief. If Freethinking Socialists have any real respect for either their freethought or their Socialism, they will realize it is high time that they let their opinions be heard, and made their presence felt. If the I.L.P. does not wish to have Freethinkers in its ranks, it should have the decency to say so. A Socialism that bows before a bigotry such as that displayed in the above incident, and hands the directions of its mental life over to Sunday-school teachers, local preachers, and opportunist parsons, is, so far as any valuable reform is concerned, damned beyond the possibility of redemption For the present we leave the subject, again asking the Freethinking members of these two bodies what *they* have to say on the matter.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Lloyd had a very successful meeting at Nottingham on Sunday last. There was a well-filled hall, and, needless to say, the audience was delighted with the lecture. There was also a good discussion. We have good hopes of a very successful movement being founded at Nottingham. There are plenty of freethinkers there. All that is needed is their resolve to get on with the work.

The further restrictions on the importation of paper, with a still further rise in price, has initiated almost a revolution in the newspaper world. Some of the halfpenny papers are being raised to a penny, and penny ones to twopence. That is to be expected where the sole reason for maintaining a paper is a commercial one. But it is noteworthy of British public life that even this cannot be done without a display of cant. Some papers are frank enough to say that the price is raised because they can only be published at the old price at a loss. And that is a quite sufficient reason. But the *Times* discovers a *moral* reason for it. It is charging 2d. in order to reduce sales, and thus help the Government to save tonnage, is a spirit of pure patriotism. How much easier it

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would have been to save *all* the tonnage involved in producing the *Times* and suspend publication altogether.

For ourselves the outlook in the future is made the more serious by this new development, but we shall hope for the best. The *Freethinker* has no income from advertisements. (It is the falling off from this source that is chiefly responsible for the increased cost of newspapers, and not the rise in the price of paper). So we are free from anxiety on that head. But with paper three or four times the price the position is serious enough for a paper like the *Freethinker*, without capital and without reserves. Still we are determined to keep the *Freethinker* as it is, both as to size and price, so long as it can be done. And with the continued help of our readers we think it can be done. We shall shrink from neither hardship nor struggle. And every month we struggle through brings the War nearer to an end. And when the end does come the story of *how* we survived will make interesting reading.

We are asked to announce that on Wednesday, March 14, Mr. C. Saphin will lecture at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on "The Solar Origin of Christianity." The lecture will be illustrated by lantern slides, and admission will be free—with a collection. We do not know the time of the meeting, but we presume it will commence about 8 o'clock.

Mr. Israel Zangwill is to deliver the next Conway Memorial Lecture at South Place Chapel, Finsbury, on Thursday, March 8, at 6.30 p.m., the subject being "The Principles of Nationalities." Mr. Percy Alden, M.P., will preside, and admission will be free, except to a few reserved seats.

Mr. Edmond Selous writes to the *Daily Telegraph* of February 17 that his brother, the late Captain C. F. Selous, was a Darwinian evolutionist, and had no belief whatever in any creed, dogma, or revelation. Religion, as distinct from right conduct, did not enter into his thoughts, and he estimated men entirely by their characters.

"Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity."

A REVIEW OF DR. F. LEGGE'S BOOK.

BOOKS on Christian origins and on the Pagan and Jewish environment of Primitive Catholicism have been on the increase during recent years, though, of course, the War has lessened the amount of interest in the subject. The striking likenesses between Christianity and its religious rivals of the Roman Empire attracted the attention of independent thinkers so far back as the eighteenth century. Among the pioneer names of that date and of the earlier part of the last century those of Dupuis, Robert Taylor, and Godfrey Higgins are not the least noteworthy. At that time scattered notices in the writings of Christian Fathers and Pagan historians, poets, philosophers, and romancers comprised nearly all the data available for the student. The gaps in our knowledge of this particular past are still very great, and there is consequently a strong temptation to indulge in hasty generalizations and ill-grounded hypotheses. During the last half century thousands of inscriptions and bas-reliefs have been brought to light, which not only help us to fill in a considerable number of gaps, but have served to confirm the statements made by ancient writers.

In the light of these new discoveries, the problem of the rise of Christianity is being attacked with fresh vigour by many English and foreign scholars, who have made the cults of the Roman Empire their special study. Among the best recent works on the subject are Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, Cumont's *Oriental Religions in Modern Paganism*, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, and Legge's *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*.

It is with the last of these that this article is concerned. Dr. Legge's treatise, which is published by the Cambridge University Press, covers the period from 330 B.C. to A.D. 330. It is well worth a serious study, but the price (£1 5s.) puts it beyond the reach of most purses, especially in war-time.

The starting-point of Dr. Legge's investigations into ancient religious cults is Alexander the Great, and the profound changes, political and intellectual, brought about by his victories in the life of Egypt and Western Asia. The establishment of Greek as the *lingua franca* over so vast an area was not the least important. How greatly this assisted the progress of the Christian Church has been emphasized by historians and theologians time and again. Less attention has been drawn to the modifications of religious feeling and speculation resulting from the Alexandrian conquests. Among Polytheists the shifting fortunes of men are imagined to imply alternations of failure and success in the divine world. A conquering king is overshadowed by his conquering god, who reduces the divinities he has overthrown to the rank of servants or inferior allies. The rise of an empire is favourable to Monotheism, in the sense of a supernatural hierarchy culminating in a supreme providence, a king of kings and lord of lords. Of course, it does not follow that every god of the conquered will take a subordinate role in the pantheon of the conqueror. Another psychic tendency, which is probably quite as common as the first, is to identify deities whose attributes are similar. Among the philosophic few a lead is thus given to Monotheism, in the stricter sense, the doctrine that there is one God, whom men variously image and variously name, but who transcends every human conception. Some may even be induced to take the bolder step of Pantheism, which, indeed, is but an inconsistent form of Atheism, and the one God becomes resolved into the infinite substance of Nature, thinkable only under its myriad changing modes.

The fostering of a Monotheistic bias and the fusion of religious cults and creeds effected by the work of Alexander the Great are fully recognized by Dr. Legge. He further notes the growth of the spirit of proselytism, which necessarily flowed from the break-up of so many national and racial barriers, with the ideas that had depended on them. His own words are well worth quoting:—

> Before his coming we see the ancient world divided into separate communities, each with its own pantheon and forms of worship, and neither knowing nor caring greatly about those of its neighbours. But immediately after, all this is changed. The interchange of ideas between East and West has thrown the different religions of the world as it were into a melting-pot, in which the germs of a different grouping of the human race are dimly visible. The spirit of proselytism is abroad, and man now wants to impress his own ideas of the Divine upon his fellows.[1]

[1] Vol i., p. 26.

Dr. Legge may well declare, on the strength of these considerations, that "from the scientific point of view, there is none among the forerunners of Christianity who did more to prepare and make ready its way than Alexander."

A whole chapter, "The Alexandrian Divinities," is devoted to a delineation of the Egyptian cult of Osiris, or Serapis, and the goddess Isis, and to the modifications it underwent through the influence of Greek ideas. Our author deals, in a very lucid and interesting way, with its many resemblances to the less ancient Mysteries of Eleusis, which promoted the worship of Demeter, the

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goddess of the corn, her daughter Kore, and the babe Iacchos. Not less striking are the parallels between these cults and Christianity. The idea of a divine being slain by the powers of evil, or going down to the underworld and returning in triumph from the dead, is common to all three, and was, in fact, the central feature of those mystic religions of the Nearer East that were invading the Roman Empire at the time when the Christian Church was beginning to make headway. Dr. Legge, in drawing attention to the parallels between the Osirian cult and Christianity, discusses how far the latter may be held to have borrowed from the former. He denies the likelihood of any of the Christian doctrines having originated in this way, but admits the passage of numerous ritual elements from the worship of Osiris and Isis to that of Christ. He even goes so far as to surmize whether "the tenets of the Alexandrian religion may not have had some influence on the discussions which raged around the definition of the Divine nature and attributes at the earlier Ecumenical and other Councils of the Church. .....The conception of the Supreme Being as a triune god was a very old one in Egypt, and reappeared, as we have seen, unchanged in the worship of Serapis, Isis, and Horus."[1] But he holds that the "deepest influence that the Alexandrian religion exercised upon the Church was probably not direct, but through those scattered and heretical sects which, although finally condemned and anathemazed by her, yet ever acted as feelers by whom she obtained converts from among the heathen."[2]

To the extremely detailed study of these sects Dr. Legge now turns. They may be all summed up under the title of the "Gnostics," that is, the "Knowers," pretenders to a superhuman insight, not unlike the Theosophists of our own day. The Gnostics have been largely regarded hitherto as rebels against the Catholic Church; but, as a matter of fact, the first Gnostics were pre-Christian. They had much in common with Judaism, especially the less orthodox Judaism of the Dispersion, on the one hand, and with the Pagan Mystery Cults on the other. The New Testament contains many Gnostic ideas and terms, as well as protests, in the later books, against Gnosticism itself. The Gnostic doctrine of redemption, even the figure of the Gnostic Redeemer, may be traced to sources that lie quite outside historical Christianity. We may reasonably surmize, though Dr. Legge does not do so, that the identification of the Gnostic Redeemer with the Christ is due rather to Jewish than to Christian contacts. No one who has studied the phenomena of religious syncretism will deem it improbable that Christ, and even Jesus, were divine names, fraught with the conception of salvation, for some among the Pagans as well as the Jews before the advent of Jesus of Nazareth (assuming his historicity). As yet, however, we cannot demonstrate this.

Among the pre-Christian Gnostics, Dr. Legge ranks the followers of Simon Magus, the Essenes, and the Orphists. The last of these are traceable in ancient Greece at least as far back as the sixth century B.C. They based their teaching on forgeries attributed to the mythical Orpheus. Their system of moral culture was highly ascetic, purporting, by means of mystic sacraments and purificatory rites, to restore the human soul, after a long series of transmigrations, to the divine source from which it sprang. It had its dying and rising Saviour-God in Zagreus or Dionysus, with whom his worshippers sought to become one by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of a sacrificed goat or young bull.

In the chapters dealing with the post-Christian Gnostics, Dr. Legge considers the Ophites, the Valentinians, and the Marcionites, who clearly show the influence of the young Church. Many of the adherents of these sects did not entirely dissever their connection with Catholicism, for whose founders they generally expressed their veneration. The post-Christian movement, however, carries on the tradition of the pre-Christian, and is continuous with it in form as well as in spirit. Gnosticism, although a serious thorn in the Church's side, did her valuable service in acting as a medium with Paganism. The ceremonial of Gnosticism, such as the use of religious statuary, was, in large measure, only an anticipation of what Catholicism did in the heyday of its triumph.

I have no space here to do more than draw attention to the two excellent chapters in which Dr. Legge deals with "The Worship of Mithras" and "Manes and the Manichæans." The former religion, which came nearer to Christianity in its theology, its worship, and its ethic than did any of the other Mystery Cults, seemed at one time likely to become the established religion of the Roman Empire. Its decline was due, in no small measure, to the weakness of its organization.

The last great rival of Christianity was Manichæism, which, spreading rapidly from its birthplace in Persia, fought a persistent battle with the Church for a century or so; nor did it finally succumb until late in the Middle Ages. Manichæism was the only religion of the Roman Empire to possess a highly centralized organization like that of Catholicism, the Manichæan "president" of Babylon (later on, of Samarkand) corresponding to the Christian bishop of Rome. In this, no doubt, lies the explanation of its greater tenacity, as compared with other Pagan cults. The sociological lesson of the fortunes of the creeds shoud not be lost on Freethinkers. The form of a movement or a society is no less important than its objects and its spirit.

Dr. Legge avoids theological disputations, and leaves us somewhat in the dark as to his exact intellectual position. But the whole tone of his work is decidedly humanist, and his researches are conceived and carried out along thoroughly scientific lines. Dr. Legge significantly remarks that "if, *per impossible*, we could approach the origins of Christianity with the same mental detachment and freedom from prejudice with which we might examine" other religions, "we should probably find that the Primitive Church had no need of the miraculous powers which were once assigned as the reason for her gradual and steady advance to all but universal dominion."[1] This alleged impossible feat the Freethinker has actually accomplished. For him Christianity, like other religions, is a human product, and not a superhuman portent; and he is thus far more open to the arguments of men like Dr. Legge than any theologian can ever be.

A. D. Howell Smith.

[1] Vol. i., p. 88.
[2] Vol. i., p. 89.

[1] Vol. i., p. 361.

The French Revolution.

V.

Democracy Militant.

(Continued from p. 125.)

The Convention now addressed itself to another burning question, the fate of Louis XVI. The democratic party throughout France looked upon Louis as a traitor caught red-handed, and demanded his trial. A new batch of papers was found in a secret cupboard in the palace, and supplied the Government with fresh evidence of his treason, revealing the secret correspondence with Mirabeau etc., and corroborating the fact (if corroboration had been needed) of the King's collusion with the

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enemies of his country. After long discussion, it was decided to try Louis before the Convention itself. He appeared at the Bar on December 11. The preliminaries, with the prosecution and defence, dragged on over many days. The Girondists, though just as convinced of Louis' guilt as the "Montagnards," were snobbishly shy of regicide, and tried several shifts to get the King off. They proposed, among other things, to take a referendum of all France on the question of the penalty! Finally the Convention decided to take three votes: (1) On the King's guilt, (2) on the proposal for a referendum, and (3), if the referendum were rejected, on the penalty. Louis was pronounced guilty *nem. con.* The referendum was refused by a large majority. Finally, sentence of death was voted by a narrow majority of 387 to 334. The leading Girondists, who had striven hard to shirk the issue, voted for death when it came to the point. On January 21, 1793, Louis XVI. died by the guillotine. The Royalists continued to form projects of rescue up to the last moment. After the execution, one of the members who had voted for death, Lepelletier St. Fargeau, was shot by a Royalist in a cafe. He was given a great funeral, and reckoned as a martyr for the Revolution.

The execution of Louis XVI. destroyed the last possibility of reconciliation between the majority of the Convention and the Royalists, and, in this way, no doubt, it prolonged the life of the Republic. At the same time, it precipitated war with England: the English Government under Pitt was already alienated by the French annexation of Belgium, the opening of the river Scheldt contrary to treaty, and the "war on the world" resolution already mentioned. On learning of the King's execution, the French ambassador in London was given his passports. Holland and Spain also joined the coalition against France.

So long as the Republic appeared to be safe from invasion, the Girondist party continued in power, though damaged in prestige by the attitude it had cut at the King's trial. The "Mountain's" attacks on it were as yet only desultory, and mainly in retaliation for Girondist attacks on them. The serious opposition to the Government came from the democracy of Paris, by whom the Girondists were now thoroughly hated as social reactionaries and as political twisters. The working-class wanted to know when those measures of economic relief were coming, for which they had waited in vain for four years. The high price of living grew more and more intolerable, being aggravated now by war conditions. Agitators in the "sections," or ward-meetings, demanded the fixing of a maximum price for corn, demanded measures against profit-mongers and speculators, and abused the Government. These views, bordering on Socialism, were echoed by the municipality of Paris, which had been lately re-elected, and by Marat in his old *L'Ami du Peuple*, which had changed its title to that of *Journal de la Republique*. On February 25, after the Girondists had opposed a State grant to meet the distress in Paris, Marat wrote an article to the effect that, if the rights of the people were not an empty phrase, the forestallers of food-stuffs should be hanged at the doors of their shops for causing thousands to perish of want. A riot occurred, in which some shops were pillaged by the poor. The Girondist party attacked Marat in the Convention and called for his arrest, but dared not proceed further. Similar agitation occurred at Lyons, the second great manufacturing town of France.

Soon after this the war took again an unfavourable turn. General Dumouriez, who had never ceased to be a Monarchist at heart, was meditating treason against the Republic. At the beginning of March he allowed the Austrians to win a victory. Danton, who had been to Belgium to take stock of the situation, returned to Paris with an evil report. At the same time the peasants of La Vendee rose against the Revolution. The immediate cause of this was a new levy of 300,000 men for the Army. It has already been mentioned that the south and west of France did not yet feel the pressure of the war. This was particularly so in La Vendee and Brittany, where the peasants were fervent Catholics, with no love for the Revolution. When the levy was announced they rose, led by their priests, and began massacring all Republicans, constitutional clergy, and enemies of the Church that they could find. Thus the Republic was faced with civil war as well as foreign war.

Worse was to come. On April 3, Dumouriez replied to a commission sent to him by the Convention, by arresting the commissioners and handing them over to the Austrians. He then tried to induce his army to march on Paris and restore the monarchy, and failing in this, rode over to the Austrians with his staff. The Republic seemed, once again, to be beset with treason on every side.

The Convention was now forced to bestir itself. The men of the "Marsh," who were patriotic and not only Conservative, turned against the Girondists, who could do nothing but pursue their party feud while France was in danger. A new Revolutionary Tribunal was created, composed of judges and jurymen nominated by the Convention, to try traitors. To supervise the Ministry, and make the Government really responsible to the Convention, a Committee of Public Safety was elected, from which the Girondist party was excluded, and which became, for practical purposes, a Cabinet. Danton was the principal member. This step (April, 1793), marks the transference of political power to those who put the winning of the war first and foremost. It was also decreed that a maximum price should be fixed for corn, and that a compulsory loan and a highly graduated income tax should be imposed to raise money for the war. All these measures were carried in the teeth of Girondist opposition.

The party scored one last outward success. They demanded and carried, in April, an order of arrest against Marat for the article about forestallers already referred to. He was sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal; but, although that Tribunal as yet consisted of more or less moderate men, he was acquitted. The people carried him in triumph back to the Convention.

For some time democratic Paris had made up its mind that no trust was to be placed in the Convention so long as the Girondists had power to obstruct measures of public safety and essential reforms in the name of empty theories. The "sections" had begun to petition the Convention from time to time to decree the arrest and detention of twenty-two principal members of the party, including Brissot, the leader, Vergniaud, the ablest speaker, Petion, Buzot, Barbaroux, and others. The municipality of Paris and the Jacobins' Club (now entirely under the influence of Robespierre) associated themselves with these petitions. The Girondists induced the Convention to decree the formation of a Commission of Twelve, packed by their own party, to investigate the actions of the municipality. The Commission ordered the arrest of Hebert, a leading member and official of the municipality, and a working-class agitator named Varlet. This set the match to the straw. Varlet was a popular exponent of social reforms, such as the limitation of landlordism, and the confiscation of "unearned increment," which are now commonplaces of Radicalism, though, in those days, they in-

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spired incredible terror and alarm. Hebert, a much less pleasant individual, edited a periodical called "Pere Duchesne." A sort of Bottomley of the Revolution, Hebert made it his business to "give the public what it wanted," and, like our modern commercial journalists, took the line of playing down to the lower tastes of his readers, interlarding his articles with the vilest slang of the gutter, and achieving circulation at the expense of dignity and decency. Though no Socialist, and, indeed, nothing but an easy-going fellow out for popularity, Hebert was feared by the Girondists, and arrested along with Varlet. Deputations from the "sections" forthwith demanded their release and the abolition of the Commission. The President of the Convention, Isnard, the most pig-headed and rancorous of the Girondist party, replied with a threat that if any violence were attempted against the representatives of the nation, "Paris would be destroyed, and the traveller would have to ask on which side of the Seine it had stood."

More than once in the Revolution it was proved that to threaten the people of Paris with awful penalties, if they did a certain thing, was the surest way to induce them to do it. The "sections" now openly prepared for a new insurrection. The release of Hebert, conceded under pressure, no longer satisfied them. Robespierre and the "Montagnard" deputies, who had hitherto stood aloof, now threw themselves into the movement. Robespierre detested Marat, Hebert, and the semi-Socialist agitation which they voiced, but was willing to support them against the Girondists for reasons of his own, which will appear later. On May 30, the delegates from the "sections" took their places in the municipal council, which became thus an insurrectionary body, and sounded the alarm bell. At this time-honoured signal for action the armed populace collected, and in the course of May 31 surrounded the Convention hall, and pointed cannon at the building. The Convention had to suppress the Commission of Twelve, and the Girondists escaped arrest for that day. But Marat and the "sections" were not content. They wanted to make sure of the business by breaking the Girondist party once and for all. Roland (who had resigned from the Ministry some time ago) and his wife were ordered to be arrested. Roland had fled, but Madame Roland was committed to prison. On June 2 the "sections" again surrounded the Convention, demanding the resignation or expulsion of the twenty-two chief Girondists. News had just come from Lyons that the wealthy classes in that city had seized the upper hand and crushed the workers, as the Girondists had wished to do in Paris; and the Parisians were taking no chances. Threatened by the "sections" and their cannon, the Convention decreed that the obnoxious members, and those who had formed part of the Commission of Twelve, thirty-one in all, should be excluded from its sittings, and put under guard in their own houses. Three were exempted at the last moment by the intercession of Marat—moderate in the hour of his victory. That there was no intention of taking the lives of the Girondists is proved by the fact that several "Montagnards" offered to give themselves up as hostages to the constituents of those members who were arrested. This offer was refused by the Girondists, who had no intention of allowing any compromise of the kind.

Those who regard a representative Assembly, however faultily elected, as the incarnation of democracy, will look upon the proceedings of May 31 to June 2, 1793, as an outrage on democracy. Yet let us submit these theories to the test of facts. The Convention was far from being a democratically elected Parliament. Theoretically there was manhood suffrage; practically, the system was that the people in each department of France elected an intermediate body, who, in turn, elected the deputies to the Convention. This obviously put a spoke in the wheel of popular representation, and was equivalent to "plural voting" and "co-option" at their very worst. Democracy, *i.e.*, the accurate reflection of the general will in an elected body, can seldom or never be perfectly achieved; but to arrive at it even approximately, that body must be elected by the *direct* votes of *all* men and (as most modern democrats, at least, hold) of *all* women in the territory concerned, and preferably by proportional representation. From this point of view the events of May and June, 1793, are not a violation of democracy, but a rude, yet effective, example of direct democratic pressure brought to bear on an undemocratic Assembly.

Robert Arch.

(To be continued.)

Thought for the Morrow.

Our always lively contemporary, *Business* (a Monthly devoted to the Insurance Business), writes as follows on "Clericalism":—

> We have published in *Business* during the last few years a large number of paragraphs relating to the Wills of obscure clergymen, who have left huge sums of money. It is a popular belief that the clergy are poor, in view of their constant cadging—an art in which they excel. That belief is not based on fact. As a class, they are the richest professional men in England. It is the *Curates* who do the drudgery of the Parish Priest, and are unmercifully pinched by their bloated "nigger" drivers. These shorn lambs have no money for insurance, but their employers have, and plenty of it. Go for them, Mr. Agent. Dig a trench round them. They are always open to a good investment. Times are hard, but poverty does not afflict clergymen. The following advertisement indicates a curious appreciation of the realities of the present day in a country parsonage (says *Truth*):—
>
> > WANTED, December 15, Upper Housemaid and to Mend Lady's things; used to valuable china: *two* in family; *five* servants, including Under Housemaid; £30.—Mrs. de Kilpeck, Rectory, Corfe Castle, Dorset.
>
> A clergyman who can afford to keep six servants is obviously in a fit position to take out a policy to meet death dues, and there are thousands in the same position of affluence. And why not ask Bishops to increase *their* life assurance? They thoroughly believe in the system. The Bishop of London is a bachelor, but he may have poor relations, or may wish to provide a fund for the conversion of the Germans! Anyhow, they are all rolling in wealth. It is on record that 39 Archbishops and Bishops annually share £180,700 between them. They suggest that they spend their money in the upkeep of the dignity of their positions. That suggestion is not borne out by facts, as revealed in the Wills of departed Bishops. Twelve of these self-sacrificing heroes left a total of over half-a-million. Obviously, clericalism is a splendid field for the wide-awake agent, who can summon moral courage enough, and who understands ecclesiastical formulæ, to work this lucrative profession. Who will undertake it?

We are surprised that the editor of *Business* should look on the clergy as likely game for insurance agents. Their creed is to take no thought for the morrow, and to trust in a Providence which knows whenever a sparrow falls to the ground. Still, it is just possible that in these degenerate days some may indulge in an insurance policy—in case the attention of Providence happens to wander.

The brain of man is Jove's eagle and his lightning on earth—the title to majesty henceforth.—*George Meredith.*

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National Secular Society.

Report of Executive Meeting held on February 22.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, occupied the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Brandes, Gorniot, Leat, Lazarnick, Neate, Neary, Quinton, Roger, Thurlow, Miss Kough, Miss Pankhurst, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for the Kingsland, Liverpool, North London, and South London Branches, and for the Parent Society.

A further letter from the L.C.C., declining to accede to the Executive's request for a permit for the sale of literature during the coming season, was reported, and it was resolved to inquire on what grounds the Council now withdrew a permit held continuously by the Society from the first issue.

Arrangements were made for outdoor propaganda in London, and, in view of the heavy losses in speakers and workers occasioned by the War, it was resolved to recommend each Branch, whilst in no sense abating its efforts, to restrain itself to one meeting per day.

The usual circular notifying Branches of the Annual Conference on Whit-Sunday, May 27, was ordered to be sent out.

Mr. Cohen's recent visit to Manchester and other internal matters were discussed at some length.

The affiliation fee to the Secular Education League was ordered to be paid.

E. M. Vance, *General Secretary*.

LIKELY!

A recruit in one of the training camps vouches for the truth of the following:

One morning a squad of recruits were learning to ride on horseback. They were slow and awkward beyond the usual, and the Sergeant acting as Riding Instructor grew more and more irritable, rapidly exhausting the common stock of expressions and expletives used in the Army, as well as ordinary language.

Finally, he gave a stentorian "Halt!" and when the raw stuff had brought their horses to a standstill, he eyed them in silence, his eyes rolling and his moustache bristling. For a moment it seemed as if he would choke instead of speak, then he calmed himself and said: "My Gawd! If Christ rode into Jerusalem the way you have ridden this morning, I don't wonder at the Jews crucifying him!"

MODERN.

A Sunday-school teacher in the East End of London tells the following anecdote:

The school is run on modern lines, and one method adopted is to call upon a pupil to stand before the class and recapitulate the lesson, or tell a Bible story in his own words. A boy was engaged doing the latter, his subject being Abram offering up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. The scholar proceeded fluently, the attention of the class was kept, and though his language was idomatic and even racy, he went on so well that the teacher refrained from comment or interference.

The story drew near its end. Every eye in the class was rivetted on the reciter, every ear listened carefully. With a slight gesture the lad concluded: "And Abram heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Abram, Abram, lay not thy hand upon the lad. God was only swanking.'"

Obituary.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. E. Fulcher, an old member of the West Ham Branch N. S. S. He was at one time an alderman of the local Council, and did good work for Labour and Freethought. He was one of the most ardent supporters of the late Mr. Keir Hardie in politics, and Mr. G. W. Foote in Secularism. Many old residents of the neighbourhood will have pleasant recollections of Mr. Fulcher's universal goodwill and manner.

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, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "The Teachings of Samuel Butler." Introduced by H. J. Stenning.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, Open Debate, "Is the Bible Worth Preserving?" Introduced by J. R. Duncanson, affirmative.

Mr. Howell Smith's Discussion Class (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, March 1, at 7.30.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Kells; 6.30, Messrs. Shaller and Yates.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Leicester (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate); 6.30, Thirty-sixth Anniversary of the Opening of the Hall.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): 7, J. Hammond, "Spiritist Absurdities."

MR. ISRAEL ZANGWILL will deliver the Eighth Conway Memorial Lecture at South Place Chapel, Finsbury, on Thursday, March 8, at 6.30 p.m., the subject being "The Principle of Nationalities." Mr. Percy Alden, M.P., will preside. Admission free; reserved seats 1s. each, to be obtained from the R. P. A., Ltd., Nos. 5 and 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C. (by post 1s. 1d.).

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Views and Opinions.

The Vitality of Lies.

Last week we wrote on the impossibility of perpetually suppressing the truth. It will only serve to keep the balance true if we dwell this week upon the persistency of a legend and the vitality of a lie. In a sense they are two sides of the same thing. All history shows how difficult it is to kill a legend, and daily experience proves that if we once give a lie ten minutes start it will take truth ten years—or more—to overtake it. And if the lie chimes with a current prejudice or prevalent expectation the chase is likely to be a long one. It is thus that every legend brings its cloud of witnesses. In the days of belief in witchcraft one could find plenty of witnesses who had seen old women careering through the air on broomsticks. In the opening months of the War thousands of people *saw* a Russian army pass through Britain on its way to France. It is hard to kill a lie when it is of the ordinary kind; when it is a religious lie it as nearly achieves immortality as is possible to any human creation.

* * *

France and the Revival of Religion.

Want of space prevented our noticing last week an article in the *Daily Chronicle*, by Major Redmond, M.P., on "The Great Revival (of Religion) in France." After being a year with the Army in France, Major Redmond is convinced that there has been "at least one beneficial result from the War. It has led to the revival of religion in a most remarkable way." Concerning England, the Major is content to observe that "everyone is agreed on this," and that "it is apparent in a hundred directions." One wonders who "everyone is." Many of the clergy deny it flatly. They lament that the expected revival has not occurred. Church congregations have certainly not increased in numbers. Soldiers home from the Front do not appear more religious than when they went out. We have published testimonies from scores of people, chaplains, soldiers, and writers who have testified that religion is undergoing an eclipse at the Front. Who are the soldiers who are becoming religious? Where is the revival in civil life? Major Redmond says he has seen it. So did our forefathers see witches travelling through the air. So did our contemporaries see a Russian army travelling through Britain. It is not at all difficult to see things—if one makes up one's mind that they shall be seen.

* * *

Evidence that is not Proof.

It would be unfair to Major Redmond to say that he does not produce evidence. He does; and it is of the usual religious variety. He finds it in France. Some of the French clergy have found the revival in England. And there is the same suspicious circumstance in either case. The miracle occurs where the writer's audience is not. It is the homage paid by legend to reality. So Major Redmond goes to France to discover something which French writers have failed to observe. He says:—

> To those who have been brought to France by the War the manifestations of religion everywhere displayed have come more or less as a surprise, especially to those who had been led to believe from the action of many successive French Governments that the Church was more or less a thing of the past in France. It is hard, of course, to judge of the real depth or intensity of religious feeling, but all one can say is that if this can be done by noticing the attendance at church, then the religion of France is to-day very true and very sincere.

Major Redmond also speaks of the bravery shown by French priests (he says that over 2,000 have been killed), and of the devotion shown by people at church services, etc. It should be noted, however, that the French priests have been killed because the French Government will not permit the priestly garb to serve as a reason for exemption, and because in France *all* citizens, lay and cleric, have the same duties and responsibilities. The French State is a Secular State, as the French State schools are secular schools.

* * *

A Biased Witness.

If one wanted proof of Major Redmond's unfitness for judging the effect of the War on French religious, or anti-religious opinion, it is supplied in the passage cited. Everyone who knows France is aware that the majority of French people are still professedly Catholic—particularly in the villages and country districts. Probably about a fifth of the nation are Freethinkers, although in disestablishing the Church in France this minority would have had the support of many others who saw both the injustice of a State religion, and the actual danger to the State the Church had been. Naturally a visitor to France—and one whose service with the British Army would have, of necessity, kept him away from the large cities — would have found many evidences of the existence of religious belief. And with equal certainty he would have seen the religion of the more superstitious peasantry and provincials intensified by the disasters which have overtaken France. The same cause which stimulated the mental activities of the educated and intelligent would, at the same time,

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numb the minds of the less educated, the less intelligent, and the naturally superstitious. This is all that Major Redmond's evidence amounts to. If he saw more, it was because he went ready to see more. If he was surprised at seeing this much, it is evidence only of how little he understood either the French character or the position of affairs in France in relation to religion.

* * *

Anti-Clericalism and Freethought.

Now, it is very likely that, so far as mere anti-clerical feeling is concerned, some Frenchmen may have had their bitterness toward the clergy toned down by discovering worthy men under the priest's robe. And if that is the case, it is all so much to the good. But to talk of this, or to see in this a great revival of religion, is downright absurdity. And may not this discovery be, so far as Major Redmond is concerned, a mare's nest? If he has been under the delusion that every Freethinker must regard every priest as a scoundrel, he will naturally view the discovery that a Freethinker will treat a priest who proves himself a good man with consideration and respect as epoch-marking. Freethought does not depend for its existence upon there being bad priests, nor can it be killed by every priest becoming a paragon of goodness and courage. A Freethought which depended upon the character of the clergy for its being would not be worth having. Whether English or French, Freethought is quite independent of the character of those who profess a faith in religion. The character of believers, the peculiarity of their mental processes, may be used to point a moral, but it has nothing to do with the development of Freethought. People did not give up the belief in witchcraft because they believed that those who upheld it were cowards, or liars, or rogues; but because their own mental growth had carried them beyond the stage of a belief in broomstick-travelling old women. And that principle holds good of every phase of the relation between Freethought and religion.

* * *

French and English.

To imagine that French Freethought, with its army of brilliant intellects, from Voltaire to Anatole France, rested upon whether clergymen were good men or bad ones, is a notion that could only live for five minutes in the brains of a man who lacked all comprehension of the meaning of Freethought, or of the historic and mental processes by which religion is outgrown. And such a notion is supremely ridiculous when we are dealing with the French intellect. For it is one of the most logical and the most fearless in Europe. It is never afraid of its conclusions, never afraid of pushing ideas to their logical issues. It is these features which, in spite of lapses, has kept France Republican since 1789. They enabled it to deal with the Dreyfus case in a way which converted what threatened to be a national disaster into a cause of national strength. It is this directness of thought, this ability to look clearly at the logical issue of a controversy, that makes the French people the most practical in Europe. They are very practical because they do not neglect the things of the mind. They do not neglect the things of the mind because they are practical. This the average Englishman, with his rooted distrust of intellectual processes and his eternal fumbling after a compromise, cannot and will not understand. And the result is, that he prides himself on being less "flighty"—or, to use Major Redmond's phrase, "impressionable"—when in reality he is afflicted with mental timidity, and more practical, all the time that his dislike to logical issues leads for generations to the delay of much-needed reforms.

Our Freethinking Ally.

Perhaps a powerful factor in the situation is that while the nation with a Christianity nearest our own is our bitterest enemy in this War, and has distinguished itself by every possible brutality, the nation with which we are in closest alliance has for years been associated with the strongest manifestations of Freethought. France is a secular State. It has no religion in its Constitution; it has no religion in the schools. Its best brains in art, in science, in politics, are definitely freethinking. And what are British Christians to do? Before the War they were pointing out that the new generation of Frenchmen were degenerate because they had been brought up in "godless" schools. French politics was corrupt, because it had no State Church. The French were "decadent"; hence their rejection of religion. The War came, and showed France as healthy, as great, as ever. What were the pietists to do? They dared not say they were wrong; that they were merely lying for the greater glory of God. And yet some explanation must be found. At length it was discovered. There had been a great revival of religion in France. That accounted for everything. And the story does account for a deal. It shows that Christian tactics, whether a nation be at war or at peace, remains the same. It is no wonder that even believers talk of "Christian truth." There is certainly something about "truth" as told in the interest of Christianity which deserves to be distinguished from that which passes under that category.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Faith.

FAITH is a word to which are attached many different and divergent meanings, though, primarily, in most languages, it signifies honesty, veracity, reliableness, trustworthiness. In Biblical Hebrew, for example, the primary sense of the term is retained throughout. Even in the famous passage (Habakkuk ii. 4), "The just shall live by his faith," a more accurate rendering would be, "The righteous shall remain alive by his faithfulness." In short, faith in the sense of trust or belief in God as the sole condition of salvation, does not occur in the Old Testament at all. On entering the New Testament, however, we find that the signification of faith has undergone a decided change. The Gospel Jesus began his public ministry with this declaration: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark i. 15). Here the literal rendering would be, "Have faith in the Gospel." In the Epistles, also, faith is represented as an act of the mind, with God or Christ as its object. In several passages (Gal. iii. 26; 1 Tim. iii. 13) the expression is "Faith in Christ Jesus." In the Pauline Epistles faith is spoken of as the only condition of salvation. In the Pastoral Epistles we get nearer still to the conception of faith for which the orthodox Church has always contended. It denotes the assent and consent of the mind to the truth of the Christian Gospel, trust in, and reliance upon, the finished work of the Redeemer; or a whole-hearted acceptance of, and confidence in, the Christian creed. This is also the meaning of the term in the Epistle of Jude or Judas. The readers are solemnly enjoined "to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints," and to build themselves up on their most holy faith. Beyond a doubt, by faith here is to be understood the sum total of what early Christians verily believed. It was their bounden duty to defend what had been delivered to them once for all, to defend it in argument as well as in conduct, and to recommend it to their

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fellow-beings as worthy of all acceptation. Jude has in mind those who oppose the Gospel as unworthy of credence, "denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ." This is admitted by so advanced a thinker as Dr. Fort Newton, minister-elect of the City Temple, in a notable sermon which appeared in the *Christian Commonwealth* for February 28. Dr. Newton says:—

> Let us never forget that Christianity is first, last, and always a faith. It may be a philosophy, a philanthropy, a prophecy, but it rests on a great adventure of soul, a grand affirmation. So does science, as Huxley has told us. So does philosophy, as Spencer admits.

We have no quarrel with that definition of Christianity, faith in which is, indeed, a great adventure of the mind. Christianity stands before us as an object of belief or disbelief, and both belief and disbelief are equally intellectual attitudes. But Dr. Newton cannot refrain from calumniating unbelievers falsely on moral grounds. He observes:—

> Here, as always when the word faith is used in the Bible, the emphasis is moral, and in no sense ecclesiastical or dogmatic. Manifestly it is not a dogma but a devotion, the covenant with purity, the citadel of all the sanctities of the moral and spiritual life. The enemies named are not heretics who may use other words than our own, but "filthy dreamers," who defile all things holy, turning even the grace of God into lasciviousness; men professing the faith with unctuous words, but living like brute beasts. Always the real Atheists are not those who deny our idea of God as unworthy or unequal to the facts, but those practical Atheists who pollute the pieties of life to the service of their own greed or lust.

As a matter of fact, the opponents of the faith in Jude's day were heretics. In the estimation of believers the sin of sins has ever been unbelief or denial. Whether within or without the Church, unbelievers in the Lord Jesus must be denounced in the most scathing terms obtainable. Of course, it is taken for granted that they are dishonest and wicked, that the love of truth is not in them, that they have sold themselves to the Devil, that there is no depth of iniquity into which they cannot descend, and that nothing awaits them but everlasting confusion and shame; but the fountain out of which flows the river of their filth and foul iniquity is their denial of "our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." Tennyson speaks of "honest doubt," in which "there lives more faith, believe me, than in half the creeds," but in Jude's opinion, doubters blossomed into deniers, who are "hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved for ever." Exceedingly eloquent is that delineation of the character and deeds of deniers of the Saviour God; but it is a purely fanciful picture of people whom the writer hated and despised simply because they did not share his faith.

Dr. Newton declares that not only is Christianity a faith, but also that it is a faith for which we must fight. The natural inference is that the faith is in danger; but why should it be in danger if it is in harmony with reason? The reverend gentleman avers that it is not opposed to reason, but is reason's basis and inspiration. And yet he admits that its final appeal is not to mortal reason, but to "a Reason greater and wiser than our own." In other words, the Christian religion is neither the basis nor the inspiration of reason, but its systematic ignorer. The claim made on its behalf is that it infinitely transcends the reason, and that, therefore, we have no right to sit in judgment upon it. Such a claim is the most ridiculous that can be advanced, because our reason is the only standard of judgment known to us, that "greater and wiser Reason than our own" being purely a theological invention. We maintain, then, that the great enemy of the faith is the human reason, of which Atheism is merely the offspring. Dr. Newton's conception of Atheism is utterly irrational, being false. Listen:—

> An Atheist, if such there be, is an orphan, a waif, wandering in the midnight streets of time, homeless, and alone. Atheism, indeed, is seldom more than a revulsion from superstition, a protest against an unworthy idea of God, the dark side of a great positive mind in the negative side of faith.

Concerning that statement the only inference we can draw is that its source was abysmal ignorance. Moderate acquaintance with Freethought literature would have rendered such an assertion absolutely impossible. It is true that Atheism is a revulsion from superstition, but it is also true that there are hundreds of thousands of people in whose sight Dr. Newton's New Theology is as fully superstitious as the Old Theology. What Atheists reject is, not this or that dogma, not this or that idea of God, whether noble or ignoble, but supernaturalism, as such, in whatever guise presented. It evidently pleases the reverend gentleman to call them orphans or waifs, "wandering in the midnight streets of time, homeless and alone"; but he forgets that it is Christians who are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," while Atheists claim Earth as their mother, in whose presence they feel quite at home, studying her laws, learning her ways, and looking upon themselves as brothers and sisters, whose one duty it is to love and serve one another. They live in and for time, while Christians profess to be preparing to live in an unknown eternity, when time is no more. Yes, it is Christians who roam, far from home, along the midnight streets of time.

Dr. Newton draws an imaginary line of demarcation between Atheism and Materialism, defining the latter as "the dread denial which would eraze, as with a sponge, all the idealisms, optimisms, and aspirations of humanity," "this horror of great darkness," according to which "all mind, all will, all emotion, all character, all love, is incidental, transitory, vain." Here, again, the preacher makes a pitiable exhibition of his unfathomable ignorance of his subject. The Materialism he describes exists alone in his own brain, and against those who are supposed to affect it he is guilty of bearing glaringly false witness. All things earthly are transitory in their relation to individuals, and yet seemingly endless as related to the race. Dr. Newton conveniently ignores this distinction. Atheists have their idealisms, aspirations, and some of them even optimisms, as well as Christians, with this difference, that Atheist idealisms and aspirations are on behalf of the race as it exists on this earth, and not for individuals as they may exist in some other sphere. We, too, walk by faith, but it is faith in the uniformities of Nature, and in the glorious possibilities already latent in humanity; and, as we walk, our faith is being gradually transformed into knowledge. We admit, with pride, that Atheism does obscure, and would annihilate, the Cross in which Christendom has hitherto professionally gloried, but it tends to strengthen and deepen the love of man for man, and to kindle in every breast a passion for making some contribution, however slight, to the common weal.

We do not believe that Dr. Newton intentionally misrepresents his opponents, but we do hold that he has no right to condemn them on entirely erroneous information; and his guilt is not cancelled, nor in any degree even lessened, by his ignorance.

J. T. Lloyd.

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Most Unnatural History.

In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text.—*Shakespeare.*
Learning is good, but common sense is better.—*G. W. Foote.*

THOMAS CARLYLE, probably prompted by an unusually severe attack of dyspepsia, once drew upon his recollection of Shakespeare, and described man as a "two-forked radish." The term was more critical than accurate, and it would not have won the approval of scholarly Charles Darwin, or even of doubting Thomas Huxley. Yet Carlyle erred in most distinguished company, for if the Deity, who, it is alleged, inspired or wrote the Bible, could not recollect accurately such an elementary fact as that the whale is not a fish, although he is supposed to have made millions of them, there is every excuse for the sage of Chelsea.

Curiously, the writers of the Bible were most inaccurate, and were as careless of facts as politicians and Christian Evidence lecturers. They frankly contradicted themselves, and, when bankrupt of ideas, simply copied a passage written elsewhere in the same book and filled the vacancy. They frequently said the thing which was not, but their crowning glory was their knowledge of natural history, which was peculiar and extensive. Their mathematics would disgrace fourth-form schoolboys, their history was almost entirely imaginary, but their excursions into zoology were nearly too funny for words.

Wordsworth has told us that "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." And this reminds us that there is such an astonishing discrepancy between the zoological conclusions of earnest students of nature and the so-called science of the Oriental writers of the Bible. The consideration of this difference affords us material for a few genial comments, entirely free from that acrimony so often imported unnecessarily into the writings of theologians.

In natural history proper not the veriest tyro, the most myopic bungler, would confound the hare with the ruminants. Yet dear religious folk would have us believe that the creator of Linnæus blundered about the hare chewing the cud, and fondly imagine that the maker of Cuvier wrote delirious jargon about clean beasts and dirty beasts. As a fact, it was actually reserved for mere worms of the dust like Buffon, Lamarck, and Darwin, to clear out the Augean stable of the divine ignorance, and to create the science anew.

Æsop and Bidpai, Phædrus and La Fontaine have assured us that everything talks from a potato-bug to a hairdresser. Even the taciturn tape-worm unfolds itself when in liquor. From their animated descriptions there appears to be an international esperanto. Surely the writers of the Bible could have effected the capture of the various animals as simply as sparrows are captured by salting their tales. A few minutes private conversation would then have verified the accuracy, or otherwise, of their extremely entertaining unnatural history, and thus saved commentators much ink and more headaches.

"Wild beasts used once to roam at will through the whole of England, but now very wild beasts are only found in theological gardens," wrote a juvenile writer. And "very wild beasts" are to be found in the sacred volume. Where else can you find a talking snake, a lodging-house whale, or a pigeon co-respondent? Where else are the fiery serpents, the dragons, the cockatrice, and the worm that never dies? Where, other than in the sacred zoological collection, are the bedevilled pigs, the four-legged fowls, the unicorn, the cherubim, the ventriloquial donkey of Balaam, and the menagerie of the Apocalypse? Even the "human beings" in the Bible act most strangely. Adam and Eve start life at full age. The lives of the patriarchs ran into centuries, and some fortunate persons had two funerals apiece. Some were so magnificently developed that ordinary folk looked like grasshoppers beside them. Among such a collection of "freaks" it is remarkable that cats are nowhere mentioned. Maybe the third person of the Trinity, that sacred dove, had an objection to that animal. The Bible menagerie likewise boasts of horses of fire which carried Elijah to heaven. There is also Aaron's rod that turns into a serpent and swallows other snakes. The leviathan, mentioned in "Job," is a wonderful creature, with its "comely proportions," its firework "neesings," and organs of vision "like the eyelids of the morning." And what is to be said of the kind-hearted raven who brought refreshments to the prophet Elijah? The Biblical menagerie is unique, there is nothing like it on earth.

These nonsensical ideas emanate from the Bible, and of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have issued from the brains of theologians, this volume is one of the most remarkable. And the work which Freethinkers have set themselves is that of freeing their fellows from the absurdities of pre-scientific times, which are perpetuated by this fetish book. To class the Bible as a book of ordered knowledge is the last word in absurdity. It is a Salmagundi of riotous, exuberent, Oriental imagination. If people would only read the volume instead of worshipping it, such absurd veneration would be impossible. The first stage in the religious road to ruin is to regard such a comedy of errors as the truth and nothing but the truth. If the Bible had not been associated with a heavily endowed system of superstition, it would, centuries ago, have been consumed to nothingness in the echoless temple of universal science.

MIMNERMUS.

Science and Spiritualism.

Whoever seriously thinks that superhuman beings have ever given our race information as to the aim of its existence and that of the world, is still in his childhood. There is no other revelation than the thoughts of the wise.—*Schopenhauer, "Religion and Other Essays,"* p. 117.

When science appeals to uniform experience, the spiritualist will retort, "How do you know that a uniform experience will continue uniform? You tell me that the sun has risen for six thousand years: that is no proof that it will rise to-morrow; within the next twelve hours it may be puffed out by the Almighty." Taking this ground, a man may maintain the story of "Jack and the Beanstalk" in the face of all the science in the world. You urge, in vain, that science has given us all the knowledge of the universe which we now possess, while spiritualism has added nothing to that knowledge. The drugged soul is beyond the reach of reason. It is in vain that impostors are exposed, and the special demon cast out. He has but slightly to change his shape, return to his house, and find it "empty, swept, and garnished."—*Professor Tyndall, "Fragments of Science"* (1876), pp. 321-2.

Ye too, believers of incredible creeds,
Whose faith enshrines the monsters which it breeds;
Who, bolder even than Nemrod, think to rise;
By nonsense heap't on nonsense to the skies;
Ye shall have miracles, aye, sound ones too,
Seen, heard, attested, everything—but true.
—*Moore, "The Veiled Prophet" ("Lalla Rookh").*

I do not believe even eye-witnesses when they tell me things opposed to common sense.—*Voltaire.*

THE War, with its relapse into primitive savagery and barbarism, has naturally led to an increase of the superstitions with which savagery and barbarism are identified. Finding no help in the cold, unregarding heavens, many have turned for consolation to the spiritualists, the clairvoyants, the crystal-gazers, and their tribe, who have been reaping a golden harvest.

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So great is the scandal that the police have been obliged to interfere, instituting several prosecutions and obtaining several convictions of these charlatans battening on the nation's misfortunes.

It is the old pathetic longing for communion with the dead which is responsible for this revival. As we have said before, it is the longing for the continuance of this earthly existence in another world, or another sphere, that provides the driving-power of religion. If men were certain that death ended existence for them, they would not care a toss whether there was a God or not. They do not care a lot about him now. In that case he might just as well not exist at all.

It is among the parents and lovers of the multitude of young lives sacrificed in the European battlefields, the wives mourning their dead and grasping at the straw of Spiritualism in the vain hope of communing once again with the beloved, that these charlatans have plied their lucrative trade.

This revival of superstition is not so apparent among the uneducated lower classes—whose beliefs vary but little from generation to generation—as among the upper and wealthy classes; and they are kept in countenance in their superstition by a few scientists like Sir William Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge. The daily papers, as usual in these matters, adopt the "sitting on the fence" attitude, with a decided leaning among the majority towards the supernatural. It is therefore desirable to consider the subject, and see if we can arrive at the facts of the matter.

But before dealing with telepathy and communion with the spirits of the dead, a consideration of the "physical phenomena" of Spiritualism will throw some light upon the subject, or at least will reveal the state of mind which leads to the belief in the supernormal; and we must remember that the "physical phenomena" of Spiritualism—which cannot be produced now for love or money—created a greater sensation between 1870 and 1880 than the "psychical phenomena" is doing to-day. Zollner, the famous Professor of Astronomy, with Professors Fechner, Screibner, and Weber, were converted by the physical manifestations of Slade, the medium.

Professors Richet and Lombroso, Dr. Ochorowicz, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Mr. F. W. H. Myers declared for the genuineness of the physical phenomena produced by the medium, Eusapia Paladino. Sir William Crookes fell to the wiles of Florrie Cook, who actually materialized a female spirit who allowed Sir William to walk about the room with her arm-in-arm, and actually allowed the gallant scientist, after first obtaining permission, to embrace her. Wallace, the great naturalist, also gave his adhesion to the same superstition. It is an imposing array of names, and Spiritualists make the most of them, just as Christians exploit the names of Faraday and Newton in the interests of their creed. No one will deny that these were really great men—that is, in the department of science to which they had dedicated their lives. It must also be conceded that they were also upright and honourable men; but, as has been shown,[1] a man may reach the highest point as a scientific investigator and yet go deplorably astray in matters outside his special studies. As Professor Jastrow has well observed:—

> There is a very broadspread notion that anybody can go to a spiritualistic seance and give a reliable opinion as to whether what he or she may chance to see is explicable as conjuring or not. Especially where the right to one's opinion is regarded as a corollary to the right of liberty, does this notion prevail. It is probably not an exaggeration to maintain that most such claimants are about as competent to form a trustworthy opinion on such a subject as they are to pronounce upon the genuineness of a Syriac manuscript. The matter is in some aspects as much a technical acquisition as is the diagnosticating of a disease. It is not at all to the discredit of anyone's powers of observation or intellectual acumen to be deceived by the performances of a conjuror; and the same holds true of the professional part of mediumistic phenomena. Until this homely but salutary truth is impressed with all its importance upon all intending investigators, there is little hope of bringing about a proper attitude towards these and kindred phenomena.[1]

Dr. Ivor Tuckett, commenting on Sir William Crooke's adventure with the materialized spirit, remarks: "Could one want a better example of an unscientific attitude in a scientific investigator? The fact of the matter is that scientific men, who are accustomed to accurate laboratory conditions and instruments, which do not lie or give rise to error—at any rate consciously—are no match for the subtle degrees of deception practised by Home, Moses, and Eusapia. Because the latter appear in their daily intercourse to be reliable, honest persons, the former cannot admit of their being on other occasions the authors of fraud. The soul of truthfulness themselves, they are quite unaware how impossible it is to postulate that anything done by that complex living mechanism, man, is absurd or inconceivable. On the other hand, they are somewhat to blame when they publish observations, bearing the imprimatur of their great names, and so likely to bias the public, which do not conform to their own standards of scientific proof."[2] Mr. Frank Podmore also observes: "The untrained eye is no match for the trained hand of the conjuror. The kind of observation demanded of the investigators at a spiritualistic seance—an observation which is alive to the various artifices employed to distract it, and which, if not actually unremitting, is at least aware of its own lapses—is a quality not called for and not exercised in the investigations of the physical laboratory, and not to be acquired, even to a moderate extent, except by education of a very special kind."[3]

Helmholtz, one of the very greatest scientific minds of the nineteenth century, recognized this clearly when he was once on a visit to England. The Psychical Society sought to interest him in the case of two little girls, the daughters of a clergyman, one of whom held up any playing card behind a closed door, and her sister on the other side described it. When told of this performance by a college professor who had experimented with the children, Helmholtz could hardly take him seriously. The professor, somewhat nettled, named some of his eminent colleagues in the investigation, and said they should be credited with enough common sense to test a thing like that; but finding Helmholtz still incredulous, he asked, "Would you believe it if you saw it yourself?" "Certainly not," answered Helmholtz; "in my investigations, if anything peculiar appears, I do not accept it on the evidence of my eyes. Before any new thing can be even provisionally accepted, I must bring it to the test of many instruments, and if it survives all my tests, then I send it over here to Tyndall, and to investigators in other countries. No, I would not believe any abnormal phenomena on the mere testimony of my eyes."[4] M. D. Conway, who narrates this, adds: "The scepticism of Helmholtz was justified in the case of the clergyman's daughters, who were

[1] *The Religion of Famous Men.*

[1] Professor J. Jastrow, *Fact and Fable in Psychology* (1901), pp. 147-8.

[2] Dr. Ivor Tuckett, *The Evidence for the Supernatural* (1911), pp. 62-3.

[3] F. Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 221.

[4] M. D. Conway, *Autobiography*, vol. ii., p. 310.

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detected in their clever trick." And it should be remembered that Helmholtz knew more about the mechanism and limitations of the eyes than any living man of his time, for it was he who invented the ophthalmascope, by means of which the living retina was first enabled to be seen.

What is required to test a Spiritualist seance is not a scientist fresh from the laboratory, but an expert illusionist and conjuror, well versed in tricks of sleight-of-hand, like Mr. J. N. Maskelyne, who has assisted at the exposure of many mediums, and who emphatically declares in his book, *The Supernatural*, "there does not exist, and there never has existed, a professed medium of any note who has not been convicted of trickery and fraud" (p. 183).

It should be borne in mind that a great number of equally great men have given their verdict emphatically against Spiritualism. Among them we find Darwin, Faraday, Sir David Brewster, Professors Huxley, Tyndall, and Clifford, Herbert Spencer, Helmholtz, Sir Ray Lankester, Sir Bryan Donkin, and Lord Kelvin. Few people, we imagine—outside his circle of personal friends—would consider Sir Oliver Lodge, as a physicist, the equal of Lord Kelvin, nor Wallace of Darwin; for, although Wallace was the co-discoverer with Darwin of Natural Selection, yet he honourably admitted that he could not have written Darwin's great work, the *Origin of Species*. Few competent judges would consider Sir William Crookes the scientific equal of Helmholtz, to say nothing of Faraday and Tyndall.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Archer on Spooks.

A VAST number of the reflecting public betray no little astonishment that some people can discuss with straight faces the existence of spooks.

This astonishment is mainly due to the fact that the so-called messages vouchsafed to us by the spirits are uniformly of a trumpery or fantastic character. To many people the intrinsic puerilities of the "communications" are evidence enough in themselves of the utter vacuity of these mediumistic pretensions. So, by way of reply to this sceptical attitude, Mr. William Archer, a few days ago in the columns of a contemporary, took up the gauntlet on behalf of the spooks. The discussion arose out of his review of Sir Oliver Lodge's last sensational ghost-book—*Raymond*.

He tacitly admits the charge of their "messages" being trumpery, but pleads that the dear spooks are not to blame. The extenuating plea is, that in the case of good spooks—that is, spooks which have taken no part in any secret crime or possess no knowledge of value to the police or at the law-courts—there would be nothing of interest to communicate.

Lest it should be imagined that I strain his words, let me quote him:—

> As for the triviality of the communications concerning sub-lunar matters, why should that surprise us? If I were to die to-morrow, I should have nothing of slightest interest to communicate to my executors or to the police. I have concealed no treasure; I have had no part, either as principal or accessory, in any undiscovered crime.

Hence, messages from good spooks must needs, on this theory, be "trivial"; and, inferentially, we have no grounds for expecting them to be otherwise. He makes no allusion to *wicked* spirits—a strange omission, by-the-bye; for, on his theory, they would have something interesting to tell us. Are wicked spooks too few to be of any account? or is it that mediums never bemean themselves by communicating with them?

But surely the spooks, if they know anything at all, would know something of the nature of their own disembodied existence that would be of entrancing interest to multitudes of people, if not to "executors" and "the police"; for instance, to know *how* they recognize and communicate with each other in a "world" where there are no sense-organs and how they know their whereabouts in an existence that is assumed to be spaceless. These are problems that puzzle thousands who would consider any information on the matter as a revelation of first importance. Nevertheless, there is among the spooks, both good and bad, a well-kept conspiracy not to divulge a single secret of that dimensionless world. And Mr. Archer apparently approves of their plot.

His comment upon their equally inane predictions is as follows: "Why should we suppose that 'spirits' have any special power of reading the Book of Destiny?"

That is Mr. Archer's way of admitting that their prophetic pretensions are a piece of charlatanic humbug and imposture; and, at the same time, his way of excusing it.

If Mr. Archer desires to rid his race of the spook-monster, as on the whole he appears to do, I have no hesitation in predicting that he will never succeed by playing the role of spook apologist. A far more successful, as well as a more heroic, method would be to point out how the famous author of the book he was reviewing was morally more culpable than either Ranson, the Divine Healer, or Mrs. Brockway.

Sir Oliver not only induces the public to part with their half-guineas for a volume of spook "rubbish," as the *Daily Mail* describes it: but, by the high and prominent patronage he gives the imposture, he is mainly responsible for the crowds of credulous and often woe-stricken people that frequent the haunts of fortune-tellers and mediums. "Since Sir Oliver Lodge believes in them, there must be some truth in it"—and away they go! more induced by his loudly advertised example than by any attractive inducements offered by the "professionals."

KERIDON.

Acid Drops.

It seems that women will soon be allowed to practice as solicitors. A Bill to permit this was introduced into the House of Lords (which has really proved itself much more favourable to progressive ideas the past two years than has the House of Commons) by Lord Buckmaster and ordered to be read a second time. Naturally, Lord Halsbury opposed the measure, so did the Lord Chancellor, who voiced the somewhat banalistic argument that "Woman's proper work was to be wife and mother." By "proper," we presume, he meant "best," and in that we agree with him. For a woman who is a good wife and a good mother is doing the best work she can do. But there is no need to artificially bar any woman—even when married—from a vocation which she feels called upon to follow, and still less need to bar those who, from inclination or circumstance, never do become wife and mother. If a woman cannot succeed as a solicitor, there is no need to prevent her by law from qualifying. The question will settle itself. And if she can succeed, it is sheer sex prejudice to say she shall not.

The bottom truth is, that this opposition to women is due partly to religious prejudice, partly to sex prejudice, and partly to trades' union interests. And lawyers of all grades belong to one of the closest trade unions in the country. The legal trade must be kept select that fees may be kept high. That is really the kernel of the matter. There is nothing whatever in a solicitor's business that an educated woman may not master. And if it comes to making out a bill of costs, we have every confidence that she will make that as lengthy as any male could desire. The chief difficulty before ladies practising as solicitors would be to induce men to

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come to them for advice. For nineteen men out of twenty would have a very strong prejudice against doing so. Of course, it is sheer prejudice, but it exists, and has to be reckoned with.

W. Mackenzie, one of the Salvation Army chaplains with the Australian forces is a favoured individual. In the *Weekly Dispatch* for Feb. 25, he tells how on many occasions —six within one week—he has been saved from death by shell-fire through a voice telling him to "run at once." It is a pity that common soldiers were not equally favoured, but perhaps there is something in the Army Regulations which prohibit a man running at the command of a ghostly voice. We are inclined to believe that Chaplain Mackenzie was conscious of a voice telling him to run, and that he obeyed the order. But the War has evidently developed his imaginative powers as well as his abilities as an athlete.

"At a supreme crisis such as this in our nation's life, what right have we to talk about comforts, luxuries, and indulgencies," says the Bishop of Kensington. Yet 39 ecclesiastics share annually £180,700 between them, sufficient to keep 1,800 ordinary families in comparative comfort.

A mission-worker at Southend stated that at a kit inspection one of the soldiers was found to have a Bible among his belongings. There was some chaff at this, but the tables were turned when the captain ordered the company to parade past the kit in question and take it as a pattern. It sounds as true as the Gospels.

What a pity the high qualities evoked by the War are not equally manifest in youngsters. The *Edinburgh Evening News* joins the ranks of those who are lamenting the increase of juvenile wrong-doing, says (italics ours):—

> The War, by reason of the calliug up of fathers, the depletion of police forces, dislocation of school hours, spread of unrest, and darkened streets, has set in motion a wave of juvenile depravity. Hooliganism, too, is rampant among youths between 15 and 18, as almost anyone who is about in the older parts of the city at nights is well aware. It surely seems as if a conference of all concerned in the problem is urgently necessary. *What in particular is the Church doing* to grapple with juvenile sinners? Surely this is a moral question, if ever there was one—Who is the "children's minister" in our midst?

The Church is, as usual, studying its own interests. We suggest to the *Evening News* that the less the Church interferes in the matter the better.

Here is another telling paragraph from the same issue of the *Edinburgh Evening News*:—

> *Parish ministers in the country districts must* view the enhanced cereal prices with infinite gratification. The higher the prices jnmp the more substantial does the parish stipend become.....As a result of this remarkable rise stipends have been more than doubled since pre-war years. The pity of it, too, is that the activities of the clergy in the main have proceeded in an inverse ratio. It is no uncommon thing to find a man drawing £600 or even £700 a year preaching to a mere handful of people, and that in a populous village. *It seems unfortunate that the Excess War Profits* Tax does *not apply to ministers:* but even as regards local rates parish ministers are tenderly treated. It is not generally known that they are exempted by an old statute from payment of poor rates. That a minister should show the opulence of a munition worker is one of war time's idiosyncrasies. The man of the cloth ought certainly to make his contribution towards the needs of the State—or give value to his parishioners for the money received.

Our "spiritual guides" have a knack of looking after their material interests at all times.

The way the higher clergy risk their precious skins for their country is passing wonderful. The Dean of Bristol announces that he is leaving Bristol for the duration of the War to take up the chaplaincy of Army cadets at Cambridge.

Mrs. Maria Sawkins, of Deal, at the age of 101, is cutting some new teeth. This will not lower the record of Methuselah.

The opening of the new School of Oriental Studies at Finsbury takes from England a grave reproach. Hitherto, in the capital of the Empire, which counts 350 millions of Oriental citizens, there has been no such institution for the prosecution of such study. Paris had a school of Oriental languages over a century ago. This has a real bearing on the fact that English people reverence an Oriental fetish-book, whilst Frenchmen are so largely Freethinkers.

Principal D. L. Ritchie is quite right when he says that "the place where hope is ever born anew for the Churches is childhood." If a child is let religiously alone till he is well on in his teens, the probability is that he will go through life without religion. The Church must catch the children before they acquire the art of thinking, or she will never get them at all. No child has ever taken to religion as a fish takes to the water. Religion is contrary to nature, and nature must be broken to it by a long and severe course of discipline during childhood. This is why such vital importance attaches to Sunday-schools, and to religious instruction in day-schools.

The study of religious revivals is both entertaining and instructive; entertaining, because they are usually conceived and conducted on thoroughly scientific lines; instructive, because it elicits the fact that they appeal to and succeed in converting, not Infidels and Atheists, but only backslidden believers, the majority of whom are nominally Church members. Unbelievers may attend such emotional gatherings out of curiosity; but they are in such a state of mental health that the religious virus has no chance of inoculating them. They are supplied with a sufficient number of the right kind of phagocytis to consume all hurtful microbes the moment they enter into them. Even religious germs have their use in that, every now and then they furnish a thoroughly good meal for the hungry microphags!

The Government has taken control of timber. This should affect the heads of the Church.

The clerical misstatement concerning the Atheism of the Germans is being disproved by facts constantly. One of the latest brought to light is a leaflet issued by the Salvation Army, dated February, 1917, in which it is clearly stated that, prior to the War, there were 156 corps of the Booth organization in Germany. This will not stop the dear clergy from telling lies of the countrymen of Martin Luther, but some of the people in the pews may be able to judge of the accuracy of their statements.

The United Free Church of Scotland Fire Insurance Trust shows a profit for 1916 of over a million and a quarter sterling. Of course, we quite understand that all the Churches are fundamentally fire insurance societies; but it is not many of them who frankly declare their purpose and avow a profit. And how can they be quite sure that their clients are protected against fire, anyway?

The Bishop of Oxford says, "Democracy is the enemy that the Church has to contend with." The other bishops are not so frank, but their votes in the House of Lords show conclusively that they have always regarded the working classes as opponents.

The Mrs. Partingtons of the Churches will soon realize that they cannot for ever sweep back the tide of knowledge with their brooms. In the new volume on *Genesis* in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools* it is stated that "The narratives of the Origin of the Universe and the beginnings of the human race from a modern point of view are unscientific." The same thing was said by Freethinkers a century ago, but it is very welcome in a school-book.

Mr. Lloyd George has addressed an appeal to Free Church pastors and teachers to assist in National Service. The men of God evaded the Military Service Act, and it remains to be seen if they will do anything in the nature of work during the final period of the War.

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At a recent sale in London, a fourteenth century medical manuscript contained a prescription for a plaster of sandiago, flex, and the white of eggs to cure a wound in four days. It added that a long Latin prayer and passages from the Bible should be read over the patient. Even this is an advance on the New Testament idea of handkerchiefs healing the sick.

The Rev. J. T. Stafford, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, has expressed surprise that colliers earned £12 weekly. The princely salaries of bishops has evoked no astonishment.

Is the Christian religion ending in smoke? At a Church meeting at Leigh-on-Sea the question as to whether incense should be used at the communion services was put to the vote, and carried by a large majority. These devoted Churchmen seemed to be unaware that 30,000,000 of Christians were in arms, and that their own country was in dire distress.

What a good thing it is that the Allies did not defeat Germany in the autumn of 1914 and the spring of 1915. It was quite "providential." That, at least, is the opinion of Archdeacon Wakeford, of Lincoln, who, as reported in last Monday's *Telegraph*, said that "if the war had ended in the first six months of the war with sweeping victories on land and sea for ourselves, by this time we should have become the rottenest nation the world had ever known." So it was "providentially" kept going for our benefit. That is the Archdeacon's philosophy of the situation. We are a great people. We have said it in hundreds of newspapers over and over again since the War started. We *must* be a great people, for God does not hesitate to keep a war in being that means the deaths of many thousands of people of various nationalities in order to prevent our becoming "the rottenest nation the world had ever known." *Good* God!

The Rev. Professor J. M. Thomson, of Oxford, is exceedingly broad-minded—for a divine. Reviewing a book entitled *The Future of Christianity*, by Mr. Crompton, he says: "Mr. Crompton takes the Christ-myth theory a little too seriously; but it is a fault on the right side." Evidently, then, Professor Thomson does not believe in the historicity of the Gospel Jesus, which is rather an awkward position for a clergyman to hold, but one from which there is no honest escape for the unprejudiced critic.

Of course, if the Gospel Jesus is not an historical person, all the doctrines of Christianity, such as the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection, and the ascension, fall to the ground; and there is nothing left but the Christ-myth, which cannot be taken too seriously, not even seriously enough, by those who still pose as his Divinely ordained ambassadors.

The Leicester Watch Committee seriously offended the local Free Church Committee. It gave permission for some cinema exhibitions on Sunday in connection with the Kitchener Memorial, and the Free Church Council entered its solemn protest against desecration of the "Sawbath" "for the second time." We wonder what will happen if the Watch Committee offends a third time in this manner?

A correspondence in the local paper followed this protest—in which the Watch Committee's action was defended by Mr. A. B. Talbot and Mrs. N. Tole, and attacked by Mr. H. B. Bruce. Mr. Bruce feels quite capable of warning his fellow-townsmen of what the introduction of the continental Sunday means, because he has been on the Continent, and so proceeds to tell the people of the horrible things he has witnessed. We do not question Mr. Bruce's veracity. Most people can find on the Continent—or at home—as much vice as they care to look for; and the amount of evil that some English visitors discover in a place like Paris is apt to surprise the ordinary Parisian. Perhaps the best way for English visitors to avoid being affronted by these scenes of continental vice would be to always take their womenfolk with them.

About a fortnight ago there was a bad accident at Three Counties Railway Station, Bedfordshire. A lady attempted to leave a train while in motion, slipped, rolled between the train and the platform, and was so badly injured that she died soon afterwards. At the Parish Church, the vicar, the Rev. G. J. Mayhew, felt called upon to say something about this "dreadful tragedy," and this is the way he did it:—

> I do not think that in such calamities we can do more than look up and in reverence say "Thy Will be done."……In the first short report of the calamity it appears that some of the poor girl's last words were, "I want to go home to my mother." How wonderful here the instinct, immediate and emphatic, which is, we see, not broken by death. The desire in her great distress to be again with one who had comforted her childhood of years gone by—"Home to my mother." Those words, full of assurance, which now have been graciously fulfilled.

So it was quite "providential." The girl wanted to go home to her mother—who was evidently dead—and God "graciously fulfilled" her desire. Why, then, call it "a dreadful calamity"? When people can sit and listen to such rubbish as that voiced by the vicar, we have less cause for wonder that they should act foolishly in other directions.

The "Holy Land" seems to be in a bad way, judging by the statements in the press concerning a meeting at the Mansion House, in which the Bishop of London's name figured prominently. The paragraph states that "thousands are starving in the Holy Land at this moment. In one district alone the deaths from starvation number 80,000. Children are being sold in the streets for a shilling or two." It is all very terrible, but why does not the dear Bishop get on the telephone to his Master, who is said to have fed thousands of people with a few loaves and fishes?

From the *Cambridge Magazine* we learn that the Cardiff City Council has asked every teacher in its employ, male and female, to sign a schedule headed "Have You Conscientious Objection to Military Service?" This is in furtherance of a resolution passed by the Council that "No person who is a Conscientious Objector to Military Service" shall continue in the employ of the Council. The striking thing about this inquisition is that it is addressed to teachers—and to women as well as men. And, unless there is a desire on the part of Cardiff, that teachers shall actually militarize the minds of the children, what justification is there for such an enquiry? Surely the Cardiff City Fathers do not think the War will continue long enough for the children under its care to take a part therein, and that they must therefore begin to train them at once. And unless they do desire this, what reason is there for discharging a probably competent teacher because he or she has a strong conviction against militarism in any form? One would have thought it sufficient if the teacher had gone about his duties in a satisfactory manner without any reference whatever to militarism. And if we are really in earnest about our professed hatred of militarism, one would have thought that the best way to smash it would be to avoid copying Germany in using schools—in Liebknicht's phrase—as training stables for the Army. If we really desire the world to have done with war, let us begin with the child. That is the logical beginning of all vital reform.

Four thousand pounds was the fine inflicted on a Swansea J.P. for fraud in connection with income-tax returns. His counsel made an "eloquent appeal" on his behalf, pointing out that he was a prominent figure in the religious life of the community. The judge also dwelt upon the regrettable fact that the offence was committed by a man "who was forward in religious matters, a member of a Dissenting Church, taking part in the activities of that church, and a communicating member." We take it the regret was more or less formal. The judge's experience must have provided him with many illustrations of the truth that there is no very close connection between religion and integrity.

Forty-four of the City churches are to be closed for the duration of the War. The *Daily Chronicle* remarks that it will not be a great deprivation to those who find beauty only in ancient buildings. We daresay others beside antiquarians will bear up under the infliction. But we suppose the salaries of the parsons will go on just the same.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 11, Birmingham; March 18, Leicester; March 25, Manchester; April 1, Portsmouth: April 8, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.

Frances Ivor.—Thanks. We hope to publish in the course of two or three weeks.

P. Friedberg.—Will look the matter up, and if we discover them, will publish the particulars.

H. Young.—We quite appreciate your concern for the *Freethinker*; but we believe we have the situation well in hand for the present. We agree with you that the bulk of our readers would cheerfully pay more for their paper rather than jeopardize its existence; but, again, you may trust us not to run unnecessary risks. Prices will steady again after a bit; then we shall be able to see where we are. And it is never wise to act in a panic. The struggle is a keen one; but we shall, we hope, pull through this year with not worse results than last.

E. E. Stafford.—Pleased to hear from you, and to know that you are making the best of Army life. Coming across so many avowed Freethinkers in the new Army must be quite an education to those officers who have always been in the habit of grouping recruits under one or other of the Christian denominations.

D. G. T. (Inverness).—Inverness is, we fear, rather too long a journey, and at present too expensive, for us to undertake a day's lecturing there now. Later, perhaps. The lines are certainly very apt.

Kepler writes, in response to Miss Rhoda Lynd's request for Freethought fiction, that he can strongly recommend *Those Lynnekers*, by J. D. Beresford. Miss Lynd will also be pleased to learn that Mr. Underwood has taken her suggestion, and has supplied us with a translation of some of Dekker's work, which we hope to publish shortly.

E. B.—Thanks; will prove very useful. The excuse must be that the "Tom Paine" was used quite innocently, and escaped us in glancing through the article.

C. W. Marshall.—In a way we are pleased you are so anxious as to the safety of the *Freethinker*. It is an indication of your interest in the paper. We are very pleased to have read the letters of those to whom you send copies of the *Freethinker*. Its being passed round in hospital and in camp—and appreciatively read—is a promise of good both for ourselves and for the Cause. We have no intention of altering either the size or price of the *Freethinker* at present. We hope to avoid both plans.

D. Fisher.—The place of Mr. Cohen's meetings on April 1 at Portsmouth will be duly announced, and we shall be very pleased to meet you then. There is no Branch of the N. S. S. in Portsmouth at present. Glad you appreciate the attitude of the *Freethinker* in relation to the War. Buchner's *Force and Matter* could only now be obtained second-hand.

C. H. M. Gronn.—Received with thanks, and allocated as desired.

F. Sunderland.—Your friend has been influenced, we think, by what some religious folk find it to their interest to say. There has been no such recession so far as we are aware. You should ask for names.

Old Member sends us £1 towards advertising the *Freethinker*,

F. Hoey.—We quite appreciate your point of view, and do not think, for a moment, that all members of the I.L.P. are Christians. But it is the fact that Freethinkers in various movements are apt to submit to a boycott of their anti-religious opinions—a boycott which does not extend to opinions in favour of religion. How many of the parsons and Sunday School teachers in the I.L.P. would agree that it was a non-religious movement? Your own position is quite clear and quite logical. Aud if the same principle applied all round no objection could be raised. So far as we are concerned, we have no intention of dwelling upon the topic, in spite of the many letters received. It is for Freethinking Members of the I.L.P. and other bodies to see that their opinions on religion are treated with due courtesy.

J. W. White.—It is not surprising that the editor of the *Cornish and Devon Post* refused the insertion of your letter. We should have been pleased to have published it ourselves but space forbids.

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

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

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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 (March 11) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Town Hall Birmingham. Owing to local conditions, it has been decided to concentrate on one meeting only—the evening at 7 o'clock. Mr. Cohen's subject is "Will Christianity Survive the War?" and he will deal specially with Mr. H. G. Wells's new book on *War and the Future*. Admission is free, but there will be a collection taken towards defraying the very heavy expenses a Town Hall meeting incurs. We hope our friends who attend will remember that, and will also do their best towards making the meeting as widely known as possible.

We believe our readers are always interested, as we are in letters from Freethinkers in the Army or Navy. One of the late members of the Edmonton Branch of the N. S. S., Mr. Britten, writes to the General Secretary, Miss Vance:—

> One of the first questions asked me when I came into barracks was: "What religion?" to which, I replied, "Freethinker." The Master-at-Arms seemed a bit doubtful, but beyond asking me to spell it, raised no query.....I expected trouble, but have been treated very well.
>
> The first Sunday morning on parade, after the usual inspection by the Commodore, I told the Petty Officer in charge of our party that I was a Freethinker, and asked to be allowed to fall out before we were marched into church. He seemed uncertain what to do, but finally said that if I had an objection to attending the service I could fall out.

A change of officers brought further experiences with a little different treatment, but, on the whole, Mr. Britten does not appear to have had an unpleasant time. Everything seems to depend on the officer—and on the man. Consideration on the side of the former, and firmness and civility on the part of the other is what is needed. But the lesson from all the letters we have received is the same—Freethinkers in the Army and Navy should avow their opinions and persistently claim legitimate consideration on their account.

Mr. Lloyd lectures to-day (March 11) in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. His subject will be "Humanism *versus* Christianity." Judging from the title, this will furnish an excellent opportunity for Leicester Freethinkers to bring a Christian friend along with them. We hope all will take the hint. Christians could not wish for a better introduction to Freethought than through the agency of Mr. Lloyd.

The Annual Meeting of the Secular Education League was held at the League's offices on Friday, March 2. The past year has not furnished the occasion for any striking manifestation of its activity, but the principle of Secular Education has been kept to the front, in the press and elsewhere, wherever possible. It is certain that before long the general question of education must come before the country, and this will give an opportunity for the League taking a more prominent position before the public. This can be done the more effectively by a largely increased membership, and we hope this will take place. The Secretary of the League is Mr. Harry Snell, 19 Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C.

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Our readers of both sexes should be particularly interested in the address to be given at the North London Branch Debating Society, St. Pancras Reform Club, on Sunday next. The subject is "The Church and Divorce," and the speaker Mrs. Seaton Tiedemann, the Secretary of the Divorce Law Reform Union, who is naturally an authority on all matters connected with the subject. This is one of the planks in the N. S. S. platform, and ample opportunity will be given for questions and discussion. The meeting will commence at 7.30.

Our readers—mothers in particular—will be interested to hear that Kathleen Alma Edith Walter, Mr. G. W. Foote's first and only granddaughter, is the winner of the first prize, offered by the *Mothers' Magazine* for the most beautiful baby. The portrait of the young lady, who is now five years old, appears in the March issue of the magazine. We echo the poet's wish: "Bonnie wee thing! May your face an index be of all your grace and mind."

A meeting of the Glasgow Branch N. S. S. will be held in the Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram Street, on Sunday, March 11, at 12 noon; subject, "Humanism," by Mr. Millar Saltcoats. Admission is free, but there will be a collection.

The Emergence of Man.

IV.

(*Concluded from p. 134.*)

THE date of the advent of the human artificers of the Pre-Chellean stone implements is important and interesting alike. Upon the solution of this problem depends any reliable estimate of the centuries covered by the Old Stone Age, as well as the antiquity of Neanderthal and Piltdown man. Osborn is convinced that:—

> After weighing all the evidence very carefully, the balance of opinion seems to sustain the view that this epoch should be placed after the close of the third glaciation and before the advent of the fourth, that is, during the Third Interglacial Stage.

It certainly seems significant that the six principal sites of Pre-Chellean culture lie close together. In Pre-Chellean times England formed part of the Continent, and a large river ran along the Channel which now divides us from France. In our island, pre-Chellean savages left their handiwork in Essex and Sussex; in France, on the north and south banks of the Somme, at Chelles, on the Marne; and at Helin, in Belgium.

The primitive men who fashioned the Pre-Chellean tools and weapons appear to have entered Europe from Africa by a northern coast route, and the distribution of their stations undoubtedly points to this. Central Europe has thus far failed to supply any positive evidence of Pre-Chellean or even later Chellean man. It is likewise suggestive that artifacts distinctly Chellean in mode of workmanship have been discovered throughout Africa, from Egypt to the Cape. An inventory has been made of these prehistoric industrial, aggressive, and domestic implements, which embraces planing flints, scrapers, borers, knives, hand-stones, and flint hammers.

Pre-Chellean flint implements were unearthed at St. Acheul in 1907, and it is very noticeable—

> that at this dawning stage of human invention the flint workers were not deliberately designing the form of their implements, but were dealing rather with the chance shapes of shattered blocks of flints, seeking with a few well-directed blows to produce a sharp point or a good cutting edge. This was the beginning of the art of "retouch," which was done by means of light blows with a second stone instead of the hammer-stone with which the rough flakes were first knocked off. The retouch served a double purpose: Its first and most important object was further to sharpen the point or edge of the tool. This was done by chipping off small flakes from the upper side, so as to give the flint a saw-like edge. Its second object was to protect the hand of the user by blunting any sharp edges or points which might prevent a firm grip of the implement.

Similar rude flints have been met with in Sussex in association with the recently discovered Piltdown skull. This is the most ancient completely human skull yet known to science. This priceless relic was disinterred at Piltdown, about thirty-five miles from Gray's Thurrock, near the Thames, in Essex, where many memorials of prehistoric times have been unearthed. The county of Kent lies to the east of Piltdown, in Sussex, and the Kentish plateau has yielded numerous flint implements of eolithic character.

Dawson discovered the Sussex cranium in a gravel deposit some eighty feet above the level of the southern Ouse. The nature of the surroundings was eminently suitable to the industry of the Pre-Chellean and Chellean workers in stone, and an exceedingly rough chipped flint was found in the layer which contained the Piltdown fossil, in addition to several "eóliths." It seems certain that the Sussex skull dates from an era when the fashioning of stone tools was still in an infant stage even when compared with the rude primitive palæoliths of the Chellean Period. Clement Reid regards the Piltdown deposits as of Pre-Glacial or earlier Pleistocene age, while Dawson, the geologist, who was the finder of the keenly controverted cranium, after critically surveying all the data concerned, came to the conclusion "that the skull and mandible cannot safely be described as of earlier date than the first half of the Pleistocene Epoch. The individual probably lived during the warm cycle in that age."

The discovery of Piltdown man proved the occasion of a lively and protracted debate in the anatomical world. Professors Smith Woodward and Elliot Smith pointed out that the appearance of Piltdown man and the Heidelberg race in geological strata of practically the same antiquity, proves that at the close of the Pliocene Era the human group was already represented in Western Europe by two distinctly divergent stocks. This necessarily presupposes a prolonged anterior period of development of the two races if each arose from a common ancestor. There can be no question that both these rugged human beings—the Heidelberg and the Piltdown (Evanthropus, or "dawn man")—manifest marked kinship, not merely with modern races, but with the apes. The several experts assign slightly different positions to the "dawn man" of Piltdown in the pedigree of recent man, while Professor Osborn dismisses the theory that the Piltdown specimen was ancestral either to the Neanderthal or the Heidelberg savages. This scientist thinks that the dawn man's jaw is of a type so low that it represents "a fully adult chimpanzee of a new species." Although the Piltdown skull and jawbone were present in the same deposit, certain men of science were sceptical as to their original association. If the jaw belonged to a different organism to that of the skull-cap, which is unmistakably human, albeit of an extremely primitive type, then there is ample reason for concluding that anthropoid apes survived in Europe during the Ice Age. Moreover, a tooth, apparently human, from Taubach, in Germany, has been attributed to "Pan vetus" by Miller, and this is the species of extinct chimpanzee which that anatomist regards as the original possessor of the Piltdown jaw. Osborn now inclines to the view that:—

> If confirmed by future discovery, the presence of anthropoid apes related to the chimpanzee in the

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> deposits of Piltdown, Sussex, and of Taubach, Weimar, is in itself of very great interest, because Taubach is of Third Interglacial Age, and of the Chellean or early Acheulean industrial stage. Both facts, so far as they go, tend to confirm the opinion.....that the Piltdown race belongs to Third Interglacial times.

Evidence has now been accumulated, overwhelming and complete, that man ascended through a series of stages in which he slowly perfected his stone implements. All over the earth, outside Australia, aboriginal man progressed along industrial paths similar to those revealed by the Chellean records of Western Europe. And there remains no legitimate reason for postulating a single centre from which his flint industry radiated in every direction. It is far more likely that primitive man everywhere experienced the necessity for utilizing stone wherever it was available, to satisfy the imperious needs of his precarious life.

It was in Western Europe where man's early efforts were first detected, and in the same quarter of the globe have been discovered the completest evidences of his onward journey. Chelles, on the Marne, in France, has lent its name to the Chellean culture, which progressed on somewhat independent paths. The rude hunters of the Chellean period of the Old Stone Age were a courageous and hardy race, whose flint artifacts testify to their devotion to the chase. From a few rough instruments of the Pre-Chellean period the folk of the later Chellean days evolved seven or eight vastly improved artifacts. Commont has clearly demonstrated that at St. Acheul, on the Somme, there existed an important industrial station from the opening of the Palæolithic Age till its very end. This archæologist's investigations prove that, if we except Castillo, in Spain, St. Acheul was the prehistoric industrial centre whose career was most prolonged. From the dawn of the Old Stone to the Neolithic Age it appears to have been constantly occupied by the workers in flint.

While these ancient artizans were labouring in France, Belgium, and Spain, peoples of the same cultural character resided in Britain. At present, however, no typically Chellean site is known in Italy, or in any district of Central Europe. But at Grays Thurrock, in Essex, scarcely 120 miles from Abbeville, a celebrated Chellean locality, Chellean artificers were firmly established. England was then united with the European mainland, and the workers at the various centres probably passed to and fro. Flints of Chellean design have been discovered in every part of Britain south of the Yorkshire Ouse. All the evidence at our disposal combines to prove that the peoples who fashioned these implements entered Europe along the land bridges which connected the old Western Continent with Africa.

Our positive information concerning the genesis of the several primitive peoples who inhabited Europe in prehistoric centuries is scanty. After an exhaustive survey of all available data, Osborn reaches the conclusion—

> that the family tree or lines of descent of the races of the Old Stone Age consist of a number of entirely separate branches, which had been completely formed in the great Eurasiatic continent, a land mass infinitely larger and more capable of producing a variety of races than the diminutive peninsula area of Western Europe.

If not from the Dark Continent's northern borders, the most rudimentary human races—the Piltdown, Heidelberg, and Neanderthal—migrated into Europe from the Mediterranean region. This, at least, is the most reasonable inference to be drawn from the extensive and peculiar distribution of Chellean and Acheulean remains. The superior savage stocks of the Old Stone time possessed abilities of a high order, and their art achievements alone conclusively prove this. All the evidence we have gathered concerning their mental powers compels the assumption of an immense period of pre-evolution. The foundations of all subsequent civilizations were laid by the more intellectual Old Stone Age stocks. These remote men displayed considerable inventive faculty, and they protected their bodies with raiment. And justly it is claimed that:—

> The same is true of the æsthetic powers, of close observation, of the sense of form, of proportion, of symmetry, the appreciation of beauty of animal form, and beauty of line, colouring, and form in modelling and sculpture.....Of the musical sense we have at present no evidence. The religious sense, the appreciation of some power or powers beyond the great phenomena of Nature, is evidenced by reverence for the dead, in burials apparently related to notions of a future existence of the dead, and especially the mysteries of the art of the caverns.

So, much as we note a tremendous interval between the rude and unlettered Teutons pictured by Tacitus, and a Lessing or a Goethe, or between the barbarous ancient Britons and a Shakespeare or a Spencer; likewise, there yawns an enormous chasm between the later men of the Palæolithic Age and the original possessors of the Piltdown and Heidelberg skulls.

T. F. Palmer.

Our Dreams.

It is a modern theory that we realize in dreams the desires we have during the time when we are awake. That theory, we venture to say, is an advance on the one held by primitive people. They, rightly or wrongly, believed that the spirit during sleep took leave of the body and wandered about as freely as imagination would allow it. Of course, all good European Freethinkers will incline towards scepticism at the mention of spirits. We must, therefore, say at once that we wish our readers to take the term in its universal sense and not at its narrow and theological valuation.

We know that life is a fact. We know that life is a journey and a battle from the cradle to the grave. Before and beyond that all our speculations are equally vain. We now speak of dreams while awake, and since neither stake nor faggot can prevent a Freethinker dreaming we will make known our dreams representing our unsatisfied desires. The worst we can say of them is that they do not lean towards oppression; the best, that they represent a contribution to the scheme of life. Man's life should not be as an uncracked nut; if he have ears, eyes, and a tongue, let him speak. Do what he will, he cannot escape the fact that he has a duty to mankind, and, in a like manner to Dante, his life is a sacrament. To a wooden post you ask? We answer, No. Has the time not come when we must throw overboard symbolism of no earthly use except to fetter the mind, to impress the ignorant, and to load the kneeling camel called man with a further burden of stupidity. A good conscience! If Freethinkers do not possess it, they are on the way towards the attainment of it. Let it be written in letters of gold *that we have never traded on man's ignorance*. Does it require any exceptional intelligence to achieve this end? Look at the mental outfit of priests; they do not experience much difficulty in that task. To mankind they say, this is the way. We know that on that way are to be found the fogs and darkness of superstition, phantoms of truth, and scarecrows of bewilderment, whilst in the distance is that will-o'-the-wisp called faith. We will have none of this.

Reality in our waking hours shall make us know that the Gods sell us all they give us, yet shall our *waking* dreams be sweeter. He who shall will his life to the

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service of the good (not *beyond* my impatient ones) shall have taken the first step towards a good conscience—and a good conscience has no bad dreams. At present, or any other time for that matter, we would not exchange shoes with any Christian; we prefer to stand upright in a world rapidly becoming a charnel house. With a song on our lips to that spirit of humanity which we know is not dead, we take our place, and let those who may get down on their knees. Where, now, is the bad conscience? The implication of original sin demands this attitude, and they who follow this practice dare to assert that they are the light of the world. Such an assertion is not worth refutation, and one begins to wonder if they would not really like, at present, to hide their light under a bushel. Time is flinging at them more problems than the combined totals of Darwin, Spencer, and Mill; the poets in their wild songs and prophecies are taking their places as the unacknowledged legislators of the world, and the Dionysian spirit of destruction is once again abroad. Woe to Appollo if he resists!

Life is a conflict. There is nothing fixed, be it law, custom, or constitution. Dionysus dislikes the smoothness of Apollo's limbs—in other words, conservation is subject to attack from without and sometimes from within. In this respect we now find Christian religion busily trying to prove that a circle is really square. A writer in the *Times* Educational Supplement says that: "The circumstances of the War make the *odium theologicum* odious indeed," and he urges the need for unity on the question of the Churches and education. Shall we not say that this is an attack from within? Have not Freethinkers said times without number, and without a war to inspire them, that Christianity is odious? All temperaments will not have imposed upon them this thing called Christianity; for the lame, halt, and blind intellectually, it may be good enough, but we question the wisdom of such an imposition even in that case.

Another instance of attack from within may be found in an article over the signature of "A. C. B." In the same paper he writes: "Very often, if a speaker begins to talk about God, his hearers lose interest, whether they are laymen listening to a clergyman or boys listening to a master." Have not Freethinkers said the same thing over and over again? Indeed, it would be hard to find ten believers in Christianity whose definition of God would agree, and, sleeping through a sermon was once considered to be joke. "A. C. B." only says the same thing in another form. We feel sure that Freethinkers will scoff at the idea of any value being attached to such admissions as the result of an impact with hideous reality. For Christians to take such unsteady childish steps, with the world of reality behind them, will prove to us how unwilling is religious conservation to advance in any direction leading to universal benefit. Nevertheless, these admissions tend to prove that internal adjustments are being made owing to pressure from without. In other words, orthodoxy is beginning to stammer a few elementary truths of Freethought.

We have travelled a long way to come to our dreams—the dreams of we dissatisfied ones. Awake, nature would seem to say to us, when we have kicked this decadent creed to Limbo: "Rejoice in all the four seasons of the year—in all the four seasons of your life, for I am Lord of all." Alas! for every one it cannot be so. Life demands courage and fortitude; from the stronger of us it demands sincerity. Curiosity, the inclination to climb dizzy mountains, the wish to probe deeper into mysteries than the men of old—life offers to Freethinkers all these avenues of choice, for have they not for ever cast away the cursed formula: "Thou shalt not"? The War has not forced Freethought to readjust itself, to dilute its thought, to change its attitude, nor compromise with the enemy. We have none of our own words to eat, for we have not allowed ourselves to be deceived, neither have we practised deception on others. We have commanded no one to believe, neither have we attempted to teach naked niggers to clothe themselves, neither have we asked any one to die for us. For these reasons, whilst awake we may come face to face with ourselves without being ashamed, and in our dreams we shall see nothing worse than life as a phenomenon, as something to be approached with gratitude, as something to be moulded by man's effort. On our lips shall be a terrible *nay* to Christian values, but our duties to life shall be somewhat in harmony with the sun, the moon, and the stars, the sea, and the fertile land, and we shall fill our cup from the fountain of Truth. To Christianity we shall say: Your intentions *may* be good, but we doubt the doctrine which demanded a human sacrifice to save immortal souls; that was ignoble. We discerning and dissatisfied thinkers "are unwilling to renounce or to share our responsibilities"; go your way, but beware of asking for obedience if you are unworthy of it.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Critical Chat.

SIR JOSEPH BAMPFYLDE FULLER is an old member of the Indian Civil Service, and has held several distinguished positions under the Government of India. In the intervals of a busy life he has produced several books of a philosophic cast, and in *Man As He Is: Essays in a New Psychology* (John Murray; 7s. 6d. net) has given the world a noteworthy study of human conduct. If the psychology is not quite so "new" as the sub-title would lead one to believe, it is not the less worthy of attention on that account. And it might be said in defence that it will be new to a very large number of readers; but inasmuch as it is frankly, although not aggressively, Materialistic in tone and teaching, it is not likely to be warmly welcomed by those who still prefer to discuss psychology in terms of a mediævalism which is little better than a refined and disguised Animism.

We say that *Man As He Is* is frankly Materialistic despite the author's brief criticism of Materialism, which is in effect only a criticism of a certain conception of Materialism. When, for instance, we are told that "Materialism can offer no solution of the problem of consciousness or feeling," and that the Materialistic theory "denies that life possesses any energies or impulses of its own," one need only reply that to the first count the reply is given by Sir Bampfylde Fuller himself in the course of his work. And to the second, feeling, or the response of living tissue to certain stimuli, is a fact that no Materialist denies, and no scientific Materialist claims can be adequately expressed in terms that are adequate for a purely physical phenomenon. Every group of phenomena—physical, chemical, biological, and psychological—must be expressed or described in terms framed to cover that group. There is no more need, therefore, for a special life force or a special mind force than there is for an independent chemical or physical force. The rise of a new group of phenomena from the interaction of pre-existing forces, the new group necessitating the framing of new "laws," is involved in the general evolution of the universe. Due consideration of this fact would prevent most of the adverse criticisms of Materialism being written.

Fundamentally, man is a creature of many impulses. That is the bedrock of the author's generalizations. Below consciousness there is going on an unceasing warfare between impulses, each striving for mastery—and

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to find expression in action. In taking his stand on impulse as the fundamental psychological fact, Sir Bampfylde Fuller is quite in line with recent psychology, and much of what he says could have been powerfully enforced by reference to the work of Freud and Jung, and their successors. This stock of impulses, possessed in varying degrees of power by all, form our inheritance from our human and pre-human ancestors. They are, to use the author's expression, the force that gives the train its motion. But human life requires not only motion, but direction. It is not enough to liken it to a train in motion; we need rails that will keep it along a given track. Sir Bampfylde Fuller finds this in memory —the recalling of past experiences. It is this "which gives dexterity to our limbs, ideas to our brains, language wherewith to express our ideas, and continuity to our purposes. It is an educative force, raising us from the helplessness of infancy to such skill as no other animal can attain, however richly endowed with the intuitive recollections which have come to the species in the course of evolutionary progress."

It is evident that the more numerous and the more varied our recollections the greater will be the part played by choice in the determination of conduct. But a life of choice is an exhausting life. To stop and weigh consideration for and against any and every possible course of conduct absorbs energy and exhausts vitality. The ideal action is direct action, just as the man who has no thought of wrong-doing is superior to the one who only overcomes the impulse to wrong-doing after lengthy deliberation. Presumably, Sir Bampfylde Fuller, from the large powers he ascribes to "suggestion," would look on this as providing the necessary counterbalance. And in this we should be inclined to agree with him. It is the social life which drills man, and which acts upon all with a power of suggestion not always adequately recognized.

And this brings us to the only real fault we have to find with *Man As He Is*. Although setting out a new psychology, Sir Bampfylde Fuller is sufficiently under the influence of the old to deal largely with the human mind as though it were an individual mind. And this is not really the case. The peculiarity of the human mind is that it is essentially a group mind. Its contents are given in the social life that lies behind it, and in the social life that surrounds it. All that fashions the human mind, language, institutions, traditions, beliefs, all are social products. It is the continuity of social life that provides the basis of human development and human civilization. I do not think for a moment that Sir Bampfylde Fuller would challenge this view. He suggests it in many places in his book, but, all the same, it does not receive the emphasis it deserves.

Apart from this, *Man As He Is* stands as a good and useful piece of work, plainly written on a subject in which it is not at all easy to express oneself plainly without running the risk of misunderstanding. And, so far as its influence extends, it will do something to counteract the flood of nonsense with which under the name of "mysticism" the public mind is deluged.

Lucian.

The British and Foreign Bible Society is paying £5,400 for paper for Bibles, which in the piping times of peace cost £2,600. The heathen Chinese, who used to pack their tea-chests with leaves from Bibles, will be sorry to hear this.

The new pound notes have a design of Saint George and the Dragon on the front. As the saintly George was an unscrupulous army contractor, the design is topical, if not complimentary.

Death of Mrs. Charles Pegg.

We have learned with the deepest regret of the death of Mrs. Charles Pegg, Secretary of the Manchester Branch of the N. S. S. Mrs. Pegg has been for over thirty-five years associated with Freethought work in Manchester, and during a large part of that period has officiated as Secretary. We think she scarcely ever missed attending a meeting, and, of late years, was often at her post when considerations of health might well have served as a valid reason for her staying at home. During the past few years her health failed, and for some months past she had scarcely left the house—part of the time being spent in bed. On Friday, March 2, the end came. Mrs. Pegg's associations with Freethought covered the whole of the Bradlaugh Parliamentary struggle, the *Freethinker* prosecution, and other striking and dramatic incidents. Hers was a record of long and honourable service in a cause that has little to offer save the consciousness of a duty done. We feel sure that both her husband and her daughter will have the sincere sympathy of many hundreds of Freethinkers throughout the country to whom she was known.—C. C.

Correspondence.

THE CRY OF ANGUISH OF THE CHURCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—A week or two ago an article appeared in the *Sunday Times*, entitled "What's Wrong with the Church?" This must be disconcerting to those ministers who have told us that the War was setting everything right. It was followed by a correspondence, in which the Rev. A. C. Headlam repeats the stale trash about true science agreeing with the Church and Christian doctrine.

But the crowning piece of terminological obfuscation is as follows:—

> But now let us turn to the particular question asked; and first of all it is suggested that Christianity is somehow responsible for the present war. "Why is all this?" Christianity has a very definite answer: It is because of men's sins. From whence comes wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence even of your lust? Ye lust and have not; ye kill and desire to have. Surely no better reason could be given of the reasons which led to the outbreak of this war. It has been a lust of power, a lust of dominion, a lust of commercial wealth, a lust of national greatness; and it has come from just that nation which has more than deliberately refused to listen to the teaching of Christianity.

Well, what is to be thought of the best answer Christianity can make to the charge, not as put by the Rev. Headlam, but as to the responsibility for not having prevented it? No doubt the answer is definite. But where is the defence of a God who, to punish Germany, inflicts punishments on the nations who are her intended victims equal to or even greater than Germany has yet suffered? And is there at the present moment any reasonable guarantee that the Lord intends that the War shall bring justice about as a result? But what can we say to the rev. gentleman's attacks on Germany as being anything like so anti-religious as France, or more indifferent to religion than the English? The evidence of the anti-religion—nay, absolute Atheism—of France is overwhelming, and I daresay, if the rev. gentleman's previous utterances were overhauled, attacks on Godless education in France could be found, as it was quite the fashion with our clergy before the War. And what about the last census in France? Seven million Atheists enumerated; a fact, and quite impossible in so-called Materialistic Germany. And is not the only country in which soldiers need not attend what is called divine worship, France? As to British indifference, the controversy in which the rev. gentleman joins is a proof of it. As Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Well—it is not the utterances that come from the clergy.

A. J. Marriott.

LIVERPOOL I.L.P. AND THE *FREETHINKER*.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—My attention has been drawn to the alleged reports of two meetings of the I.L.P. held in Liverpool when your

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paper was abused, which appear in the recent issue of the *Freethinker*.

I would draw the attention of yourself and readers to the undermentioned facts which entirely repudiate the suggestions of mean and intolerant bias made in your remarks.

1. The statement that your paper was discussed at two meetings of the I.L.P. is incorrect.

At a branch business meeting which I attended, various members asked the Literature Secretary to place some orthodox Christian periodical on the stall seeing that a Freethought periodical was being sold. A very fair and courteous discussion ensued, and it was decided to take the *Freethinker* off the stall. Such an action can hardly be described as pitiable and contemptible.

2. No member threatened to resign, nor was there any suggestion of such an action by any speaker taking part in the discussion.

3. The unwarranted statement that by an overwhelming majority it was decided to burn all copies unsold is, absolutely without foundation.

4. Your statement *re* burning your paper giving Liverpool I.L.P. members pleasure is well answered by the above facts and, I am sure, you will withdraw it.

The points I have raised place an entirely contradictory version to that of your own, which, you said, you had no reason to doubt; this, however, is explained by the fact that Mr. J. W. Gott, who was responsible for the report, informs me that he was not present at any meeting of the I.L.P. when any such action took place, but only sent you the report on versions given him by friends.

I quite appreciate your own position, and can understand that the comments were written in ignorance of the true position on the statements of your correspondent.

I would suggest that such statements will not increase Freethought sympathy in Liverpool Socialist circles, nor are they likely to strengthen the sympathy which you already have.

Ernest W. Silverman.

[Our paragraphs were based on information supplied by Mr. Gott whose word we had no reason to question. His statements were clear and precise, and we have now written him on the subject. We now await his reply, and can only say that we have no desire whatever to do the Liverpool members of the I.L.P. an injustice. But we cannot close our minds to the fact of the hostility shown by a section of the I.L.P. in various parts of the country, and the comparatively free hand given to religious propagandists.—Editor, *Freethinker*.]

The Reflections of Riquet (A Dog).

All passes away, and is succeeded. I, alone, I remain.

Meditation. I love my master Bergeret, because he is powerful and terrible.

Always I am in the middle of all, and the men, the animals, and the things are ranged, hostile or favourable, around me.

At the fall of night, evil powers roam around the house. I bark in order that my master may be warned, and drive them away.

A dog that has not any feeling of piety towards men, and who dislikes the assembled fetishes in his master's house, leads a wicked and erring life.

Men have the divine power of opening all the doors. I am only able to open a very few. Doors are the great spirits that do not voluntarily obey dogs.

One never knows whether one has acted well towards men. It is necessary to adore them without trying to understand them. Their wisdom is mysterious.

Men, animals, stones, grow larger on approach, and when I am near to them, they become enormous. But I do not. Wherever I am, I remain the same size.

Anatole France (Translated by H. W. Edwards).

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, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mrs. Seaton Tiedemann (Secretary Divorce Law Reform Union), "The Church and Divorce."

South London Branch N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 6, Annual Meeting. 7, P. S. Wilde, "What is Materialism?"

Mr. Howell Smith's Discussion Class (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, March 15, at 7.30.

Caxton Hall (Westminster): March 14, at 8, E. C. Saphin, "The Solar Origin of Christianity." Lantern lecture.

Queen's Hall (Small) (Langham Place, W.): 6.30, Maurice Maubrey, "The World's New Evangel."

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales; 6.15, Messrs. Shaller and Yates.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Town Hall): 7, Chapman Cohen, "Will Christianity Survive the War?" With special reference to H. G. Wells' *War and the Future*.

Leicester (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate); 6.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Humanism *versus* Christianity."

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Views and Opinions.

Mr. H. G. Wells on "War and the Future."

In the closing paragraph of his new book, *War and the Future*, Mr. H. G. Wells takes his readers into his confidence by telling them "I take myself to be very nearly an average man, abnormal only by reason of a certain mental rapidity." That, if true, certainly lifts Mr. Wells out of the ranks of the average man, for the ordinary man thinks very little, and certainly does not think rapidly. As Mr. Wells himself says in this rather ill-balanced book, while multitudes have their minds concentrated on the War, they are "neither doing nor trying to do anything that deserves to be called thinking about it." Mr. Wells, therefore, is certainly not an average man, whatever else he may be. That he possesses "mental rapidity" may be true, but that is not always an unmixed blessing. It may cause a man to rush into print, once the avenues of publicity are open to him, before he has thoroughly digested the facts of the situation; and that we believe is the case with *one* aspect of Mr. Well's book. It is not a very difficult matter to turn out a book of three hundred pages every six months or so, provided one can string sentences together in their proper order. A great public service would often be performed if writers would publish less and reflect more.

* * *

The Force of Ideas.

That Mr. Wells should, in the course of his work, say many interesting things, and occasionally pregnant things, is inevitable. Some of them are very pertinent, and nearly all of them are suggestive. Here, for example, is one of the latter order:—

> All human affairs are mental affairs; the bright (why "bright"?) ideas of to-day are the realities of to-morrow. The real history of mankind is the history of how ideas have arisen, how they have taken possession of men's minds, how they have struggled, altered, proliferated, decayed.

Now that is not only a truth, it is a very vital truth. And it is one that Freethought has always emphasized as against that superficial sociology which imagined that social conditions would be changed without first modifying the mental conditions of which they are the product. Every human institution rests fundamentally upon a mental condition. It expresses certain ideas and beliefs, and while there *is* a reaction of the institution on mental life, it is by way of the modification of the latter that social evolution has been achieved. There is, as Mr. Wells says, "Nothing in this War at all, but a conflict of ideas, traditions, and mental habits." We have competing ideas of Imperialism—British, Russian, German, and the rest. We have traditions of loyalty to a king, ideas of patriotism, of the supremacy of force—physical and moral. Analyse any phase of the War, nay, analyse any phase of social life, and we come ultimately to a conflict or a harmony of "ideas, traditions, and mental habits." That is one of the vital truths contained in Mr. Well's book. And it is a complete justification of the method of the Freethought attack.

* * *

The Progress of the Churches.

With Mr. Wells's views on the War we are not now concerned. Feeling is, however, so strong on the subject that the chief purpose of a lot of the writing about the War would seem to be either a commercial one, or to keep public feeling up to the required degree of tension. What we are concerned with is Mr. Wells's opinions as to the effect the War has had, and will have, on religion. And on this Mr. Wells says that the War "has produced a very great volume of religious thought and feeling.....People habitually religious have been stirred to new depths of reality and sincerity, and people are thinking of religion who never thought of religion before." The first sentence is open to very serious and very solid question, although Mr. Wells says it is "indisputable." The second might be true without it implying anything in the nature of a religious revival. It may mean that under the stress of emotion or disaster the habitually unreflective or superstitious become intensified in their superstition. And whatever strength that may bring to religion is certainly discounted by the people who have thought about religion only to recognize its radical ineffectiveness for good in human affairs. Mr. Wells himself points out that a great deal of this talk about religion is mere froth. The Anglican churches have used the occasion "mainly for pew-rent touting." The Bishop of London's utterances have a "regrettable superficiality." The National Mission was in the nature of "a magic incantation; a satisfactory end of the War to be brought about by convergent prayers and religious assiduities," "The Churches are merely wasting their energies in futile self-advertisement." The Churches "All pander to nationalism, and to powers and princes. They exist so to pander," etc., etc. With all of which we agree; only with so much of recognized religion dismissed as rubbish, and dangerous rubbish, one wonders where Mr. Wells discovers his revival of religion?

* * *

Is there a Revival of Religion?

So far as we can see, the only revival of religion indicated is in the case of Mr. Wells himself. And

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while that may be an interesting biographical fact, it can scarcely be taken as proof of a religious revival. This is particularly true when one discovers that Mr. Wells's religion, which he expresses under the formula "The Kingdom of God," is no religion at all. It is no more, as Mr. Wells explains, than an organized and educated "impulse to social service." "The service of men's collective needs," being "the true worship of God." And more curious still, even if one were to grant that this is really religion, the new lawgiver, prophet, and apostle of this religious revival confesses that he cannot find proof of its existence. He says:—

> Eagerly as I would grasp at any evidence that this idea is being developed and taken up by the general consciousness, I am quite unable to persuade myself that anything of the sort is going on. I do perceive a search for large forms into which the prevalent impulse to devotion can be thrown. But the organized religious bodies with their creeds and badges and their instinct for self-preservation at any cost, stand between men and their spiritual growth in just the same way as the forestallers stand between men and food.

But if there is no evidence that this idea of the "true worship of God" is being taken up and developed by the general consciousness; if, in addition, the organized Churches stand between men and its development; what in the name of all that is reasonable becomes of the religious revival? It remains a pious aspiration of Mr. Wells', and an indefensible one at that. It is true that Mr. Wells says that religion is stronger in France than it was; but that, we venture to say, may be attributed to the fact that Mr. Wells knows more of England than he does of France. As usual, the revival is occurring somewhere else.

* * *

Blowing Off the Froth.

"Nowhere," says Mr. Wells, "is there so much froth and waste as in religious excitements." Our great need, he adds, is to "blow off the froth." With this we quite agree; and there is a good opportunity here of blowing the froth off Mr. Wells' own "kingdom of God." For when all is said and done, what we have here is pure froth. And of all the frothy expressions that one might take as a badge for a new evangel, "The kingdom of God" is surely the frothiest. It means anything, everything, nothing. It is a formula that all religionists would agree with, and each would give it a different meaning and a different explanation. It provides verbal agreement, with universal discord in practice. With Mr. Wells, "the true worship of God" is organized social service; but how can anyone with the slightest grasp of the evolution and historic meaning of the worship of God call that a religion? Mr. Wells rightly says that "nothing is so misleading as a careless analogy." Well, here is a careless analogy with a vengeance. He takes a word such as religion, with centuries of evil associations, and with an unbroken connotation of supernaturalism—a word which, because the world is outgrowing supernaturalism, is inevitably and mischievously misleading—and because he desires a more intelligent *social* service, calls that a religion. But social organization is not religion; social service is not religion. A religion without supernaturalism is a vertebrate animal *minus* a spinal column. If Mr. Wells possessed more of what one may call the historic sense, he would realize how essentially vicious is his procedure. He is confusing the thought of men in the very attempt to clarify it; providing discord in the act of preaching unity. Mr. Wells' "kingdom of God" is almost without "the pride of ancestry." It will certainly be without "the honour of posterity."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Jesus Only."

THE direct object ever kept in view by the Four Gospels is the apotheosis of Jesus of Nazareth, and the critic can see only too clearly how clumsily the process of deification is related. The Evangelists were fiction writers who had but an imperfect understanding of their art. While honouring their hero with a departure from life that was attended by various supernatural incidents, they omitted to confer a like distinction upon his advent into the world. Beyond a doubt, in its original form, the story treated the birth as a purely natural event. Perceiving this defect later on, either the authors themselves, or some editors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, resolved to improve the narrative by lifting the birth out of the natural order into the supernatural. Unfortunately, the revision did not extend to the text between the birth and the death, so that in these very Gospels Jesus is more than once referred to as the Son of Joseph and Mary. Yet nothing can be more evident than the fact that what the writers always aim at is to present their hero with the halo of Divinity round his head. "And we beheld his glory," they said; "glory as of the only begotten from the Father." Of Jesus it is every now and then said, "And he manifested his glory." But here, again, the novelists are occasionally caught napping. Take the recorded incident of the Transfiguration as an apt illustration. Matthew's account is as follows:—

> And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light: And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter answered, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only (Matt. xvii. 1-8).

Mark's report agrees with Matthew's, but in that furnished by Luke there are two significant additions, namely, that the metamorphosis occurred while Jesus was engaged in prayer, and that while he prayed the three disciples were fast asleep. The metamorphosis is said to have taken place during the disciples' slumber, and was noticed by them only after they had awakened. If the incident were historical that fact would account for much; but the historicity of the narrative is doubted even by many Christian scholars. Professor Max Muller, of America, in his article on "Simon Peter" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, is unable to pronounce the episode in any true sense historical. Professor Schmiedel suggests that the story "ought to be taken as reflecting the great crisis at which Jesus became convinced that he was the chosen hero of God," and Dr. Arno Neumann adds that "while explaining the matter in this way, we must not ignore the legendary Supra-terrestrial light in which the Master is brought into contact with Moses and Elijah, the representatives of the ancient religion" (*Jesus*, p. 128). We regard the Transfiguration as wholly a mythic episode. It is naively admitted by Matthew and Mark that at the specific request of the Master they never alluded to the alleged incident during his lifetime, while Luke simply says, "And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen."

Our present purpose, however, is to call attention to

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the use that is often made, especially by preachers, of the expression "Save Jesus only" at the close of the narrative. While Peter suggested the construction of three tabernacles, "there came a cloud, and overshadowed them." When the cloud was gone, they looked round about, but "saw no one any more, save Jesus only," the meaning being that in the presence of Jesus Judaism was bound to vanish. Jesus was the only one worth thinking about. In him was the Old Testament fulfilled, and apart from him it had no significance at all. The late Dr. Joseph Parker was in the habit of declaring that he saw Jesus on every page, and in every verse, of Holy Writ. The Rev. Archibald Duff, M.A., LL.D., D.D., Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Theology in the Congregational College, Bradford, though a Higher Critic of some note, endorses Dr. Parker's pronouncement. In an article in the *Christian Commonwealth* for March 7, entitled "A New Crusade for the Use of the Bible," he says:—

> Our Crusade is so sacred—it is none other than a campaign to bring all men to see Jesus—it is so sacred that it is imperative. The great watchword in it is the Word of God: that Word is Jesus, the God-man; and it is nothing else. The early Christians of, say, 100 years after the Crucifixion, were easily misled by the doctrine of the scribes and elders, who said, "The Word of God is our great Hebrew Scriptures; this Jesus who had to be put to death is not The Word." The unwitting Christians, in their enfeebled days, were persuaded by those scribes and elders; and so they said that they too would set up a Collection of Scriptures—a Christian one. Then, alas, came the twisted fancy that this new Collection was "The Word." How natural, and in some real sense, how true; but, natural and easy as it was, it was a fatal blow to the absolute supremacy of Jesus. He is first; he must be first; and there cannot be two "firsts."

We wish to congratulate Dr. Duff very heartily upon the courageous manner in which he dismisses the doctrine of the Divine inspiration of the New Testament. On this point he is as heterodox as any Higher Critic can be. He considers the setting up of the New Testament as the Word of God not only a mistake, but a misfortune, if not a calamity; an opinion in which we fully concur, although we fail to see how it could have been "a fatal blow to the absolute supremacy of Jesus." At any rate, the object of the writers was to exalt him, to establish his Deity, and to proclaim him the Saviour of the whole world. Of course, Dr. Duff is specially interested in the Old Testament, while with the New Testament he has professionally no concern. Evidently, to him, Old Testament theology is summed up in Jesus, and apart from Jesus, would be on a level with Pagan mythology. It is not as a calm, straight-eyed critic, but as an emotional, almost tearful believer in Jesus that he comes before us in the article under consideration. With all due respect to his undoubted scholarship, we are afraid that here he allows his emotionalism to run away with him. We have no hesitation in affirming that no honest exegete can find Jesus in a single Old Testament text. In point of fact, modern scientific commentators have been compelled by their love of truth to give up most of the passages which our forefathers used proudly to quote as being distinctly Messianic. Indeed, Professor Duff himself expresses the opinion that there is nothing in the Old Testament that makes the New a necessity.

Dr. Duff seems to be prevented by his piety from realizing that to disprove the historic reliability of the Old Testament is tantamount to demonstrating its entire unfitness to be accepted as being in any sense a revelation from above. He is exceedingly severe on a pastor who recently said to him: "I cannot use the Bible in the modern and scientific way, because the modern and scientific students of it are not all agreed about results." The pastor was quite wrong in supposing that there is no agreement as to results among Biblical critics. The conclusions arrived at by such students are substantially the same, just as scientific conclusions are essentially the same, whatever differences there may be being of minor importance. The pastor was further mistaken in thinking that it was merely the lack of unanimity as to results that made it difficult, if not impossible, for him to use the Bible in the modern scientific way. The real cause of his inability was the fact that if he accepted *any* results of scientific criticism of the Bible, it rendered belief in it as the infallible Word of God laughably ridiculous. And we beg to remind Dr. Duff that he is himself in the same boat as the pastor whom he derides. Nobody can say that he uses the Bible in the modern and scientific way in the first paragraph of his present article. Scientifically speaking, there is no trace of Jesus in the five Books of Moses, not even in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, nor in any other Old Testament document. Surely, it is not as a scientific critic, but as a devout divine who believes without, or against, evidence, that the Professor speaks, when he asserts: "Always in his Divine ways, whether in Jesus or in the previous story, God has been utterly Love. What should hold us back from telling this to the people?" Nothing but the consciousness that it is but a horrible lie. Let anyone read the Book of Joshua from beginning to end, and say without a blush of shame, if he can, that in all his Divine ways disclosed in that document God was "utterly Love"? There were a few grains of honesty still left in that pastor's mind when he confessed he could not use the Bible in the modern and scientific way; but one is simply aghast as one thinks of the Professor's absolutely mediæval and unscientific method of using the Bible in the pulpit of to-day. It is essentially an unscrupulous, Jesuitical method, and the resort to it by so many preachers accounts for the growing unpopularity of the pulpit. Forsooth, Dr. Duff tells his readers that there are two stories of the Bible, and that they are both true, in spite of the fact that outwardly they contradict each other. To the preacher he says:—

> Just say you know two stories, and then tell far more about the grand facts of the developments that went on in man in Hebrew days and Jewish days.

If Professor Duff gives us an accurate description of the "New Crusade for the Use of the Bible," we can assure him that it will prove as gigantic a failure as did those awful crusades we read of Church history. Those disastrous campaigns had for their ultimate object, in the minds of the popes, the establishment of the papacy on a surer foundation in the confidence and affections of the people; but in the long run they were tragic fiascoes, and did not serve the desired end. Such will be the fate of the present campaign for the use of the Bible. It is now finally impossible to "bring all men to see Jesus," and Jesus only, in the so-called Book of Books, or anywhere else. The Gospel Jesus is an interesting creation of the theologian, and nothing more. The Christ-myth will still live on among a constantly diminishing minority; but it cannot any longer be as successfully exploited by the Church as it was in the Dark Ages. The doctrine of "Jesus only" has had its day, which will never return. After the God-man comes Man, with all the glorious possibilities which still lie latent within him.

J. T. Lloyd.

So far as I am concerned, I have made up my mind that no organization, secular or religious, shall be my master. I have made up my mind that no necessity of bread, or roof, or raiment shall ever put a padlock on my lips.—*Ingersoll.*

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Mark Twain's Dream.

Speedy end to superstition, a gentle one if you can contrive it, but an end.—*Carlyle.*

The like will never come again; he is inimitable.—*Goethe.*

The art of the pen is to rouse the inward vision.—*Meredith.*

MARK TWAIN is largely regarded in England as the prince of jesters, and justly so. He was, however, so much more than that, for he was a great man, a great citizen, and 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 Scotch for Sir 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 undistinguished, 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 brave and fiery dashes against tyranny, humbug, and corruption, attracted men no less than the irresistible laughter of his humour. The incident of his financial failure, which, like Sir Walter Scott's, was wholly the work of others, raised him to the rank of the heroes of literature. For he assumed a moral where there was no legal responsibility, and he set to work and paid off the debts. It takes a man to engage in and win such a fight with fate as that. 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."

Mark Twain was a thorough Freethinker, but he 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 from circulation, by the unseen hand of piety. We shall never know what we lost by this procedure, or what we missed by this kindly philosopher being trammelled by the critic on the hearth.

For this reason all Freethinkers will be pleased at the posthumous publication of Mark Twain's *Mysterious Stranger* (Harpers), a volume discovered amongst his papers by his literary executor. The book is the strongest expression of Twain's views that has appeared, and will prove of unusual interest to all those who share the author's philosophical and sceptical views.

The book deals with the follies and crimes that men are led into by religion, and the mysterious stranger is Satan, who appears as a handsome youth named "Philip Traum." A fierce attack is made on the God idea, which is described as so monstrous that Satan wonders why man does not regard the universe as a nightmare. The profanity is not veiled, for "Philip" goes on:—

> 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 times seven, and invented hell; who mouths morals to 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 honorably placing it where it belongs, upon Himself; and finally, with altogether Divine obtuseness, invites this poor, abused slave to worship him!

And the Satanic Philip sums up by saying: "You perceive now that these things are all impossible except in a dream. You perceive that they are pure and puerile insanities, the silly creations of an imagination that is not conscious of its freaks." So Mark Twain goes on holding the noses of his readers to the grindstone of thought, forcing them from complacency to discontent, stinging them into sensitiveness. Under the relentless rhetoric we are pierced through and through with a sense of the contrast between what life is and what it might be.

What are religious folk making of life? This is really Mark Twain's question, and the burden of his "dream." He is the corrosive acid that eats into the Christian complacency. He is the critic who does not give a moment's peace for cheap pious conclusions. Quieter in tone than most of his books, with no jesting at all, *The Mysterious Stranger* is a book that thrills with the life, the questioning, of to-day. Whatever the publishing season may produce, it is not likely to bring anything more vital, more significant, than this attack on Godism, written by one who was, in his generation, the most eminent man-of-letters in America, and whose books are still a large asset of national pride. The volume shows Ariel turned Prospero, and showing in the transformation how impressionable and extraordinary a spirit Ariel is. When Mark Twain passed away, the event eclipsed the gaiety of the English-speaking peoples. Despite his motley dress, 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:—

> What good is like to this
> To do worthy the writing, and to write
> Worthy the reading and the world's delight?

MIMNERMUS.

Science and Spiritualism.

II.

(Continued from p. 150.)

I confess that my admiration of Hamlet is somewhat dulled by reason of that ill-advised remark to Horatio about there being more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophies. The occultist always seizes upon that citation to refute the scientist. He prints it as his motto on his books and journals, and regards it as a slow poison that will in time effect the destruction of the rabble of scientists, and reveal the truth of his own Psycho-Harmonic Science or Heliocentric Astrology. It is one thing to be open-minded, and to realize the incompleteness of scientific knowledge, and to appreciate how often what was ignored by one generation has become the science of the next; and it is a very different thing to be impressed with coincidences and dreams and premonitions, and to regard them as giving the keynote to the conceptions of nature and reality, and to look upon science as a misdirected effort. Such differences of attitude depend frequently upon a difference of temperament as well as upon intellectual discernment. The man or woman who flies to the things not dreamt of in our philosophy quite commonly does not understand the things which our philosophy very creditably explains.—*Professor Joseph Jastrow, "Fact and Fable in Psychology"* (1901), p. 42.

With regard to the fact that various men, eminent in some sections of science, have expressed their belief in the reality of the existence of spirits apart from the human body, we may remark that the ability of man in one subject is but rarely

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> a proof of his ability in another; we know that although Ampere was an eminent mathematician, he was also a devout believer in transubstantiation; that Faraday was a great discoverer, and yet a believer in the doctrines of Sandeman; Volta, a Roman Catholic. Spiritualists appear to be in a somewhat similar position now, that believers in witchcraft' miracles, and other occult agencies, were in former times.—*G. Gore*, "*The Scientific Basis of Morality*" (1899), p. 307.

There are a multitude of books full of accounts of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism to which Spiritualists refer you if you wish for proofs of the phenomena. Like the age of miracles, the age of physical phenomena—table-rapping, levitation, spirit materialization, etc.—is past; or, if it is still indulged in, is confined to exceedingly private circles, far from the inquisitive eye of the investigator and the sceptic. We shall soon see why.

One of the most famous mediums was Slade. "Dr." Slade, as he called himself, was an American. In the middle of July, 1876, "Dr." Henry Slade came to London. His fame had preceded him, and he was warmly welcomed by leading Spiritualists. Slade made a great sensation. Several men of science who visited him were unable to explain the mysteries they had witnessed. It was even discussed by that august body, the British Association, at their meeting in that year, and "Lord Rayleigh mentioned that he had gone to Slade in company with a professional conjurer, who had admitted that he was completely puzzled."[1] This was because the tricks were new, and not the usual stock-in-trade of the professional conjurers. Slade professed to receive messages from the spirits, written on slates. Slade would hold a slate under the table for a time, and when reproduced it would be found to contain a message

Slade's triumphant career, however, did not last long. A few days after the British Association meeting, Professor Ray Lankester and Dr. Donkin visited Slade, and, having satisfied themselves at a previous visit of Slade's method, "Professor Lankester put his hypothesis to the test by snatching the slate out of Slade's hand before the ostensible sound of writing was heard, at a time when, presumably, therefore, the spirits had not begun to write. As he anticipated, he found the message already written."[2] Professor Ray Lankester prosecuted Slade for fraud. "The trial," says Mr. Maskelyne, "took place at Bow Street, and lasted several days. I was called as an expert, and performed the tricks in the witness-box. The result was that Slade was sentenced to three months' hard labour. An appeal was made against the magistrate's decision, and it was quashed, owing to a technical flaw in the indictment. New summonses were at once taken out, but Slade and his manager, Simmons—both Yankees—made tracks for the Continent before the summons could be served."[3]

The technical flaw in the indictment was merely the omission of the words "by palmistry or otherwise," which appeared in the Statute. A good instance of legal red-tape.

Slade was no fool. Maskelyne said, in the witness-box, that it took him several weeks' hard work to imitate Slade's tricks. He had, moreover, a front of brass; for notwithstanding his ignominious defeat and flight from England, we find him in the following year (1877) in Germany, where he made the biggest scoop of his life. At Leipsic, Professor Zollner, with the assistance of Professors Scheibner, Fechner, Weber, and Wundt, undertook an inquiry into the phenomena in the presence of Slade. So assured was Zollner that Slade's tricks were the works of spirits, that he made them the foundation of his book, *Transcendental Physics*.

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 89.
[2] *Ibid*, vol. ii., p. 89.
[3] Maskelyne, *The Supernatural*, p. 195.

One of Zollner's colleagues, a Professor of Surgery in the University of Leipsic, made a bet with Zollner that a slate carefully sealed and watched by himself could not be written upon by spirits. He had left the slate in Professor Zollner's hands, in the confidence that the latter would use all the necessary precautions, says Dr. Paul Carus; "Professor Zollner, however, not finding Mr. Slade at home, saw nothing wrong in leaving the sealed slate at the medium's residence, and thus allowing it to pass for an indefinite time out of his own control, thinking that the seals were a sufficient protection. It goes without saying that his colleague at once cancelled the bet, and took no more interest in the experiment."[1] Mr. Carl Willmann, of Hamburg, a manufacturer of magical apparatus, and the author of several books on modern magic, gives a circumstantial account of Zollner's double slates used in seances with Slade, now in the possession of Dr. Borcherdt, of Hamburg, who bought them after Zollner's decease. "To a superficial inspection they appear unbroken, but the sealing-wax shows vestiges of finger marks, and Mr. Willmann has not the slightest doubt that they were opened underneath the seal with a thin heated wire, and that the seal was afterwards again attached to its place."[2]

Slade also had the audacity to produce foot and hand-prints of the spirits. These were probably made from rubber or celluloid impressions carried in his pockets. "Mr. Willmann calls attention to the fact that the foot-prints as published by Professor Zollner were made from feet whose stockings had been removed but a few moments before, for they still show the meshes of the knitting, which quickly disappear as soon as the skin of the foot grows cold. Professor Zollner did not see such trifles, and yet they are important, even if it were for the mere purpose of determining whether the spirits wear stockings made in Germany or America."[3]

Zollner had two rings turned from the solid wood, and brought them to Slade to get them linked together by spiritual power. Of course, he did not do it. What happened was that, at the conclusion of a seance, "the two wooden rings, or two others like them, were found strung on the leg of a table, which it does not appear that Zollner—he was alone with the medium—had examined before the seance."[4] Other tests were evaded or refused altogether, such as reversing the spiral in a snail-shell and the introduction of a piece of paraffin wax into a hollow bulb of blown glass.

However, the report of Zollner, backed by his colleagues, carried so much weight that the Seybert Commission—so called after Mr. Henry Seybert, who left a sum of money to the University of Pennsylvania to investigate Spiritualism—sent Professor Fullerton, the secretary, over to investigate the subject, who, in a summary of his conclusions, says:—

> Thus it would appear that of the four eminent men whose names have made famous the investigation, there is reason to believe one, *Zollner*, was of unsound mind at the time, and anxious for experimental verification of an already accepted hypotheses; another, *Fechner*, was partly blind, and believed because of Zollner's observations; a third, *Schiebner*, was also afflicted with defective vision, and not entirely satisfied in his own mind as to the phenomena; and a fourth, *Weber*, was advanced in age, and did not even recognize the disabilities of his associates. No one of these men had ever before had experience of this sort, nor was any one of them acquainted with the ordinary possibilities of deception.

[1] Carus, "The Old and the New Magic," *The Open Court* (June, 1900), p. 344.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 344.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 345.
[4] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 193.

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the experience of our Commission with Dr. Slade would suggest that the lack of such knowledge on their part was unfortunate.[1]

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

Profiteering and the Pulpit.

DURING the spring and summer months of last year (and in all probability ever since), the City of Cardiff was visited by a tidal wave of phenomenal prosperity which made its commercial heart beat with the vigour of youth. This sudden accession of energy sent the currents of its new life throbbing through at least a tract of its business veins with a more bounding pulse than had previously marked it during our sojourn there. The boom manifested itself in a feverish eagerness for enjoyment and diversion; for displays of decorative vanity; and for ampler opportunities of self-indulgence.

The great retailing establishments of the city, especially those of the drapery and kindred trades, were, at the usual business hours, crowded with buyers; and the fashionable restaurants in the principal streets were simply thronged at certain times of the day with smart young men in khaki and with blithe young women, displaying with conscious pride the "latest" in hat or costume, whose apparent motive was not so much a desire to be artistically dressed as to create an impression on those around them, that what they wore was absolutely new and of the latest style. The more ungainly and freakish the articles were in design or colour, the more proudly they appeared to strut about, being under the impression, I fancy, that such a "get-up" was better calculated to attract the attention they desired to arrest. At all events, that seems the only plausible soluton of the riddle, why smart young girls should *voluntarily* make such guys of themselves.

One could not infer from the vivacity and merriment of this "Mayfair" that life *could* have a dismal side—that the same city embraced *vast* areas of slumdom, hidden away in the sombre shadows of that black mass of destitution and misery which hung over them permanently as a pall, and through whose streets and alleys flowed without ceasing the bitter "waters of Marah."

Nor was there anything in the scene to remind one of the fact that the city also includes multitudes of ruined homes and livelihoods, and of blasted careers that were, but yesterday, full of promise and expectation. Nor, again, that it harboured thousands of mothers, wives, and orphans grieving about the possible fate of sons and husbands, lamenting over the wounded, or mourning their dead. But the sighs and the sobs were effectively drowned by the sound of mirth and the voice of gaiety.

This financial sunimer-scene, however, was not confined to the effervescence of young life. It was an epidemic which had infected an entire section of its citizens, irrespective of age. Houses were eviscerated of their old contents, and then refilled with new furniture of a modern and costly design. People who never knew the luxury of having a motor-car of their own suddenly became proud owners; while those who already enjoyed the luxury, disposed of it for a song, to make room for another of a more luxurious type. Magnificent new buildings, some of them sumptuous enough to be called mansions, sprang up with mushroom suddenness and growth. Persons who used to live in humble streets migrated to more aristocratic quarters; and many who were comparatively poor grew rich at a rate reminiscent of Jonah's gourd.

Is war, then, a fruit-bearing tree laden with golden apples, to be had for the plucking? To a certain section of the inhabitants it proved to be such, despite the fact that to the mass of the nation it is a veritable upas tree, whose breath is the blast of death and desolation. What, then, is the secret of this anomaly? Where lies the fountain of this selective tide? Is it a manifestation of the working of special Providence? If so, how inscrutable is the moral mystery of the divine scheme! If, however, we seek a solution of the riddle in human nature, it presents no difficulty: it is contained in one magic word—Profiteering.

Cardiff is a port, and is dependent almost entirely upon the docks, *i.e.*, upon the shipping industry. The War increased to an enormous extent the demand for tonnage, and at the same time equally reduced the available supply. And shipowners, seeing a rare chance of piling up wealth, took full advantage of the national predicament, and charged such exorbitant rates for freightage that fabulous profits were reaped from each cargo. Ships were sold and resold for many times their original values. And well they may; for in some instances, I am told, a single voyage realized in profits the cost of the vessel.

To enable the reader to realize these facts, I append a few figures of War and pre-War freights.

In 1913, the average rate of freight for coal per ton for the port of Gibraltar was 6s. 3½d. A week or so ago 77s. 6d. was paid for the same! An increase of £3 11s. on an original of 6s.! The same is true of corn. The freight for bringing a cargo of maize, costing £7,500, across from Argentina to Swansea was £33,000, or nearly five times the cost of the corn.

Now, however reprehensible this practice may be in the eyes of those whom Providence did not include among those privileged to share in the "swag," it should not be overlooked that the practice is not rare or unique in modern society. It is only a variety belonging to a wide, comprehensive class of similar exploits. It is merely an instance of the "short cuts" devised by self-conscious man for procuring the necessities and "extras" of life without toiling for them.

Profiteering is but a species of *class-exploitation*, as the "policy and practice" of preying upon the community by a section of it, is denominated. This parasitic habit or mode of life is effected by exploiting some human characteristic as "fulcrum and lever" to attain its end. For example: The priesthood has, from the dim dawn of human origins, exploited man's ignorance, credulity, and fear, in order to live in sloth and ease. Rulers, slave-lords, and capitalists have similarly exploited his hunger and his sentient skin, and through these his capacity for toil, to provide them with the means of sumptuous living. The "trade" exploits his craving for drink. The decorative industries exploit his vanity. The theatrical and kindred vocations do the same of his thirst for diversion and amusement; and so forth through the entire gamut of human wants, failings, or capacities. And since these practices get petrified as privileges, customs, laws, institutions, vocations, trades, and industries, modern society has become a conglomerate mass of mutually exploiting groups, each trying to "do" the rest, and each being on the alert against being done by other exploiters.

We are now able to define profiteering with greater precision. It is the policy of *exploiting a nation's needs in a state of distress*. For the sake of brevity, I left out from the definition two adjectives: the "needs" are *imperative* and the "distress" is *abnormal*. What makes its culpability still more detestable is the fact that it unavoidably tends to intensify the distress it exploits—an effect we now feel throughout the country in the fabulous prices paid for articles of food and other necessary commodities.

[1] Maskelyne, *The Supernatural*, p. 209.

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If exploitation is thus so baneful, and differs from robbery only in its method of attaining its end, why is it comparatively respectable? Why is the profiteer so often *envied* instead of being execrated and hounded out of society, or lynched?

The reason is, that whatever society condones or sanctions is respectable, however morally base it may be. And, conversely, whatever it denounces or condemns is disreputable, whatever be its ethical justification or necessity. Constant evil produces moral blindness and insensibility, just as the hideous, in time, paralyses the eye and robs it of its sense of beauty.

Again, it is frequently asked, as a still greater wonder and mystery: Why does not the Christian pulpit denounce the evil; or, rather, preach a crusade against it? They ask in astonishment: "Why is the pulpit so dumb when so flagrant an evil stalks so unblushingly throughout the land, spreading privation as it goes?" Is not "morality" claimed by it to be an essential part of its function? This common surprise was vigorously voiced by "Rita" in recent numbers of the *Sunday World*, under the heading "What's Wrong with the Church?"

Now, to expect the Church to denounce exploitation is to forget, or shut one's eyes, to the history and fixed policy of that Institution. It is tantamount to expecting the Church to commit suicide; for *religion is the mother of the evil*—the priesthood being probably the most ancient of exploiting classes. The pulpit has at best preached only *negative* or prohibitive morality. It has never commended or advocated the positive conditions of social wellbeing. The *orthodox* pulpit has never lifted a voice against exploitation—against the practice of class or trade preying upon the community. On the contrary, it has invariably condoned, sanctioned, or blessed the practice. The normal function of the pulpit is other-worldly; its aim is not social wellbeing as such, but to fortify and keep strong the believer's faith—in other words, to gain converts and to maintain its hold upon those already in the fold.

That society is in a deplorable state of moral torpor is obvious from its attitude towards exploitation in general and profiteering in particular—that is, in the freedom and respectability enjoyed by the profiteers, and in the necessity of resorting to *legislation* to check him! What modern society needs is an institution corresponding to the pulpit, to awaken the secular conscience to *social* evils and create a moral atmosphere in which the exploiter could no more exist than could animal life do in one deprived of oxygen. If the pulpit was an organ of "morality," and not that for buttressing up a topling "faith," there would be no occasion for the appointment of a Food Controller.

KERIDON.

The "Freethinker" in Liverpool.

We printed last week a letter from Mr. Silverman, criticising our comments on the boycotting and burning of the *Freethinker* at Liverpool. We have received many letters commentiug on the proceedings, and also the following from Mr. J. W. Gott, who was our informant in the first instance:—

> Dear Mr. Cohen,—If you will refer again to my letter describing the treatment of the *Freethinker* at the hands of the Liverpool Socialists, you will find that, instead of being two I. L. P. meetings, it was the Liverpool Fabian Society where several members threatened to resign unless the *Freethinker* was removed from the literature stall. And it was at the Islington Branch of the I. L. P. where a very heated discussion took place, and where it was decided that the unsold copies should be burned.
>
> Your correspondent, Ernest W. Silverman, is correct in stating that I was not present at the meeting of the Islington Branch of the I. L. P., but I made the statement on the authority of a member who was there—Mr. Thomson, Secretary of the Fabian Society, 30 Lord Street, Liverpool. The statement was confirmed by several other Socialists whose names I did not know.
>
> Now that that part of my statement referring to the burning of the *Freethinker* has been challenged by Mr. Silverman, I have seen Mr. Thomson again, and he reaffirms most positively that it was decided that the unsold copies should be burned.
>
> Now for a later experience which came immediately under my own notice on Sunday, March 4, at a meeting of the Liverpool and District Independent Labour Party, which includes all the Brauches, held at the rooms of the Edge Hill Branch, 264 Upper Parliament Street, for the purpose of considering the resolutions and amendments for the coming National I. L. P. Conference, and also for the purpose of *rejoicing* at the selection of a parson—Rev. Herbert Dunnico—as Parliamentary I. L. P. candidate for the West Derby Division of Liverpool. Again the question of having the *Freethinker* on the bookstall was raised, and again it was decided that it should be removed. This was not done without several strong protests of disapproval from members of the Edge Hill Branch. I am proud of my comrades' decision later on: that so far as the Edge Hill meetings were concerned, I might sell it at all times.
>
> Nobody, of course, buys the *Freethinker* unless they want it. Then why should the Christian Socialist section try to prevent them from getting it? I never heard of a Freethinker objecting to the sale of the *Christian Commonwealth*, although it is on sale at many meetings. Let's have toleration all round.—Yours faithfully, J. W. Gott.

Mr. Gott, it will be seen, reaffirms his statements, and, it seems to us, on good authority. And there is the statement of a Socialist official concerning the order to burn unsold copies of this paper. As Mr. Gott says, Christian papers are sold at many I. L. P. meetings, and no objection is raised. Why, then, object to the *Freethinker?* We have no space in which to pursue the matter further this week; we must leave it for Freethinking members of the I. L. P. to see that their opinions are treated with decency and respect. If *they* are content to see the I. L. P. run as a semi-Christian movement, well and good. We have done our part when we have made the matter public and entered our protest.

Acid Drops.

The piety of the *Daily Telegraph* is of a peculiar and expansive kind, and it creeps out often in the leading articles. In a recent utterance on the shipping crisis, it burst out "The times call for such an awakening movement as the Salvation Army undertook years ago in connection with the submerged tenth." Unfortunately, all the drums and tambourines of the "Blood and Fire" Crusade did not raise the "submerged tenth"—but the Salvation Army got a cheap advertisement, the effect of which is seen in the *Daily Telegraph's* remarks.

Sir Arthur Lee, Director-General of Food Production, has asked the clergy to invite their congregations to work on the land on Sundays, and he quoted a saying of Zoroaster: "He who sows the ground with care and diligence acquires a greater stock of religious merit than he could gain by the repetition of 10,000 prayers." There is a deal of Secularism in the remark.

The self-sacrificing heroism of the clergy deserves a volume devoted to the fascinating subject. According to an Essex newspaper, six local ministers are to compete in an apple-pie making competition at Westcliff-on-Sea. The report adds, "the pies will be made by the ministers at their own homes, and it is provided that no help is to be given."

Mrs. Sarah Jones, who has died at Rochford, Worcestershire, aged 103, worked in her garden till a few days before her death. Poor old Adam was gardening till he was near a thousand years old.

A good story is told of an Essex conscientious objector who has been imprisoned for his principles. Whilst in goal, the chaplain came to see him, and asked him what he was

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there for, and he replied, "For carrying out the teaching of your Master." A palpable hit!

The *Daily Mail* says "it is understood that several bishops are working in connection with the problem of venereal disease." What noses the clergy have for such things!

An extraordinary speech was delivered by Archdeacon Wakeford at Llangollen, in which he said "a great war was needed to save us from damnation. As a people, luxury and materialism dominated us, and God in his mercy smote us." The Archdeacon did not explain why thirteen other nations were suffering from the War, and why his Deity punished them for our shortcomings.

A recent law case was headed "Adam's Appeal." It had no connection with that little affair in the Garden of Eden.

Ramsgate school-children have saved their pence and invested £300 in the War Loan. The missionary boxes will not be so heavy in that locality.

A London daily paper states that women are not good at arithmetic. If this be so, the ladies share this failing with the dear clergy, who always make a tangle of the Trinity.

A daily paper devoted a lengthy paragraph to the subject of the King's laugh, which was described as being "jolly." That's one of the penalties of worshipping the Man of Sorrows.

An Essex evangelist boasted recently that he had distributed Bibles to some soldiers, and added that the men invariably went into action with them. It's a good thing his gifts were not family Bibles.

Those confounded Germans won't play the game in any direction. Although we have been assured on the highest clerical authority that Germany is a nation of Atheists, we see from the *Daily Express* that Herr Vereyon, Professor of Philosophy at Bonn, has been sent to the Western Front for delivering a lecture against Christian dogmas. Shameful! They are behaving just as though they were Christians.

The Rev. E. N. Gowing, speaking at Southend-on-Sea on the National Mission, said one of the greatest needs of the present time among the younger clergy was the spirit of reading. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the parsons are so shy of debates.

"There is indeed small justification for grumbling at the writing of the present time," says Mr. H. G. Wells. Evidently, Mr. Wells does not read the parish magazines and religious periodicals.

The announcement that Dean Henson, of Durham, will preach at the Nonconformist City Temple, London, has caused a flutter in the sectarian dovecotes. Strict Churchmen are expecting the Bishop of London to inhibit Dr. Henson, just as Bishop Gore did some years ago when he preached at Digbeth Institute, Birmingham. How these Christians do love one another.

The Rev. Kenneth Bond, of Chesterfield, has announced his intention of devoting seven Sundays to farm work. What courage! And where does Brother Bond expect to spend eternity?

Father Bernard Vaughan says: "The birth-rate was never so low. We should do something to promote a population worthy of the Empire." Excellent advice to come from a priest of a Church full of nuns and monks.

In an article on "Religion and the War" in the *Daily Chronicle*, the writer says that the ruins of the cathedrals and churches have stricken the population with remorse and sorrow. It is so like Christians to think more of damaged religious relics than of men's lives.

A London newspaper states that about two thousand French priests have been killed and wounded in the present War. In the same paper, one reads the thrilling announcement that the Rev. J. Haslam, an English Wesleyan minister, has started work at a Wigton jam factory. France uses her clergy, but we do not.

In a sermon on the wickedness of Sunday gardening, the Rev. J. R. Brown, Vicar of Canvey Island, Essex, said, "the Archbishop of Canterbury was as necessary as a Food Controller." As the shoemaker said, "There's nothing like leather."

The Jezreelites were once a fairly strong sect in England, but there are few left now. They were distinguished by a vow never to have their hair cut. One of them, named Richard Shilling, whose hair reached the ground, believed that the Archangel Michael had forbidden him to eat, and the coroner's jury returned a verdict of "Self-imposed starvation." They don't believe in angels in Kent.

A letter has been sent to the new "pastor" in the City Temple, who is in America, urging him not to run undue risk in coming to England in view of the submarine menace. He said he hoped to begin his ministry in April; but the people who have engaged him only believe in God's protection to a certain extent. "Trust in God." Yes, but not too much.

The clergy are, naturally, trying to turn the National Service movement to their own interests. The Moderators of the Church of Scotland and the U. F. General Assembly have issued a manifesto suggesting that teaching would be a work suitable to ministers, and it would release teachers for other service. We beg to assert that there is no work for which a minister of religion is less fitted than that of teaching. Many as are the disasters that have overtaken this country in consequence of the War, the heaviest of all would be to allow the clergy to enter the schools in the manner suggested.

How careful some people are to avoid offending Christian susceptibilities! Dr. Robertson, Superintendent of the Edinburgh Mental Hospital, says that Spiritualism is recorded amongst the causes of insanity. This may be true, but almost anything may serve as the occasion for an attack of insanity. And, after all, the part played by Spiritualism in producing insanity comes under the general head of "religion." There is no other form more hopeless than religious insanity.

The clergy are always asserting that this is a Christian country, but there are flies in the ointment. During January, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children dealt with 3,656 cases of neglect and cruelty. And the hymn tells us, "There's a friend for little children up above the bright blue sky."

Sir Charles Wakefield, ex-Lord Mayor of London, said in the present War the Eton boy and the slum boy were in the trenches together. He might have added that the clergy were safe at the back of the Front, or in the tea-shops at home.

One child was killed, and six other little ones seriously injured by the fall of a brick wall at the Catholic School of the Holy Name, Manchester. Yet, according to the papers, statues of the Virgin have been saved providentially on the Continent.

Many religious people are not above conceit when it is a question of paying out, and, where income-tax is concerned, they will take the meanest advantage of defrauding the revenue. An instance of that is the case of Mr. John Williams, J.P., managing director of the Clayton Tinplate Works, who is connected with the religious life of South Wales, is reported. He was severely lectured by Mr. Justice Bailbache, at the Glamorgan Assizes, and fined £4,000, with costs, for falsifying his income-tax returns. In 1916 defendant returned his income as £400, the true amount being a thousand pounds. What is that text about the eye of a needle?

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Special.

The latest rise in the price of paper has brought me a number of inquiries from friends as to what I purpose doing in view of the new situation thus created. I am pleased to have had these letters, since they show how keen is the interest taken in the welfare of the *Freethinker*; and it would be useless pretending, with the price of newspapers—daily and weekly—being increased in all directions, and party organs frankly admitting that they are engaged in a veritable struggle for existence, that the outlook is not a serious one. Hard as the struggle has been since the War commenced, it threatens to become still harder in the near future. But I do not wish to decide in a hurry, or act in a panic. Much will depend upon whether the price now asked for paper—five times that of the pre-War cost—is a panic price or not. A week or two longer should settle that question, and I will defer saying anything definite as to what plans I have in my mind. But a fresh order for paper will have soon to be placed; or, it may be necessary to purchase future supplies at once – this will mean the getting of ready money for that purpose. Meanwhile, I can assure all and sundry that the *Freethinker* in its present form is quite safe for the time. I am taking no unnecessary risks, but I am loth to make any demands upon the friends of this paper that are not imperative. Their loyalty and the assurances of their continued support has been a source of strength and inspiration to me, and for that I thank them most heartily.

Chapman Cohen.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 18, Leicester; March 25, Manchester; April 1, Portsmouth: April 8, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.

Libra.—Quite so; the only difference between the various brands of clergymen is the label. Pleased you are "enjoying the *Freethinker* more than ever."

G. Edwards.—Your remittance will cover five, not four, week's issue of the *Freethinker*, which will be sent you.—You can only be released from Church Parade by the goodwill of your officer.—We cannot answer your last question, as we are unaware of the gentleman's whereabouts.

Mr. E Robertshaw, of 1, Peter Street, Boothtown, Rotherham, Halifax, writes that he can supply D. Fisher with a copy of Buchner's *Force and Matter* if he will write him.

W. Bell.—We are inclined to agree with you that the majority of I.L.P. members are not intolerant It is often an active and shortsighted minority that are responsible for such things as those of which complaint is made.

W. Wright.—Received with thanks. As soon as we can manage it shall appear, but we are overloaded for the moment.

J. A. Reid.—Many actors, like many other people, find it profitable to exploit the prevailing superstition. When superstition ceases to *pay*, we shall have less of it on the stage.

Major Warren.—Thanks for cuttings. Will be useful. We have not yet had time to notice the *N. C.* article, but hope to do so.

Owing to many calls on our time during the past week, we are obliged to hold over a number of letters until next week.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

There was a good meeting at the Birmingham Town Hall last Sunday for Mr. Cohen's lecture on "Christianity and the War." The address was listened to with close attention, and frequently applauded. Mr. Willis occupied the chair, and managed to elicit a few questions from the audience. To-day (March 18) Mr. Cohen lectures at the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester.

Will Manchester friends please note that Mr. Cohen lectures in Manchester on Sunday next (March 25). The meetings, afternoon and evening, will be in "The Cozy Corner Picture Hall," at the corner of Swan Street and Oak Street, Shudehill. On Saturday evening (March 24) there will be a meeting of the Manchester members at the Merchants' Hotel, Oldham Street, to meet Mr. Cohen, and discuss with him, as President of the N. S. S. the future work of the Branch.

A debate has been arranged between Mr. Clifford Williams, of Birmingham, and Mr. E. Phillips, on the subject "Is There a God?" Mr. Phillips takes the affirmative, and the vicar of Walsall is to take the chair. The date of the encounter is March 19, at 8 p.m. Place, The Corporation Hall, Bridge Street, Walsall. We hope that Freethinkers will make a special note of the occasion.

A discussion will be opened this evening (March 18) at the St. Pancras Reform Club, 15, Victoria Road, Kentish Town Road, by Mr. H. E. Hunt, of the London Spiritual Alliance, on "Spiritualism both Reasonable and True." The meeting is held under the auspices of the North London Branch N. S. S., and commences at 7.30. Mr. Hunt is, we believe, one of the regular speakers for the Alliance, and should, therefore, speak with authority.

Several weeks ago we announced as nearly ready the new pamphlets—a reprint of Mr. Foote's *Christianity and Progress*, and *Christianity and Pagan Morality*, by Mr. Mann. The delay in issuing is due to no fault of ours. The paper for them was duly bought, but it has not yet been delivered. The trouble appears to be due to want of labour to get the paper from the mills to our office. However, we expect to have it in a few days, and then we can go ahead.

The Reflections of Riquet (A Dog).

One day, a broken jug, filled with water, was being carried across the drawing-room, and moistened the wax floor. I think that that wicked jug was well whipped.

During the sleep of men, of dogs, of houses, of trees, one sees forms that are pleasant, and forms that are terrible. And when one awakes, those forms have disappeared.

When I wish, I speak. Out of the mouth of my master there come some sounds that form sense. But the sense is a great deal less plain than that which I make by the sounds of my voice. In my mouth all has a sense. In that of my master's there is much vain noise. It is difficult, but necessary, to guess the thoughts of my master.

Anatole France (Translated by H. W. Edwards).

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The French Revolution.

VI.

PARIS AT BAY.

(Continued from p. 141).

BY the insurrection of May 31 to June 2, Marat and the "sections" of Paris hoped that they had cleared the way for drastic social reform, for the confiscation of excessive incomes for the benefit of the distressed, the disestablishment of the Church, the compulsory war-loan, and all the other measures whose enactment or execution had been held up by the reactionary influences in the Convention. The Girondists, however, had no intention of submitting quietly to what they regarded as a lawless outrage on constitutional authority. In the days following June 2, many of those deputies who had been expelled eluded their guards, repaired to the departments, and proceeded to raise civil war against Paris. The departmental authorities everywhere, like the Convention itself, were elected indirectly and undemocratically, and most of them, including the entire south and west of France, declared against Marat and the "Mountain." Lyons, as has been mentioned, was already in arms, and Marseilles, Toulon, Bordeaux, and Normandy followed the lead so given. Paris seemed isolated and doomed. To make matters worse, the war continued to go ill for France. The treachery of Dumouriez had left the French armies disorganized and helpless. The Austrians, supported now by an English army, drove the French out of Belgium, invaded France, and took Valenciennes and Conde. The towns in Germany occupied by the French were recaptured. At the same time, France was invaded by Spain in the south, while England blockaded the French ports, stopped all imports of provisions, and helped the other Allies with money. The peasant revolt in La Vendee, already mentioned, made formidable headway. At first merely a "pogrom" got up by the priests, the rising soon attracted the support of Royalist nobles like Lescure and La Rochejacquelein, under whom the insurgents took Saumur and Angers, attacked Nantes, and aspired to march on Paris. These Vendean insurgents have been represented by sentimental religious writers as poor innocent lambs, butchered without provocation by the wicked Republicans. As a matter of fact, terrible atrocities were perpetrated by the Vendeans before the Republic was in any position to meet them. Religious wars have always been most savage; and those Republicans might think themselves lucky who were killed outright, and were not reserved (as in many cases) to be tortured, crucified, or buried alive by the peasants, mad with the poisonous religious hatred fanned by their priests.

What with Prussians, Austrians, Spaniards, English, Vendean Royalists, and Girondists at Lyons and other towns, the plight of Parisian democracy looked perilous indeed. Paris was in no position to insist on a comprehensive social programme for the whole country. While, therefore, the municipality took on its own initiative, and for Paris alone, such measures as the enforcement of the maximum price for commodities, the levying of the compulsory loan, the organization of the armed populace into a "revolutionary army," etc., the Convention, beyond one important measure ordering the partition of confiscated land among the peasant population, and sweeping away the remnants of feudal rights, was chiefly concerned rather to conciliate than to defy the revolted departments. Six "Montagnard" deputies were nominated to frame, as quickly as possible, a democratic constitution, which, while instituting direct manhood suffrage, and maintaining municipal self-government, should assure the departments that there was no intention of imposing a Socialist regime on them against their will. This project, known as the Constitution of 1793, was mainly the work of Herault de Sechelles, an ex-noble of advanced opinions, and an intimate friend of Danton. While carrying political democracy further than it had ever been carried before, it left social reform an open question, to be settled as occasion arose. This scheme was adopted by the Convention, and submitted for acceptance to the people throughout France. It was immensely popular, and to a great extent cut away the ground from beneath the feet of the Girondist insurgents. However, it was clearly impossible to put the Constitution into force when part of the country was occupied by invaders or rebels; and the Constitution remained in abeyance.

One last severe blow the Girondists were able to strike before they went under. Inflamed by the talk of the Girondist deputies who, after escaping from Paris, had foregathered at Caen in Normandy, a young lady named Charlotte Corday went up from Caen to Paris with the intention of killing Marat. As leader and spokesman of the Parisian democracy, Marat was odious to the Girondists more than any other man. He was at this time broken down in health, and confined to his house. Charlotte Corday wrote to him, pretending that she had important information to give, and also that she was unhappy and persecuted for her Revolutionary opinions. Marat (a kindly man, in spite of his hot-headed and irritable disposition) received her. He was so ill that he had to sit in a covered bath, with a board and writing materials placed across it. While he was writing down her information, Charlotte Corday plunged a dagger into his heart. She was seized, tried, and guillotined. But *L'Ami du Peuple* was dead, and there was no one in the Democratic party who combined such an insight into social conditions with such self-effacing sincerity. Reactionary historians have represented him as a criminal lunatic thirsting for blood and rapine. His temperament led him often to express himself in lurid and violent language; and his circular commending the September massacres is really deplorable. But, on the whole, the Revolution produced no better and honester man, and few abler men, than Jean-Paul Marat.

Bitterly did the common people of Paris mourn their friend and hero. The body lay in state in the Cordeliers' Club, that centre of advanced ideas, where Marat had helped to organize the demand for Radical reform in days when it was dangerous to do so. His funeral was honoured, like that of Lapelletier St. Fargeau, his predecessor in martyrdom, by the attendance of the Convention in a body, followed by the municipality of Paris and a vast concourse of people.

The assassination of Marat took place on July 13, 1793. On July 16, at Lyons, the Girondists guillotined Chalier, his friend and disciple, who had preached the social revolution to the workers of that city, and had been arrested when the wealthy seized power there.

If Charlotte Corday really thought that by stabbing Marat she was serving humanity, she was terribly mistaken. The effect of the deed was to provoke the Democratic party to greater energy, and to measures of reprisal. The Convention declared outlaws those Girondist deputies who were fomenting civil war, and ordered the trial of those who had remained in Paris. On August 10, the anniversary of the downfall of the monarchy, a festival was held in Paris in honour of the Democratic constitution, which had been accepted by an overwhelming majority of the people. The delegates who had come to Paris for the occasion demanded, in view of the foreign and domestic crisis, the arrest of all suspected persons, and a new general levy for the Army. No one dreamt of returning to

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settled government until the soil of France should be free from invasion and rebellion. The Girondists in Normandy had been forced to disperse, but La Vendee was still ablaze, Lyons and Toulon defied the Government, and the Austrians were in the north with nothing between them and Paris. They might, in fact, have marched on the capital, but for their anxiety to reduce the towns on the Franco-Belgian frontier, which they hoped to retain if peace were made.

A change now took place in the Government. The disasters without and within had shaken confidence in the first Committee of Public Safety and in Danton, its chief member. On July 10, before the murder of Marat, a new committee had been elected; the number had been reduced to nine, and Danton had been left out. The nine members were all advanced Radical Republicans, except one, Barere, a man of the "Marsh," a fickle and impressionable man, ready to swim with the stream. Robespierre was elected in a vacancy later in July. In August, the body was strengthened by the addition of Carnot, an army officer of great ability, to whom was entrusted the organization of national defence. At the beginning of September two men were added, to whom was given the task of establishing the authority of the Government at home—Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois. These two men were the extremists of the committee. They followed Marat in his social policy, and believed that the object of the Republic should be the abolition of riches and poverty through heavy death duties, the limitation of private ownership of land, and (in short) steady development in a Socialist direction. Unfortunately, Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois had not the superb loyalty to an idea that had marked Marat, and they were vindictive to a degree which far surpassed his most violent moods. Both of them, in fact, were party pamphleteers, whose *metier* was to popularize the ideas of abler men than themselves, and who ought never to have been asked to govern men.

The new Radical Cabinet (for that is what the Committee of Public Safety really was) was speedily armed by the Convention with perilous and extraordinary powers, dictated solely by the war situation. Danton, an abler man than all of them put together, and whose dismissal from power was a public misfortune, loyally supported his successors in office. The Revolutionary Tribunal was strengthened in *personnel* to enable it to deal with more cases. The "law of suspects"—a measure analogous to our Defence of the Realm Act—was passed, providing for the arrest and detention of all dangerous and suspicious characters, *i.e.*, all nobles, Royalists, Girondists, and enemies of the Government generally. The distress in Paris was met by the rough-and-ready method of paying every workman two francs a time for attending the meetings of his "section," which were held twice a week. At the same time, universal military service was introduced; everyone, from 18 to 40, was to be enrolled in the Army; France was to be an armed camp; and commissioners of the Convention were to accompany every army to see that the generals did their duty, and that mess, muddle, and make-believe were avoided. In this way fourteen armies were soon at the disposal of Carnot, the War Minister (in fact, though not in name). The Austrians and English were beaten back at Hondschoote and Wattignies, Carnot himself leading a charge at the latter engagement. The Vendean insurrection was gradually brought under. Lyons was besieged, bombarded, and fell early in October. Toulon, which had called in English assistance, still held out, and was not taken till December. It was at the siege of Toulon that Napoleon Bonaparte, then a young subordinate officer, first distinguished himself.

Before the fruits of the new organization were reaped, Danton's health broke down, and he had to retire to his country home to recuperate. The effect of this was to leave the Government without any effective criticism. The one man who, now that Marat was dead, might have given ballast to the ship of State, was out of the way. The lamentable consequences of this accident will now demand our attention.

Robert Arch.

(To be continued.)

Christianity as the Symbolism of Factuality.

A Reply by the Vicar of Bromyard.

In replying to Mr. J. T. Lloyd's criticism of my recent sermon on "The Father-heart of God and the World-agony of War," I should like first to acknowledge its kind and reasonable temper. The day, I hope, is fast passing when these great questions at issue could only be discussed in an atmosphere of anger and acrimony. In approaching these interesting problems it is only right that we should seek to discard the imputation of motives which has too often characterized their discussion, and to conduct it with calmness and such freedom from prejudice as we can attain.

As Mr. Lloyd says, that "so far as the negative position of this discourse is concerned we are in hearty agreement with it," there is little need for me further to labour it. But he is uncompromisingly opposed to my effort "to discern the traces of a Divine Father's heart in the existing European situation." He will, perhaps, remember that I said that "the Father-heart is not in man's follies and crimes but in his aspirations and true ideals, not in any war except in the sacrifice and devotion which attend it." The Father-heart is, therefore, in my view not to be found in the European situation *as a whole*, but only in the highest and best part of it—*i.e.*, in human nature at its best. In my sermon I distinctly said that it was in "the ever-growing spirit of humanity alone where, it seems to me, we should seek the evidence of the great Father-heart."

But Mr. Lloyd demurs to my differentiating the idea of Fatherhood as the communication of life from the idea of Fatherhood as the outpouring of love. He says "the one gives the lie direct to the other." But does it? Will Mr. Lloyd deny that the two represent actual facts of human existence? The Fatherly communication of life is ever going on, and has been going on for many myriads of æons. It is involved in parentage, and in the most simple and elementary generation. Does Mr. Lloyd not share what Mr. Herbert Spencer called "the absolute certainty that we are ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed?" He says that "to call Nature God is a most deplorable instance of misnaming." And yet immediately afterwards he adds: "that the poet may and does personify" Nature, and that "Meredith now and then uses the theological name God." But is a preacher really to be denied that which a poet and a novelist may enjoy? May I not be allowed to substitute a little time-honoured word of three letters for Spencer's "Infinite and Eternal Energy?" Did I not admit that as the communication of life God stands for the great world process, for that stream of tendency by which all things seek to fulfil the law of their being? If Shelley, Keats, and Meredith are permitted by Mr. Lloyd to call this God, why may not I? And the more so since I acknowledged that "in the presence of a mystery apparently everlastingly impenetrable we are all Agnostics"—priests and philo-

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sophers, poets and novelists alike! This being so, my chief concern is not that the universe should be provided with "a great first cause," but that the universe should be ultimately of a kind to accord with my deepest rational and moral demands. For this reason I sought to dismiss in my sermon the first idea of Fatherhood as quickly as I could. It is with the other idea that I am more interested and concerned. And so, apparently, is Mr. Lloyd. For at the end of his article I find these words: "The time has fully come for the commencement of a new period of energetic, whole-hearted activity, of the manifestation of the will to growth and development of that brother-heart which will make the whole world kin," etc. Compare this sentence of Mr. Lloyd's with one from my sermon: "There are those who, by their devoted work for the welfare of a posterity they seldom or never seem to envisage, bear their splendid, if often unwitting, testimony to the ever-growing presence of the great Father-heart." The difference, therefore, between Mr. Lloyd and myself is merely one of terminology. There is not the slightest dispute between us as to the fact that in the vast world-process, of which humanity appears to be the highest result, there are traces of "the outpouring of love." The only difference between us is that while Mr. Lloyd call these traces "the brother-heart," I call them "the Father-heart." In what way, therefore, does the "outpouring of love" (Mr. Lloyd's "brother-heart") give the lie direct to "the communication of life"? I said in my sermon that I did not know how to reconcile the idea of the Father of experience (Mr. Lloyd's "brother-heart"), with the idea of the Father of Science and Philosophy (Mr. Spencer's Infinite and Eternal Energy). Because if there be a unity behind creation, then this unity causes or sanctions some very awful conditions. For the same mysterious Power (Spencer's Infinite and Eternal Energy, or my Fatherly communication of life) which has produced the tenderest sentiments of the most loving earthly parent (Mr. Lloyd's "brother-heart" or my Fatherly "outpouring of love") has also evolved those shocking cruelties which, by hurting or destroying the child, agonize that parent's heart." Although I am unable to reconcile them, I do not deny their co-existence. But Mr. Lloyd asserts that "these two hostile Fathers cannot possibly co-exist." Not two hostile Fathers, perhaps, but two hostile conceptions of the one Father. Does Mr. Lloyd believe what Spencer called "the absolute certainty that we are ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed?" If he does so believe, and if, at the same time, he also believes in "the growth and development of the brother-heart," then how is it possible for him to maintain that these "two hostile Fathers"—(1) the communication of life, and (2) the outpouring of love "cannot possibly co-exist?" The two conceptions do co-exist and stand for something very real whatever name, he, or I, and Spencer, or any other, man choose to give them.

Nay, more; "the outpouring of love" (my "Father-heart," Mr. Lloyd's "brother-heart") is part of the result of "the communication of life." Even the last *R.P.A. Annual* (1917) acknowledges that "there is no great practical harm in the belief that the world is directed by the will of God, so long as we clearly recognize that its good ends can be attained only through the active and enlightened co-operation of the will of man." (And yet, surely Mr. Archer will allow that there are some good ends in Nature—a lovely sunset, to wit—which are not attained through the co-operation of the will of man! But let me go on with my quotation.) "When we are asked, What actuates the will of man? Whence comes that slow-moving but irresistible bias towards the good (my 'Father-heart'; Mr. Lloyd's 'brother-heart' again!) to which we owe all the progress that has been achieved from the days of the cave-man onwards? Is it the work of God? It is certainly the most plausible evidence we possess of the existence of some well-meaning power at work behind the framework of things," even though Mr. Archer will "not allow that it points to the omnipotent personal God, the magnified and non-natural man of the theological creeds." But with this I am not now immediately concerned. I freely admit that Christians as a whole are apt to confuse religious "judgments of value" with so-called heaven-made quasi-scientific statements. But it is only fair for us all to remember that it is not only the pathway of religion which is strewn with errors more or less discarded. All that I am out now to maintain is that the Father-communication of life does co-exist with the Father-outpouring of love; that Spencer's Infinite and Eternal Energy and Mr. Lloyd's "brother-heart" are co-existent, and that the latter is part of the outcome of the former.

The God in whom I believe is "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," *i.e.*, the "brother-heart" of Mr. Lloyd, immanent in human nature, working itself out with sure and certain progress as the ages roll on. He is also transcendent—the Ideal and Goal towards which all things, I believe, are tending. This twofold Divine revelation is "through the universal order rather than through the miracles of sacred story; through the present hunger for righteousness rather than in the ancient tables of commandments; through the beauty and joy of the present life rather than in the authoritative promises of heaven; through the loving, redeeming, forgiving, triumphant, spiritual energies of all sorts and conditions of men rather than by the accurate believings and corporate continuance of the ecclesiastical few."

The Christian Church is an instrument which has not been made to play nearly all the tunes of which it is capable. It has but to apply its really vital principles, and it will transform the world and lead it to perfection. It will some day expand sufficiently to unite all the supreme seers and revealers of the Divine. For the ultimate principles of the Christian religion, as Sir Ray Lankester has shown, are supreme and unassailable. So long as mankind has spiritual instincts and spiritual aspirations, they can never go out of date or lose their power. For there is a spiritual force which, when free to apply itself without the mythical accretions which have been allowed to develop, can bind man to man and nation to nation by an inner bond stronger than selfishness, ambition, or any material thing. But for my part, I value and welcome any and every criticism, from whatever quarter, which will make religion a worthier and more perfect attempt to realize the most noble and perfect ideal with which it is entrusted.

FRANCIS E. POWELL.

The Terrible Turk.

THE stranger was bewildered. He was carefully scrutinizing a row of recruiting posters which adorned the railings round St. Martin's Church. The man was obviously out of place. His clothes were quite ludicrous, and yet he bore himself as Mahomet might have done had he been compelled to select and don a wardrobe from a slop-shop. The man wore a faded frock-coat and corduroy trousers. A pot hat was tightly gripped in his hand, and had never been on his head. Perhaps he did not know it was meant to wear. He held it as a priest might hold a powerful amulet. A flaming red workman's handkerchief tied round his neck

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completed the get-up. The passers-by were justly amused, yet the more intelligent could not laugh, for there was no element of humour in the face and forehead of the man. They wondered where they had seen that beard and those eyes before, oddly familiar somehow.

* * * *

A recruiting sergeant stepped up to him. "What about enlisting, my lad?" The stranger was still engrossed in the posters, but now he slowly turned and spoke: "Those that take the sword shall perish with the sword," he said. The words were familiar enough, but were spoken as if for the first time. The sergeant, who was a Churchman, was annoyed. "Nonsense," he said, "you know what the Bishop of Lebanon has said about all that, if you don't—well you ought to. Come on, my lad." His voice got loud. "There's the King's uniform waiting for yer, better than what yer've got on." In another three minutes P. C. Scuffle and his colleagues at law were dispersing a crowd, and pushing their way through to stop the stranger speaking, for he had mounted the church steps and was quietly addressing the crowd which had collected, while he was talking with the sergeant. The servant of the State heard what he was saying and redoubled his efforts. "Blessed are the peacemakers....." P.C. Scuffle at last, over a massacre of footwear, reached the stranger. "Ere, you," he panted, "you 'old yer gas in, and bloomin' well come along o' me to the station. Quietly now!" There was no reason to add the warning, for the stranger offered no sign of resistance, only turning astonished eyes at the policeman, who had now turned his attention to the slowly evaporating crowd. "Op it, can't yer—git along 'ome—move along!" he shouted. The crowd finally faded away as the dreary little cortege set off for the police station, constable, prisoner, and the usual hangers-on. P.C. Scuffle was not unkindly, and seeing that his charge was a stranger to London, began to point out the various signs as they went along. "Darn there," said P.C. Scuffle, "is the Lor Corts and the Temple." The Stranger turned. "Yus, my boy, the Temple, where the loryers 'ang out." The Stranger spoke: "It is said my house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." The constable pondered. Then realizing that the honour of the Force was implicated, and that dangerous doctrine was afoot, he gripped the stranger by the collar and hustled him all the way to Bow Street.

* * * *

Mr. Pilot was on the bench and Mr. Gimlet was prosecuting for the Crown. The usual procession of "drunk and disorderlies" was at end, and the fines collected. Mr. Gimlet, in the course of his address, said that the prisoner was charged with a very serious offence, namely, a flagrant violation of the Defence of the Realm Act. He had shamelessly and publicly made remarks which were highly prejudicial to recruiting. What was worse, he was an enemy alien who had neglected to register himself as such. In fact, no registration entry could be found at all. It appeared that prisoner had been born in a suburb of Jerusalem and consequently was a Turkish subject.

Mr. Pilot: Are you a Turkish subject?

Prisoner: My kingdom is not of this world.

Mr. Pilot: Charming! I might almost say quite Turkish delightful. (Laughter). But the answer is hardly a reply to my question.

Mr. Gimlet: Prisoner, your worship, admitted his nationality before the inspector. He is undoubtedly a Turk.

Mr. Pilot: Yes, indeed! A terrible Turk! (Laughter).

Mr. Gimlet: The Crown, however, are willing to take a lenient view of the case, as the demeanour of the prisoner suggests a weak mind.

Mr. Pilot: Is it known how the prisoner managed to effect a landing in this country.

Mr. Gimlet: Prisoner's answer to the inspector was evasive.

Mr. Pilot: How did you manage to land in this country?

Prisoner: An angel brought me hither to preach to you and to all men the glad tidings of peace and goodwill towards men.

Mr. Pilot: Eh, *what!* An angel! Really this Mons story seems to be working on people's minds. (Laughter). In fact I may say the story is nothing short of *monstrous*. (Renewed laughter). In any case, I can't understand any angels deliberately transplanting an alien enemy into this country to preach obnoxious peace doctrines. A very dangerous practice. In fact, to such an angel, I should quote the old song, "Go up! fly away."

Mr. Gimlet: Such a reply, your worship, supports the view the Crown takes of the case, that is, that prisoner is weak-minded.

Mr. Pilot: Most certainly, Mr. Gimlet. Perhaps he is infected with religious fanaticism. (To Prisoner): What is your religion?

Prisoner: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbour as thyself.

Mr. Pilot: I do wish you would cease from quoting. It is a most objectionable habit. Answer briefly, and, of course, respectfully. This is a court of law, and you are charged with a serious offence; do, do not treat the matter with levity.

Prisoner: What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

Mr. Pilot: Haven't I just told you *not* to quote. Do cease. There is no one who is a greater admirer of our national bard than I am, even though he *is* a naturalized Hun, but these everlasting quotations are annoying. How do you manage to live? What is your occupation?

Prisoner: Take no thought for the morrow saying: "What shall we eat or what ——"

Mr. Pilot: Silence!

Mr. Gimlet: With all due deference, your worship, I submit that the prisoner's quotations are not Shakespeare but appear (Mr. Gimlet lowered his voice reverently) in Holy Writ, in fact, with all due deference, your worship, they are in the Bible. The prisoner is evidently insane. One would think by his speech that he was Our Blessed Lord....."

Prisoner: *I am.* (Loud laughter).

Remanded for medical examination.

Edwin Greenwood.

Funeral of Mrs. C. Pegg.

The cremation of Mrs. C. Pegg took place on Thursday, March 8, at the Manchester Crematorium, in the presence of a number of friends of the late Secretary of the Manchester Branch of the N. S. S. Mr. C. Pegg, accompanied by his daughter and her husband, Dr. Paterson, were present, and many other friends of the Secular Movement in Manchester. The service was a musical one, and an address was delivered by Mr. Cohen, who travelled specially from London for that purpose. Mr. Cohen paid a warm tribute to the thirty-five years during which Mrs. Pegg had worked with loyalty and devotion to the cause of Freethought. Such a record was not only an honourable one in itself, it was part of that larger work which men and women all over the country were

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engaged with the single ideal of the uplifting of humanity. So long a service in such a cause argued a strength of character, a sincerity of purpose, and a sense of duty not common in either men or women. Our lives were passed amid circles of friends—whether those circles were great or small. It was their judgment on our actions that kept the memory of us green, and tried by that test Mrs. Pegg had no cause to fear.

The date of publication of the *Freethinker* prevented the news of Mrs. Pegg's death being known to most Manchester Freethinkers, but among those present were Mr. W. Bailey and Mr. and Mrs. Crompton, who represented the old guard of Manchester Freethought.—C. C.

Correspondence.

A MARRIAGE "CONTROLLER."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Sunday Pictorial* for March 4 there appeared an article on "A Ministry of Matrimony," by Lawrence Clarke. It is both an indication of the propaganda for larger families, that is likely to go on as a result of the War, and an exhibition of the nonsense that can be written on the subject.

The writer informs us that we must find a woman who will be able to solve the population problem for us in a practical way. Evidently the writer fails to grasp the fact that the problem is one which cannot be solved by any one person. He suggests that there "must be a Dictator, drawn from the sex whose interests are more nearly affected by this problem." That woman should play a very large part in any attempt to solve the population problem will be admitted, I think, by all Freethinkers. To me, however, it is ridiculous to talk about a great social problem of this kind as being one that more nearly affects woman than man, and as a "problem that is particularly and essentially her own." The population problem will never be solved unless men and women work together for its solution. Mr. Clarke further suggests instructing every potential mother in maternal hygiene, which is an excellent suggestion; but I doubt if this kind of teaching would be fully successful in the hands of a Dictator of Matrimony and her workers up and down the country. The teaching of national hygiene must become an essential part of the whole of our educational system, as regards females, if a reasonable measure of success is to be attained. Not only so, the importance of sexual hygiene must be taught to both boys and girls when they reach a suitable age. The nebulous sociology and psychology of Mr. Clarke is revealed in the following: "How deftly our Woman Minister of Matrimony would fling a noose over the heads of a million young warriors returning from the Front, and lead them to the altar. How graciously she would fairy-godmother these same young millions." And, again, "Every unwed man in the land would fly to the Minister of Matrimony for surcease of his forlorn and unpatriotic condition." What bosh to imagine that it is possible for a Ministry of Matrimony to deal with all the varied temperaments of unwed people and bring about happy marriages.

The writer seems to be blinded by the idea that an increase in marriages and the number of babies is going to strengthen England's position after the War. He does not seem to realize that marriage and the bringing of children into the world should be determined by the physiological condition of the persons concerned, and by their economic condition. He makes no mention of the need of increased wages for a large section of the community, and neglects the fact that efficiency in citizenship is more important than mere numbers. He tells us to "set up a birth-rate barometer on every town hall portal." Babies wanted for future slaughter, I suppose!

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Mrs. Kelly: "So th' magistrate sint yure poor little Timmy t' th' refarmatory? Sich a good choild, too."

Mrs. Grady: "Shure, an' he wort hot, Mrs. Kelly. Iviry-thing thot darlint iver shtole he'd bring roight home t' his mother. He wor thot good Oi wor goin' t' make a priesht out av 'im."

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, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "Spiritualism, both Reasonable and True." Opened by H. Ernest Hunt; opposed by T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, F. A. Davies, "Christianity and the Joy of Life."

MR. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, March 22, at 7.30.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Chapman Cohen, "Christianity and the Logic of Life."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Buildings, second floor): 6.30, R. Chapman, "Epicureans."

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Views and Opinions.

Sunday Labour and the Clergy.

The War, which the clergy hoped to have turned to the advantage of the Churches, is serving to break down another hallowed tradition of British Christianity. The food shortage has brought to the front the question of Sunday labour. In munition works, Sunday labour has long been the rule, and battles are being fought as freely on Sundays as on other days. But the battles were being fought out of Britain, and munition workers were labouring under cover. To that extent the face of British Christianity was saved; and while this Sunday labour could proceed in comparative obscurity, our Churches, with their customary hypocrisy, remained silent. But agricultural labour is open to the light of day; and if labour is permissible on Sunday, it seems hard to discover why amusements and recreation should not be permitted also. So the clergy are on the horns of a dilemma. If they oppose Sunday labour, they lay themselves open to the accusation of placing a sectarian shibboleth before national welfare. If they countenance it, they are destroying the sanctity of the "Sawbath." So the compromising bless and the uncompromising curse. The Archbishop of Canterbury sanctions work for food production on Sunday, while the National Free Church Council passes a resolution against it with only two dissentients. Perhaps a *via media* might be found by allotting to those who object to Sunday labour their proportion of land, and let them try raising crops by prayer—and live on the harvest thus obtained.

* * *

The Collapse of a Bubble.

Never before, perhaps, has the inefficiency, the shallowness, and the radical dishonesty of the religious mind been so clearly indicated as it has been during the continuance of the War. Its dishonesty was demonstrated by the attempts to foist upon the public stories of a great religious revival, in the face of irrefutable evidence to the contrary. That seems now to have broken down hopelessly. The *Church Times*, as representing the Catholic section of the National Church, laments that:—

> The cause of religion is not flourishing either in England or in the world to-day. From all that we can see of things at home, and from all that we hear of the armies abroad, it seems that the majority of men are occupying themselves very little in thoughts of religion.

And, as representing another section, the *Christian World* cites a Southport vicar who declares that the much-boomed National Mission is a "ghastly failure," and that different sections have been simply trying to "bluff" each other into believing that it has been otherwise. So we have one falsehood after another, each worked for all it is worth while it shows the least evidence of vitality, to be replaced by another boom or another falsehood, to be worked at high pressure for so long as is possible. In this respect the pulpit runs the Yellow Press hard for first place in a thoroughly discreditable competition.

* * *

Pious Humbug.

The curious thing to note is the way in which politicians—of a kind—play to the clergy and lend them aid in their endeavour to gull the public. Thus, the Right Hon. John Hodge, whose fitness for office might be less a matter of opinion if he ceased talking, informed a Church of England Men's Society: "He looked to the men in the Church of England to act as the leaven in the lump. Every good Christian and citizen was required to do his best when peace was declared to assist in repairing the ravages of war." And if this is to be done, "two things were essential to the future; scientific organization by the employer, and increased productivity on the part of the worker." How this is to secure the establishment of more *human* relations between employer and employed, Mr. Hodge did not explain; probably he did not know; being quite content to throw out a number of the now stale platitudes about the spirit of self-sacrifice abroad, the breaking down of class feeling, etc., etc. The fact that all over the country, from the petty shopkeeper up to the merchant prince, from the carter with a one-horse van up to the owner of huge ships, there is going on a colossal game of grab, in which each considers himself justified in screwing the last halfpenny out of the nation's necessities, does not affect Mr. Hodge's trust in the men of the Church of England as those who will "leaven the lump." If Mr. Hodge had paused to consider the silence of the Church of England with regard to the plundering of the poor in the shape of excessive food prices, he might have felt less certain of getting assistance from the Church in bringing about desirable social conditions after the War. For our own part, we feel confident that when the War is over, as before the War commenced, religion will resume its historic function of inducing contentment in the interests of the governing classes.

* * *

Mass Morality.

One would have thought that by this time even the cant talk about the self-sacrificing spirit engendered by the War, the moralizing influence of this ghastly chemi-

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cal and machine slaughter would have worn too thin for use by even that awesome product, the pious politician. For our own part we agree with the Bishop of Peterborough: "It is not safe to argue that because men have agreed to sink their differences in the face of a great peril that these differences will not spring into life and vigour when the peril is past." Or with Dean Inge:—

> A lower standard of morality is usually found when people are acting in a mass than when they act individually. The present war and similar horrors are only possible because of a prevalent system of co-operative guilt with limited liability.....It is poor consolation that heads are no longer broken at elections for hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness run riot on the platforms, in the newspapers, and even in some pulpits.

That, we think, expresses both a psychologic and a sociologic truth. It would require an inconceivable degree of callousness for each individual to remain sane and feel that he was partly responsible for such a conflict as is now proceeding. It is borne because each one shelves his or her responsibility on the community as a whole. War establishes a mass morality that is of necessity on a low level because it lacks the refining and restraining influence of individual responsibility. But that is not progression, it is retrogression. We habitually live and think on a lower scale during war than we do during a time of peace. Analyse a great deal of the current "Patriotism" and there will be found not the patriotism that is motived by a love of country or a love of one's fellows, but the lower tribal feeling of hatred of some other country or group of people. One tenth of the motive power expressed in hatred of Germany or Turkey, if existent before the War, and expressed in terms of a genuine love of one's country, would have made it quite unnecessary to look for a desirable social state after the War—it would already have existed.

* * *

The Impotency of the Churches.

When all the chatter of the Churches is done with, there is one final indisputable fact that stands out as a clear condemnation of Christian rule and Christian influence. For centuries the Christian Church has held a position of power and influence in the world of European civilization. More than thirty generations of people have grown up and passed away with the Christian religions exerting a profound influence on their lives. The Church could make and unmake kings, it could strike a whole people with terror by a threat of excommunication, and plunge nations into war in defence of an article of faith. And, withal, the Christian nations of Europe have found themselves powerless to combine for any single purpose under the sun save that of waging war. A few years back this country was squabbling over an Old Age Pensions measure, and protesting its inability to spend a few millions a year for that purpose. To-day it can pride itself on spending on war as much in a day or so as was needed for Old Age Pensions during a whole year. Sixteen centuries of Christian domination found Europe ready for war, for the simple reason that it was neither ready nor fit for peace. And to-day the Churches, which might have stood as the natural mediators between nations at war, and so have commanded the respect of men, even though it could not obtain their adherence, are in all countries energetic in fomenting hatred and division. It is certain that when a better understanding between men does come it will be due to no effort on the part of the Churches. To our mind it is quite as certain that that better understanding will arrive the sooner the already dwindling, hold of the Churches on men and women is altogether relinquished.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Christianity as the Symbolism of Factuality."

UNDER the above heading, the Rev. E. Powell, Vicar of Bromyard, does me the honour of replying in the *Freethinker* for March 18, to my article, entitled "The Futility of Theodicies," which appeared in this journal for the 4th inst. That article was a review of a sermon by Mr. Powell on "The Father-Heart of God and the World Agony of War." The tone of the reply is everything that could be desired, and I trust the same will be true of my rejoinder. Clearly what we both desire is a knowledge of the truth on the subject under discussion. My contention was, and is, that what Mr. Powell gives us in his interesting discourse is "not the scientific conception of God, but an unscientific conception of Nature." He now asks me whether or not I believe in what Herbert Spencer calls "the absolute certainty that we are ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed," and I answer that I have neither consciousness nor knowledge of the presence of any such Energy. I accept the scientific view that the Universe is infinite in extent and of eternal duration, but I am unable to believe in "an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed." Besides, even Spencer himself did not believe in its existence as apart from and of prior existence to the Universe. To hold that the Universe is but the fleeting manifestation of some Reality, or that it is but a surface veil of phenomena, is to part company with known facts, and speculate upon unverifiable assumptions. To me the Universe itself, "as a vast and orderly mechanism," is the only Reality of which we have any knowledge. But let us think, for a moment, of this "Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed," in which Mr. Powell believes; and it is this Energy that he personifies and calls God. Then he adds: "The God in whom I believe is 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'" Now, to a student of the Four Gospels nothing can be more certain than that Jesus regarded God as a person apart from and above the Universe, and whose will the Universe fulfilled. I repeat that nothing can be more undeniable than this, and it is equally incontrovertible that this faith of Jesus has been shared by the orthodox Church in all ages. What I maintain is that people who verily believe in the personality and fatherhood of God, in the sense that Jesus did, cannot personify Nature and call her God without being guilty of an act of gross misnaming. It is true that poets do sometimes so personify Nature; but when they do, nothing is further from their minds than that they should be taken literally. George Meredith takes the precaution of explaining his meaning in his fine ode, entitled *France: December, 1870.* In those sad days, what France needed was not comfort which the Church offered her.

> Could France accept the fables of her priests,
> Who blest her banners in this game of beasts,
> And now bid hope that heaven will intercede
> To violate its laws in her sore need;
> She would find comfort in their opiates.

But it was for Strength France yearned.

> For Strength, her idol once, too long her toy;

and,

> Lo, Strength is of the plain root-Virtues born:
> Strength shall ye gain by service, prove in scorn,
> Train by endurance, by devotion shape.
> Strength is not won by miracle or rape.
> It is the offspring of the modest years,
> The gift of sire to son, *thro' those firm laws*
> *Which we name Gods*; which are the righteous cause.
> The cause of man, and manhood's ministers.

Mr. Powell asks, "If Shelley, Keats, and Meredith are permitted by Mr. Lloyd to call this (Nature) God,

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why may not I?" The answer is that those three poets did not believe in the existence of a personal God at all, while Mr. Powell confesses that he does, which makes a big difference.

Furthermore, the reverend gentleman accepts the teaching of the Creed, which he can repeat thus: "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth," well knowing, surely, that the framers of that Creed understood by "the Father Almighty" the God of love who sent Jesus Christ into the world to save his people from their sins. He has no right to twist that article out of its intended meaning, and say, "Of such a Father, who is only stern Nature personified, whose will are the universal uniformities we call Nature's laws 'which shall not be broken,' we may well say" so-and-so. On the assumption that an infinitely powerful, wise, and loving Deity exists, the existence of the Universe as we know it is absolutely inexplicable; and Mr. Powell is quite wrong in suggesting that it was of this Father, "stern Nature personified," Jesus was thinking when he said, "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and the unjust." To show the absurdity of that suggestion, we need only put those words in their proper context:—

> Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye (Matt. v. 44-46)?

Clearly the teaching of that passage is that God's treatment of mankind is without respect of persons, and Jesus urges his disciples to imitate him in this respect. To infer from those words of Jesus that he regarded his Father as "stern Nature personified" in one aspect of his character, and as overflowing love in another, is to pursue a most abnormal method of exegesis.

Now, according to Mr. Powell, there are two Gods, two Fathers, the one made known by science and the other by Revelation, the one showing no pity, answering no prayer, forgiving no sin, and the other with a heart brimful of affection and yearning to befriend and pardon his sinful children. This is bad science and worse theology. I do most certainly deny that two such Fatherhoods "represent actual facts of human experience I am profoundly convinced that there is no evidence whatever of the existence of a Father of Revelation whose outpouring of love in Christ delivers believers from the cruel clutches of the Father of Science and Philosophy, "who is only stern Nature personified." If this is the theology of the twentieth century, I, for one, am not surprised that people resolve to have nothing to do with it.

In his reply Mr. Powell says:—

> The Father-heart is, in my view, not to be found in the European situation *as a whole*, but only in the highest and best part of it—*i.e.*, in human nature at its best. In my sermon I distinctly said that it was in "the ever-growing spirit of humanity alone where, it seems to me, we should seek the evidence of the great Father-heart.

That is perfectly true, but the truth involves a most humiliating reflection on the Father of revelation and experience. The world is chock-full of evils and wrongs, of injustice and oppression, for which the Father Almighty is not to be held responsible, but we are told that the ever-growing spirit of humanity that is being displayed in this horrible War evidences the active presence of the Father-heart. And yet in the face of this strange assertion Mr. Powell calls my attention to the fact that he has acknowledged that "in the presence of a mystery apparently everlastingly impenetrable we are all Agnostics." The fault I have to find with him is that in the presence of an everlastingly impenetrable mystery he preaches in terms of the most thoroughgoing Gnosticism. The difference between the reverend gentleman and myself is by no means "merely one of terminology," but one that results from two absolutely different viewpoints. He acknowledges that "in the presence of an apparently everlastingly impenetrable mystery we are all Agnostics," and yet declares that there are two Fathers who are as unlike each other as day and night, while I can trace no sign whatever of the active presence of a God of truth and love in this dark world. What the preacher describes as the Father-heart at work in human nature at its best can be and is satisfactorily accounted for without any reference whatever to super-human agency. It is a purely natural process, painfully slow and intermittent. The social and moral progress of the race during the last six thousand years has been on such an infinitesimally small scale as to shame any Deity out of existence for ever. The curious thing is, that whilst affecting Agnosticism, Mr. Powell immediately blossoms out into a full-fledged Gnostic.

With what Mr. Powell says about the future power and triumph of the Church I have now no space to deal beyond to say that the same prophecy has been indulged in continuously since the days of the Apostles, but has never yet been fulfilled. Of the reverend gentleman's sincerity and love of truth I have not the slightest doubt, and with much of what he says I am in heartiest sympathy. It is to his supernaturalism and his Theistic theory alone that I am opposed, my conviction being that all the claims made by supernaturalists have been completely falsified in history.

J. T. Lloyd.

Our Greatest Philosopher.

> Who saw life steadily and saw it whole.—*Matthew Arnold.*
>
> This man decided not to live, but to know.
> —*Robert Browning.*
>
> Without fears, without desires, without ceremonies, he has used sheer reason, and played the philosopher.
> —*Voltaire on Confucius.*

In spite of a shortage of paper and a scarcity of labour, it is interesting to discover that in our present crisis, which is so clearly opposed to higher literature, there still exists a public which is curious about Herbert Spencer. Mr. Hugh Elliott has contributed to the makers of the Nineteenth Century Series (Constable) an attractive monograph on the great philosopher, whose reputation was world-wide, and who removed the stigma of insularity from his countrymen.

Herbert Spencer is our greatest philosopher. Long before his death men had come to think of him with Plato, with Bacon, with Kant, with Comte, and with Mill, as one of the men who mark an era. To the great mass of men, it is true, he was only a great name; but to the world of intellect he ranked with the highest minds, with those who open up new vistas to men's eyes and widen the horizon of knowledge.

He was not born, like Charles Darwin, to ease and affluence. He had his own way to make in the world; but for what is commonly meant by success he cared not a straw. To spurn delights and live laborious days for the sake of ambition and its rewards is comparatively easy. Spencer belonged to the few great men who have sunk their personality in their cause, and without thinking of fortune or fame. To his system of Synthetic Philosophy, which puts things together and does not pull to pieces, he devoted his genius, his energies, and patience. Struggling for years against

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poverty, against obscurity, against the indifference of the general public to philosophy, he persevered to the end. For forty long years he was perfecting the details of his philosophical scheme. There has been no grander intellectual achievement since Edward Gibbon took his memorable walk under the acacias at Lausanne. Spencer, unlike Gibbon, never startled the world, and his utter want of orthodoxy was not fully realized until his *Data of Ethics* appeared. Then Christians were annoyed to find that the man who had taken his place quietly as the leading English philosopher was as thorough a Freethinker as Charles Bradlaugh. Standing outside all churches and creeds, he built up his own philosophy by science alone.

Herbert Spencer, in his writings, sought to show that all phenomena, physical and psychical, are the natural products of elementary matter and its laws, these being modes of operation of the primal law of what he calls the "persistence of force." His scheme, probably the vastest ever conceived by the human mind, embraced the story of the evolution of the universe from formless stuff into solar systems, the process being the advance from the simple to the complex, from the indefinite to the coherent. This same process was shown to be in operation in the life-history of the earth. No break between things inanimate and animate being assumed, life, mind in the lower animals, and man, man's social and intellectual development are in unbroken sequence shown to be parts of the eternal order. The Synthetic Philosophy, as the author chose to call it, is nothing more nor less than the law of evolution, as exemplified in nature and in man, in the animal realm and the vegetable and human, the sphere of sense, and the sphere of conscious and moral aspiration.

Spencer's literary style was austere, and he stripped deliberately his writing of all embellishment. He never chose to ornament the expression of his thoughts by surface graces. If he did not display the element of fancy, he had the larger gift of imagination, for, in a sense, the *Synthetic Philosophy*, as a whole, is as truly imaginative as the tragedies of Shakespeare, or the pictures of Michael Angelo. To whom, Spencer asks in one of his essays, will a piece of Alpine scenery more powerfully appeal, "to an ignorant mind, or to the mind of a philosopher who knows that over that mountain a glacier slid a million years ago?"

The glory and triumph of Herbert Spencer is that his philosophy rests on ascertained knowledge. While other philosophers have evoked various extraneous agencies to account for the difference between man and the rest of the world, he preferred to trust to evolution, the law which connects the thoughts of a Socrates with the obscure movements of an ascidian on the rocks. Spencer had a harder task than any of his predecessors, because the product of science had become so much more extensive, and because he took all knowledge to be his province.

Living to a great age, Spencer long out-lived his associates in the early days of fame, Mill, "George Eliot," Lewes, Darwin, and Huxley. It is strange to think that Spencer's friends might well have reckoned him the least likely of their circle to survive to extreme age. For, like Voltaire, he had a frail constitution. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that he never knew what health was, so fragile was his body. For the greater part of his life he was an invalid, a victim of dyspepsia and insomnia. What courage he displayed through it all? The quantity and quality of his work would have put a strong man to shame. As the product of an invalid it is marvellous. He was a hero as well as a philosopher.

For half a century his authority was unquestioned, not merely in his own country, but in every part of the civilized world. His works were read not only throughout Europe, but in India, America, and Australasia. In the Far East the principles of the great philosopher of evolution are better known than those of any other English thinker. He belongs to that rare company to whom may be applied the supreme tribute: "Others abide our question; thou art free." Probably the pendulum is swinging away from the Spencerean teaching to-day, owing to the upheaval of a world-war. But that, after all, will only be in accordance with one of Spencer's own tenets—that there is a rhythmic movement in all thought, and that progress is in spiral curves, and never in a straight line.

Spencer was not merely an academic philosopher. His love for liberty was as worthy a feature of his life as his enthusiasm for knowledge. He was not loved by priests, ever the hindmost of the thinkers, and he suffered many of the whips and scorns of clerical animosity. But Freethinkers have to endure that sort of thing. Few men, indeed, were more sober or temperate in their expressions, or more just to opponents, than Herbert Spencer.

His was a life of sacrifice. The tremendous intellectual labours which Spencer carried on brought him neither wealth nor comfort. He was unable to find a publisher for his *Social Statics*, and he had to print and sell it on commission. A small edition took over fourteen years to sell, and the *Principles of Psychology* sold almost as slowly. Again and again he found he was losing money by his writings. Once he would have had to stop his great work but for a timely legacy. After a quarter of a century's work, the sales of his books just paid the publishing expenses. All his labour had gone for nothing, and his health had broken down from the constant strain of his studies. We can but admire the singular devotion, completeness, and dignity of his life. Seeking no honour nor applause, he made an imperishable name. No philosopher, ancient or modern, held up a higher standard of conduct, none illustrated it by a purer or more unselfish life. At a time when commercialism was rampant, the pursuit of study for its own sake, and not for any base or ulterior object, was an exception so rare as to be scarcely credible. In an age of compromise Herbert Spencer remained ever faithful to first principles; in an age of ostentation he cared only for truth.

MIMNERMUS.

Science and Spiritualism.

III.

(*Continued from p. 166.*)

What is one to do, when in order to rule men it is necessary to deceive them, when in order to persuade them to let themselves be driven where you will, you must promise them and show them playthings? Why, suppose my books and the *Theosophist* had been a thousand times more interesting and more serious, do you imagine I should have had any sort of success anywhere, if behind all that there had not been the "phenomena"? I should have done simply nothing. I should have long ago starved to death. They would have crushed me, and it would never have even occurred to anyone to think that I too was a living creature, that I too must eat and drink. But I have long, long since learnt to understand these dear people, and their stupidity sometimes affords me unbounded satisfaction. Why, you are not satisfied with my phenomena, but do you know that almost invariably the more simple, the more silly, and the more gross the "phenomenon," the more likely it is to succeed? I may tell you such stories about this some day as will split your sides with laughter, indeed they will. The vast majority of people who are reckoned clever by themselves and others are inconceivably silly. If you only knew how many lions and eagles in every quarter of the globe have turned into asses at my whistle, and

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obediently wagged their great ears in time, as I have piped the tune!—*Madame Blavatsky*, Founder of the Theosophical Society, to V. S. Solovyoff.—*Solovyoff*, "*A Modern Priestess of Isis*" (1893), pp. 155-156.

A few years later Slade met his Waterloo at the hands of Mr. Truesdell, in America, who, in a seance with Slade, detected him using his foot to simulate a spirit hand. He had also discovered, "before the seance began, a slate with a prepared message, to which he stealthily added a message of his own, as follows:—

> Henry, look out for this fellow; he is up to snuff.—Alcinda.

Alcinda was the name of Slade's wife, and Truesdell had the satisfaction of enjoying Slade's discomfiture when, at the appropriate moment of the seance, the unrehearsed message came to light."[1] The end of his career came in 1894, according to the *English Illustrated Magazine* (January, 1895), where we read: "The famous 'Dr. Slade,' who created such excitement in London in 1876, and made so much money with his slate writing, was recently taken to a workhouse in America, penniless, friendless, and a lunatic." One would have thought that the spirits who worked so industriously for him would have bestirred themselves to save him from this fate.

In the *Open Court* for June, 1900, there is a picture of Zollner and Slade seated at a small table; Zollner, bowed down, nearly bald and bespectacled. Slade is a fine, vigorous man in the prime of life, gazing intently at Zollner. It is a case of the spider and the fly. Zollner and his colleagues were as wax in the hands of this wily charlatan.

The late Captain Noble, who, under the initials "F.R.A.S.," used to conduct the correspondence columns of the *English Mechanic*, writing in 1903 on the case of the medium, Anna Rothe, who was convicted in Berlin of pretending to produce roses, lilies, and oranges from the air by "spiritual agency," and received eighteen months' imprisonment, remarks:—

> Your older readers will remember that this was the role of the notorious Mrs. Guppy, whose trickery was exposed in Belfast, 1874, on the occasion of the meeting of the British Association there, by the pretty expedient of dropping a few crystals of potassium ferrocyanide into the ewer and carafou in her bedroom, and other water to which she had access, and which salt was subsequently discovered on the calyx and corolla of the asters and hollyhocks, so supernaturally produced! In the woman Rothe's case, a much less refined method was adopted, and she was caught, *flagrante delicto*, by the police official, who seized her bodily, and found a huge supply of flowers up her petticoats! This rough-and-ready way of seizing the medium or "materialized spirit" was employed, as will be remembered, with signal success in the case of Miss Florence Cook, who so thoroughly took in poor Sir William Crookes, and who was exposed by Sir George Sitwell and Herr von Buch; that of the Holmes's; in that of Herne; in that of Miss Showers; in that of Bastian and Taylor (at Arnheim)—and so very many others. Possibly from a wholesome dread of the provisions of the Act 5 Geo. IV., c. 83, s. 4, those scandalous impostors the "Spiritual Media," have retired into the background in this country lately, and as medium after medium has been exposed, their dupes have decreased in number.[2]

The public has a short memory, and most people would be at a loss to give any particulars as to the frauds of mediums and their exposure if challenged by a Spiritualist, unless they happened to have made a study of the subject. The best encyclopædias fail one here. This being the case, and as there appears to be a strong attempt made to revive these frauds and follies, it will be as well to give a few of the more notable exposures.

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 216.
[2] *English Mechanic*, April 17, 1903, p. 211.

Bastian, the last-mentioned medium in the above quotation, was exposed in the winter of 1884. The Archdukes John and Rudolph of Austria, being desirous of investigating Spiritualism, invited Harry Bastian to Vienna, where he gave two seances on the 17th and 30th of January, 1884. The performance aroused the deepest suspicion. The princes therefore requested another seance, and the date was fixed for February 11 of the same year. Says Lanslots: "They were bent upon surprising the medium in the midst of his operations, and find out for sure whether there was any jugglery about them. They so arranged that the doors could be suddenly closed by means of a hidden mechanism, and prevent egress from the room in which Bastian was supposed to be lying in a trance, while the spirits made their apparitions. The evening of the experiment sounds were heard, sparks were seen, raps came next, followed finally by materializations. Suddenly a white and well-defined figure passed out of the room in which the Archdukes had seen Bastian lying on the sofa in a state of lethargy. Immediately they set the machinery to work; it slammed the door behind the white figure. The spirit frantically tried to open the door, but in vain. The Archdukes jumped at him, tore the clothes from his body; the spirit was no other but the same medium, Harry Bastian, in flesh and bone. Finding himself unmasked, he began to tremble like a leaf. The princes felt pity for him, and gently assured him that all was over, and that he had nothing to fear. A report of the discovery was duly made and signed by all those present. A detailed account of it was given to the press."[1]

Here is an account of the exposure of the mediums Williams and Rita, in Holland:—

> In September, 1878, a group of Dutch Spiritualists detected the mediums Williams and Rita in flagrant trickery at Amsterdam. The exposure was complete. At a dark seance, a figure purporting to be a materialized spirit-form named "Charlie" showed his face by the light of a spirit lamp. One of the circle, whose suspicions had been aroused at a previous sitting, grasped "Charlie" and found himself holding Rita by the coat collar. After a sharp struggle a light was obtained, the two mediums were baffled in an attempt to escape from the house, and their persons were searched. Upon Rita were found a false beard, several large handkerchiefs, and a small circular bottle of phosphorized oil,—the raw material of "Charlie" and his spirit lamp. On Williams were found also a beard, much used, several yards of dirty muslin, handkerchiefs, a bottle of phosphorized oil and a bottle of scent,—objects familiar in happier circumstances to the eye of faith as the bearded mariner "John King," with turban, lamp, and spirit perfume. In Williams' handbag were found a small tube filled with minute pieces of slate-pencil, and a piece of notched whalebone,—the instruments employed for writing on closed slates.[2]

Of course, the leading Spiritualists would not admit these frauds. Thus, when in January, 1880, Mrs. Corner (Miss Cook) was seized under similar circumstances by Sir G. Sitwell and Mr. Carl von Buch, the editor of the *Spiritualist* pointed out that "grasping one of the forms and finding it to be the medium proves nothing"; while the editor of *Spiritualist* "Notes" has "no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that on the occasion of the recent seizure Mrs. Corner was completely guiltless of deception." Moreover, as Mr. Podmore sarcastically remarks: "Mrs. Corner's character as a genuine medium was vindicated on this occasion with unexempled rapidity, by means of a successful seance held on the evening of the exposure at the house and in the presence of another professional medium."[3]

[1] Lanslot, *Spiritism Unveiled* (1913), pp. 109-10.
[2] Podmore, *Studies in Psychical Research* (1897), pp. 21-22.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 24.

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To cite the same author again :—

> In October, 1894, Mrs. Mellon (*nee* Fairlamb) was seized in Sydney, N.S.W., when personating the spirit form of a little black girl, Cissie. Mrs. Mellon was discovered on her knees, with her feet bare, white muslin drapery round her shoulders, and a black mask on her face. In the cabinet were found a false beard and other properties. At about the same time Mrs. Williams was exposed in Paris, by the Duke de Medina Pomar and others. The medium in this latter case was found masquerading, in more or less appropriate dress, as the spirit of a man.[1]

Miss Annie Eva Fay was another medium who achieved fame by the ease with which she imposed upon Sir William Crookes, the famous chemist, who, says Mr. Maskelyne, "after repeated visits to Miss Fay's seances, was so convinced of the supernatural character of the performance that, in order to test his opinion, he invited the lady to his house, there to give a demonstration of her powers, under what Spiritualists term 'test conditions.' Result—he discovered no trickery whatever. And how should he? The man of great attainments is, generally speaking, the one most easily puzzled. There is a simplicity of high intelligence, just as there is a simplicity of ignorance. An ignorant person may not be able to see through the simplest trick; and a person of culture may be as readily deceived, for the simple reason that he cannot bring his mind *down* to the level of the deception practised."[2]

After this, Miss Fay betook herself to the provinces; but, owing to Mr. Maskelyne's public exposure of her tricks, the business fell off sadly, says Mr. Maskelyne, "and being in low water, she made me an offer, through her manager (the letters are still in my possession), to come to London and explain publicly, for a sum of money, how she performed her tricks, and how she humbugged the scientific gentleman aforesaid. I declined her offer, however, in the belief that my own exposure of the fraud was sufficient" (p. 194).

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

RELIGION IN SCOTLAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Might I draw the attention of your Scottish readers to the frantic efforts of our clergymen to regain the influence they once possessed over the people of Scotland.

At a meeting of the Commission of the Free Church of Scotland, held last week, a resolution was passed protesting against the continued desecration of the "Lord's Day," and especially against the suggestion that farmers should be persuaded to undertake ploughing and other forms of labour on the Lord's Day. In the next column of the same newspaper which reports the above, is a report of the Commission of Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in which the Rev. Mr. Dickie, New Kilpatrick, said he thought the Church should not be silent on the question of Sunday labour in raising food, but should give the people frank guidance on the necessities of the situation, and point out that it was a good thing that they should labour part of the Sunday this summer.

Do these ministers believe for one moment that the people of Scotland care one pin what they think? If I am not mistaken, more attention will be given to the appeal by the Director-General of Food Production than to all the pious resolutions passed at any Church meeting. The time has now passed when the opinion of a few ministers met together is taken seriously in Scotland.

Another question on which the Scottish clergy are hopelessly divided is National Service. It is pathetic to read in the columns of our daily newspapers the far-fetched claims the clergy are making that their calling is of national importance.

The Moderators of the three Scottish Churches suggest that the ministers might take up the work of teachers, and thus allow the teachers to go and fight. This suggestion is not allowed to go unchallenged, as the teachers rightly declare that ministers are not fit to teach, and that if the ministers wish to do their country a service their proper place is in the trenches.

A correspondent to the daily papers, signing himself "Church of Scotland minister," questions the importance of the work being done by ministers in the Y.M.C.A. huts. He says, it may be splendid work, but most of it can be as well or better done by waiters, clerks, or concert organizers; in fact, ladies could manage the whole thing—an admission in which I most heartily concur. Another trenchant question raised by the same correspondent is the question of salary. He inquires if ministers take up National Service at home, such as clerical, secretarial, or munition work, are they going to drop all or part of their stipends? To answer this question for him, I should say that would be the last thing they would think of doing. Do they not continue to draw their stipends, even though they have also been drawing the pay of Army Chaplains?

Freethinkers should view with suspicion the suggestion that ministers should supplant the teachers in our schools. It is the constant aim of our Church organizations to get more religion taught in the day school, and once the ministers get the chance of teaching, religion would form a large part of the curriculum. Whenever there is an outbreak of juvenile depravity, the ministers blame it on the lack of religious instruction in the day school.

The influence of the Church in Scotland is certainly on the wane, as witness the statement made at a meeting of the Paisley U. F. Presbytery last week, when the Rev. Mr. Simpson, of Johnstone, stated that with 55 Sabbath schools, 882 teachers, and 8,524 scholars, there had been a decrease during the past six years of 1,282, equal to 13 per cent.

Now is the time for Scottish Freethinkers to make their plans for after-war problems, as the clergy are certainly alive to the fact that their influence is on the decline, and they are on the watch to jump at anything which they think will put them on the popular side, and so regain their lost influence in the affairs of Scotland.

"SCOTTY."

Acid Drops.

In "Acid Drops" for March 4 we commented on the *Publishers' Circular's* remarkable saying that "but for the Bible there would have been no Shakespeare." Our remarks induced the editor of the *Publisher's Circular* to elaborate his meaning, thus :—

> What we had in mind was this :—If there had been no Bible there would have been no Christianity, no Christian Church, no conversion of Britain from Paganism, no schoolmen monks, no order of chivalry, no feudal system, no English literature based on monkish teaching, and no English language for Shakespeare to use so magnificently. (We do not hold all these things to have been unmixed blessings!—merely that they existed and influenced Shakespeare from his cradle to his grave—he signed a will declaring he was a Christian, which may mean much or little.) If you cut out of Shakespeare all that is directly or indirectly connected with Christianity, it would be as fatal as the carrying-out Shylock's demands for Antonio's heart would have been. We are not contending that Shakespeare was a converted Christian or a Christian Pagan—merely that he was a product of Christianity to a very great extent. So is the Editor of the ***Freethinker***.

Now that statement is longer without being either clearer or more convincing. We may grant that if there had been no Bible there would have been no Christianity based on the Bible, and therefore no conversion of Britain from Paganism to Christianity. And there our concessions end. Schoolmen monks are, or were, not peculiar to Christianity. India, and Egypt had plenty. Feudalism is not an institution that springs from Christianity. *Our* Feudalism was merely coloured by it. And does the editor really believe that

[1] Podmore, *Studies in Psychical Research* (1897), p. 82.

[2] Maskelyne, *The Supernatural*, p. 192.

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English literature based on Monkish legends was vital to the production of *Hamlet*, or *Lear*, or *Othello?* Suppose there had been no legends would there have been no literature? What of the literature of Greece and Rome—to which Shakespeare's indebtedness is beyond question? And how does the English language depend on the Bible? That is really a discovery. We have heard of the claim that the Bible owes much to the English language, but that the English language should owe its strength to a book written in an obsolete Eastern dialect is a discovery of the greatest magnitude.

We refrain from commenting on Shakespeare having signed his will as a Christian, as the editor rightly dismisses that as of no importance. The summary is, however, that if one takes out of Shakespeare all that is connected with Christianity, the deletion would be fatal. How so? If Euripides and Æschylus could write their plays without Christianity, why could not Shakespeare have written his without monkish legends and Bible? What is there vital in Shakespeare's plays that belongs to Christianity? It is not Christianity but humanity that is vital to Shakespeare, as it has been to all the world's great dramatists and poets. There is nothing Christian in the passion of *Lear* or the philosophy of *Hamlet*. Christian phrases and images appear in them because they happen to have been in an age when the Christian religion was dominant. But that is purely an accident of environment. Had Shakespeare possessed nothing but Greek, or Roman, or Scandinavian, or even Indian legends and histories, the result, other things equal, would not have been vastly different. We beg the editor of the *Publisher's Circular* to cease trying to make Shakespeare an appanage of the Church. It is like making sunlight an appanage of stained glass windows.

We congratulate the Russian Duma on having made so successful a stand against the pious and other rascalities of the Russian Court and governing gang. At a time when our own elected assembly is sinking more and more into impotency, it is well to see one of the youngest of the world's Parliamentary bodies vindicating its right to direct the affairs of the nation. Everyone who wishes well to Russia will have but one desire, and that is that the cleansing will be thorough. The programme of the new Government is certainly thorough enough. It includes freedom of religious worship, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of Labour organizations—with the right to strike—and universal suffrage. If these things are realized, the ex-Czar will feel far more at home in England than in his own country. We may return to this subject next week.

We are very pleased to see that the proposal for the clergy to offer National Service by taking the place of teachers in the schools is rousing opposition in the Scotch newspapers. Numerous correspondents point out that, if education is National Service, the wise policy is to leave the teachers where they are. And that answer is quite unassailable. To take a qualified teacher out of the school and put a parson in is so absurd a procedure that only a country distracted by war would tolerate it. And it is quite clear that the game of the clergy is to get their clutch more firmly on elementary education under the pretence of National Service. If these gentlemen are really desirous of doing the nation a service, their best plan would be to emigrate *en masse* to the Arctic regions.

The organ of the National Union of Teachers, the *Schoolmaster* did well in calling attention to the imputation cast by the judge in the Wheeldon case on teachers generally because the teachers implicated confessed to habitually using bad language. Such an attack was quite unjustifiable, and was only another feature in a case that has left a bad taste in the mouth of those who took pride in the quality of our English judicature. But we beg to point out that there is another matter on which the N.U.T. and its organ has remained curiously silent. We referred the other week to the inquisition by the Cardiff City Council as to whether the male and female teachers in its employ objected to military service or not, with a view to discharging such as had such an objection. Now, it was the plain duty of the N.U.T. to protect its members against both the inquiry and the threatened penalty, should their views on a subject quite outside their scholastic duties not harmonise with those of the Council. So far, it has not done so (we speak under correction), and its silence opens it to the imputation that it is much more concerned about the raising of teachers' salaries than about the cause of education or the status of the teacher.

Like many other people and organizations, the Salvation Army is eager to make as much as it can out of the War, and is advertising for funds to assist its "War Work"—whatever that may be. It declares that it receives "most enthusiastic praise" from the soldiers themselves, and prints the following as a specimen:—

> I am holding on, and God is helping me. Last night two of my mates got converted, and three hours after they were both killed without a second's warning.

The benefit of the conversion is a little difficult to discover.

Evidently Scotland will not submit to Sunday labour on the land without a struggle. The Renfrew Town Council has prohibited all plotholders working on their land between the times of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. We wonder what would happen if the plotholders told the Council to go to the Devil? We doubt if a court would uphold that clause in the agreement under present conditions. Or, as the country is now being more or less governed by ukase, why does not someone issue an order declaring all such stipulations void?

All wars, said Sir Francis Champneys, M.D., addressing a Glasgow meeting on the question of "The Hidden Evil" "are accompanied by a intensification of venereal disease." Sir Francis Champneys is surely mistaken. We have it on high clerical authority that this War has been the occasion of a great "spiritual uplift," a source of "Moral regeneration," the cause of a "national rebirth," etc., etc. Sir Francis and the other doctors who were with him must be mistaken. Or, perhaps, they were referring to the effect of the War on Germany.

The Rev. E. Shillito, in a remarkable article in the *Christian World* for March 15, deals with "Theology and the War" in such a fashion as to make it perfectly clear that the case for theology is the flimsiest imaginable. Even his definition of theology is fundamentally false. He says that "one of its functions is the task of setting in order for the satisfaction of the intellect all that is involved in religious experience"; but he conveniently ignores the incontestable fact that theology is the fountain out of which all religious experience springs. Every believer in God is to that extent a theologian, and without belief in God there is not and there cannot be any religious experience whatever; *Atheists have never a single touch of it.* This is a point which the divines entirely overlook, or are afraid to face. If there is a God, why is he absolutely silent to unbelievers?

Mr. Shillito admits that the War has given rise to no new problem, which is perfectly true; and yet he expresses the opinion that all problems require to be discussed anew in the light thrown upon them by the War. Omnipotence, prayer, and the Atonement are singled out as subjects that must be studied in their relation to the immediate situation. He asserts, for example, that "the War has driven many to pray for the first time in an agony of desire." In what degree that statement is true we know not; but we do know absolutely that the War has driven multitudes who used to pray, to pray no more. The War has already demonstrated, not the omnipotence, but the utter impotence, of the Love said to lie at the heart of things.

The vicar of Redcliff, Bristol, "after a considerable amount of thought," has decided to offer himself as an assistant chaplain to the forces. Brave man! He adds he will serve Redcliffe better by going than by staying. Very probable. We commend this example to the rest of the clergy. They

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would *all* serve their country better by going than by staying. Of that we have no doubt whatever.

Rev. W. M. Smith-Dorrien, brother to General Smith-Dorrien, sends to the *Times* a letter—a petition for presentation to the Prime Minister, asking him to "call the nation to prayer" on a given day "to show that the nation puts its trust wholly in God." But does it? What of the call for men, and money, and munitions, and National Service for every one from eighteen to sixty-one? Besides there is Lord Northcliffe and Lloyd George, *and* Horatio Bottomley. Trust in God! The humbug of it all!

The War has given a splendid opportunity to religious cranks and self-elected moral reformers, so we are pleased to see the Chief Constable of Edinburgh taking a stand against the nonsense talked about the evil influence of the cinema on the young. With the older people, he said, the cinema had been a means of attracting the people from the public-house. He knew of no cases where boys had been incited to crime by the cinema, and was unaware of any evil resulting therefrom. The Chief Constables of Dundee and Aberdeen concurred with these views. The truth is, we believe, that these sensations are worked up by Societies for the Improvements of Public Morals and the like, which can only exist by manufacturing or exaggerating evils so as to make the flesh of the timid creep, and extract subscriptions from the unwary.

Rev. Bickersteth Ottley, Canon of Canterbury, writes to the *Daily Mail* that a good potato crop and a good corn harvest cannot be secured apart from "fair weather," and suggests that the present is the occasion for offering of prayers throughout the country. We note, however, that the Food Controller and the rest of our rulers have not appealed for more prayers but for more labour. And, so far as we observe, those Freethinkers who have taken up allotments appear to be doing just as well as their pious neighbours.

We take the following from the Glasgow *Evening Times* of March 12:—

> An unusual incident occurred during the hearing of a case of theft at Clydebank Police Court to-day. Charles Stewart, one of the witnesses for the prosecution, declined to take the oath, but said he would affirm. Replying to the Court Assessor, he said his reason for declining to be sworn was that he did not believe in it. In reply to a further question, he said he was not a member of any Church.
>
> Stewart was ordered to leave the witness-box, and at the close of the Court was put into the dock, when Superintendent Mackay said that he would report the case to the Burgh Officer.

Some parts of the above seem obscure. Why, for instance, was the witness, after being dismissed, placed in the dock? And what was meant by Superintendent Mackay saying he would report the case to the Burgh Officer? We are trying to get fuller information on the matter, but one thing seems clear. The Court had no right whatever to refuse the witness the right of affirmation. That was a purely arbitrary and indefensible act, and we purpose drawing the attention of the authorities, so soon as we have made the necessary inquiries, to this high-handed action of the police-court officials.

Twenty thousand State schoolmasters are serving at the Front, says Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education. Yet the clergy, who number 50,000, have been exempted from military service.

The new edition of the *Catholic Year Book* is edited by Sir F. C. Burnand, a former editor of *Punch*. We hope this does not indicate undue levity in its contents.

In her book, *Non-Combatants*, Rose Macaulay writing in antithetical style of persons who longed for the end of the War, writes: "the staffs of journals as widely sundered by temperament and habit as the *Times* and *Manchester Guardian*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Daily News*, the *Spectator*, and the *English Review*, the *Vorwarts*, and the *Kreuz Zeitung*, the *Church Times*, the *Freethinker*, and the *Record*." We should imagine that many others, beside those named, long for the end of the War. It has revealed so much of the savage, the brute, and the reactionist that, given a really long war, it looks as though one might almost say good bye to civilization.

The more irrational a creed is the greater are the vitality and power it seems to possess. All attempts to rationalize Christianity have invariably weakened its influence. Such is the effect of the Protestant Reformation even at this very day. As statistics continue to testify, nearly all the Non-conformist bodies are perceptibly losing ground year after year; and in the Anglican Church the only party that is making progress is the Catholic, and it prospers simply because it represents irrationality aflame with enthusiasm.

For several months the Catholic party in the Established Church has been enjoying a fine innings in its own ably conducted organ, the *Church Times*. In the issue for March 16 our contemporary devotes five columns and a half to correspondence on the subject of the Reservation of the Sacrament. To an unbelieving outsider nothing can be more irrational than the belief that so much bread and wine, over which a priest has pronounced certain words, can be the medium of supernatural grace and strength to those who reverently contemplate it; but the gullibility of the majority of mankind is quite a proverb. It follows, of necessity, that the heavier the demand made on this gullibility the greater and heartier is the response thereto. And it is against this direct foe of Reason that our hottest warfare must be directed in the immediate future. The Catholic religion is, undoubtedly, the only religion before which there opens out a future of any promise, and that, largely, because it sets Reason at defiance.

Sabbatarians in Wellington (N.Z.) have just experienced a nasty fall. The City Council, using its powers for regulating the Municipal Golf Links, decreed there should be no Sunday golf. Numerous golfers defied the regulation, with the result that the Council was compelled to prosecute. The judge who tried the case said that the sole reason, to his mind, for making the regulation was to impose a measure of Sabbath observance on unwilling people. Further, the bye-law was an unnecessary interference with the right of private judgment. The summonses were therefore dismissed, and Sunday golf will proceed as usual.

It is worth while noting that in our own London Parks the L.C.C. has forbidden all games on the "Sawbath," and Londoners have tamely submitted. But, then, English people appear willing to submit to any and every interference with individual freedom. Further, we have much the same kind of quarrel on with the L.C.C. with regard to the sale of literature in the Parks as the Wellington folk had with their Council. This is, not the right of the L.C.C. to make bye-laws, but whether in making those laws the Council is acting in the interests of common sense and public policy. It remains to be seen, in the tussle that may come, whether English judges will be less enlightened than New Zealand ones.

Mr. R. Tweedy-Smith, a prominent Y.M.C.A. worker, says he helped many soldiers "to pen letters to their wives and sweethearts" during his stay in France. "Wives and sweethearts" is distinctly good.

Pious folk are often deficient in a sense of humour. At a London tribunal a Christian conscientious objector told the officials he had flat foot and hammer toe, but "stood for Christ."

The *Christian Science Sentinel* has a leading article, entitled "Friends of Jesus." It is significant that no names are mentioned.

The Bishop of London says: "We ought to be looking for a new country, new church, and new world." Many people wish his lordship would look for a new country—and stay there.

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Special.

When I wrote last week, I was in doubt as to whether the newly increased price of paper was due to panic or to the imminence of a genuine paper famine. It was very soon obvious that there would be a real shortage of paper, and it became imperative to take steps at once to guard the future of the *Freethinker*. I am happy to say that this has been done. My greatest difficulty was, as usual, want of capital. There was only one way in which this could be overcome at short notice, and that was by borrowing the necessary money on my own personal security. This has been done, and I have no doubt I shall be able to meet the repayments as they become due.

The immediate question remaining is how to make good this new increase in the cost of material. The possible ways are: (1) Increase the price of the paper from twopence to, say, twopence-halfpenny. (2) Issue a special number at threepence once each month. (3) Re-open the Sustentation Fund. (4) Just carry on as usual, and trust to surmounting difficulties as they arise. (5) Issue a smaller number of pages each week.

Number two would nearly meet this new increase in the cost of paper, and number one a little more than meet it. Number three would, I am sure, meet with a ready response; but I am very loth to adopt it. I feel strongly inclined to venture on number four, in spite of its meaning greater worry and trouble. Number five has technical difficulties in the way of its adoption, and I do not favour that plan unless the output of paper ceases and it becomes a question of ekeing out one's supply.

However, the matter can now rest for a week or two; the great thing was to guard against danger, and that has been done. I am only writing now because I know how keen is the interest readers take in the *Freethinker*, and some of them may have suggestions to make that would be helpful.

Chapman Cohen.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 25, Manchester; April 1, Portsmouth; April 8, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.

Henry.—We are obliged for copies of local papers sent. Correspondents do us a real service in forwarding newspaper cuttings. They considerably ease our labours, although space often prevents them being used.

F. Betts.—Received. Thanks.

A. F. Thorn.—Pleased to hear from you, and to note that you are retaining both your spirits and your activity—though one, we suppose, goes with the other.

"Scotty."—The oversight was quite unintentional. Will bear it in mind for the future. We are obliged for useful batch of cuttings.

Will Freethinkers in the neighbourhood of Cardiff who are willing to co-operate in the work of Freethought propaganda please communicate with Mr. J. H. Edwards, of 9 Sycamore Terrace, Taffs Well.

B. Russell.—We are not surprised at the return of your letter. When officials are open to such influence, a profession of religious zeal is quite a common method of gaining preferential treatment. It is very annoying, but a little reflection enables one to smile at the privileges thus gained.

W. E. Hopkins.—Thanks. Very interesting, but regret want of space will not permit reprinting.

H. Johnson.—If we may paraphrase Mark Antony "Intrigue should be made of *keener* stuff." When a writer addresses his letter to the Editor of "Freethought," it is a safe presumption that he knows very little of the *Freethinker*, and is interested in neither its policy nor its welfare.

C. Jortram.—Yes, it is a tyranny. Lately we almost think in reams, and dream of heaven as a place where the supply of paper is plentiful and cheap. Naturally our trouble is largely a financial one. With adequate capital we should only be bothered about the cost. As it is we are worried in two ways. Still, we shall survive.

E. B.—We are obliged for your weekly package.

C. Chambers.—We are very sorry to hear that your friend, lance-corporal Butcher, has been killed in action. From your account of him, we do not doubt that the Freethought cause has lost a brave and worthy servant. Your affection for him is complimentary to you both.

J. G. Bartram.—Glad to see you are endeavouring to reorganize at Newcastle, and hope all the local friends will heartily assist. Sorry to hear one of your sons is in hospital. Please give our regards to them both.

D. Adamson.—Thanks for cutting. Shall be obliged for any further information on the matter you can get for us.

R. G. Smith (B. E. F. France).—We shall be very pleased to see you when you obtain your long-promised leave. Please advise us beforehand if you can. Sorry to hear of the interrupted supply of *Freethinker*. Hope it is all right now. Am sending current issue.

Freethinker Sustentation Fund.—Tom Taylor, 9s. 6d.

Dr. B. Dunlop writes that he desires to make one comment on Keridon's "partizan article" "Profiteering and the Pulpit," which is that "all evolutionists should be able to see that excessive birth-rates inevitably cause poverty, superstition, war, and 'Profiteering.'"

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

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.

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 (March 25) Mr. Cohen will deliver two lectures in the Cosy Corner Picture House, Manchester. The place of meeting is at the corner of Swan Street and Oak Street, Shudehill, and is easily accessible from all parts of the city. The afternoon meeting will be at 3 o'clock, and the evening meeting at 6.30. We hope there will be a good muster of Manchester Freethinkers, and that they will bring their Christian friends along with them.

The attention of Manchester members of the N. S. S. is specially directed to the meeting at the Merchants' Hotel, Oldham Street, on March 24, at 7 o'clock. The President, Mr. C. Cohen, will leave London early in the day for the purpose of being present.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (March 25) in the Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham. The lecture commences at 7 o'clock, and the hall is within three minutes' walk of Clapham Road Tube Station. We hope that Mr. Lloyd will have the audience he deserves. In that case the hall will be more than crowded.

In connection with the repeated boycotting and burning of the *Freethinker* at certain Labour meetings in Liverpool, Mr. F. Hoey (Labour Representation Committee) and Mr. C. Barker (Kensington I.L.P.) write protesting against Mr. Gott's account as originally published in the *Freethinker*. Mr. Barker denies that the paper was ordered to be burned, although the Secretary of the Fabian Society, from whom the information originally came, reaffirms the truth of his statement. Mr. Barker says that he bought the unsold copies of the *Freethinker*, and gave them away. Mr. Hoey supports the I.L.P. in keeping anti-theological literature off the bookstalls and protests energetically against an implied attack upon the Rev. Dunnico (selected as Parliamentary candidate) because he happens to be a parson. It should be added that both Mr. Hoey and Mr. Barker write as Freethinkers.

For our part we have already said all we had to say on the incident, and we only re-open the subject in order to place our readers in possession of the fact that contradiction to

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the original statement had been offered. But, we may add, that if the I.L.P. really keeps both religious and anti-religious literature off its bookstalls, no Freethinker can have any legitimate cause of complaint. But does it do this? So far our information is to the contrary. As to Mr. Dunnico's selection as Parliamentary candidate we are quite ready to accept Mr. Hoey's contention that being a parson had nothing to do with his selection. We are the more ready to accept this as we hear very favourable accounts of Mr. Dunnico from other quarters. Finally, our whole demand is that Freethinkers in the Labour Movement should receive *fair* treatment, and be on their guard against a too great readiness to sink their Freethought in such a manner and under such conditions as will enable the common enemy to gain an advantage.

Members and friends of Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch are requested to note that a meeting will be held on Sunday, March 25, in the Colingwood Hall, Clayton Street, opposite the end of Nelson Street, at 3 p.m., to consider reorganization, etc. Hoping all desirous of assisting will attend or communicate with J. G. Bartram, 107 Morley Street, Heaton.

A medical correspondent, now on active service, writes, offering us "warmest congratulations" on what he calls the "vigorous manner" in which the *Freethinker* is conducted, and adds:—

> Plain speaking is necessary now more than ever—for the present "World" War, having knocked away the few decaying props of superstition and orthodoxy which were still remaining, has engendered an entirely new spirit of inquiry and criticism in regard to long-cherished religious beliefs, this tendency being often most marked in those who previously were numbered amongst the most pious. This fact cannot have escaped anyone who is not totally blinded by ignorance and prejudice. It was after reading your leader on "Religion in the Army," every word of which I heartily endorse, that I determined to bring the following points from my own experience before you.
>
> It has been repeatedly stated that a great and sudden change has come over our fighting men; that they have become more fervently religious, after many years of spiritual indifference; and that their splendid courage and self-sacrifice are attributable to a newly found faith in the divine power and inspiration.
>
> It is my privilege to mix intimately with the men during the course of my duties. I also censor a great many of their letters. On many occasions, both by personal conversation and by facts related to me by others, I have endeavoured to form a rough estimate of the attitude of the average soldier towards religion.
>
> After a good deal of close observation, I have no hesitation in stating emphatically that, as far as my experience goes, in the vast majority of cases the religious sense is practically non-existent in our soldiers. They are animated by a sincere desire to do their best for their country in its time of peril, and so help to bring about an early and victorious peace and a return to less strenuous conditions of life. Fair play and sportsmanship appeal strongly to the Tommy—God and the supernatural are of very little account.
>
> In regard to the officers with whom I have come in contact, open unbelief is the rule in at least half the number; the remainder either believe in an indifferent and nebulous manner or do not trouble to venture an opinion one way or another. The corps to which I have the honour to belong is specially noted for its heterodox opinions on religious matters.
>
> On several occasions I have talked to "C. of E." men whose only acquaintance with church was on the day they were married. Religious services and celebrations are often attended in order to kill time or afford a bit of variety from the monotony of active service. I have been unable to discover any indications of increased piety from the speech or the manners of the men. Pious ejaculations are common, but are reserved solely for moments of irritation or anger; whilst ribald ditties in which Biblical characters often figure prominently are the rule in moments of leisure.
>
> The other night our church tent was blown over in a gale of wind. This caused considerable amusement amongst the men, and I heard from several the following morning that "God's House had been routed during the night," and that "Jesus could not have had many pals amongst the soldiers of this unit." On entering a hospital ward one morning, I was "terribly shocked" to hear the refrain, "Jesus washed my sins away, and I'm very much obliged to Jesus." I could recount many similar stories. I have no reason to suspect that the experience of others who take the trouble to investigate this subject from an unbiased standpoint will differ materially from mine.
>
> The statement that the average soldier has a "strong religious instinct" or "an extraordinary spiritual power" is directly contrary to the facts, and as yet there has been no proof that our men need a supernatural stimulus in order to enable them to carry out their hazardous exploits. To say that our troops suddenly become religious when the enemy is nigh is a gross and impertinent slander on an honourable body of men, and effectively demonstrates to what depths of calumny the pious, both clerical and lay, will descend on realizing the futility of their faith and seeing the edifice of superstition tumbling about their ears.
>
> Truly to the Freethinker this War has been a "godsend."

Quite a lengthy "Sugar Plum," but, we think our readers will agree, both an interesting and an important one.

The Birmingham *Weekly Mercury* publishes a three-column descriptive article by "Arley Lane" on Mr. Cohen's recent Town Hall meeting. It notes the large "congregation," with "a happy sprinkling of beautiful girls and magnificent matrons." The close interest of the audience in the lecture, with their frequent laughter and hearty applause, is pointed as, we suspect, a warning lesson to those who profess to treat Freethought meetings as a negligible quantity.

Critical Chat.

FREETHOUGHT AND THE NOVEL.

A CORRESPONDENT, who is far too complimentary to my well-meant if insignificant attempt at literary criticism, has done me the honour to ask me to draw up a list of works in which Freethinkers are handled more or less sympathetically. Miss Lynd is also kind enough to suggest that I may possibly know the answer to the following conundrum: Why has the modern novel not been more frequently used as a vehicle for rationalistic propaganda, in support, as she puts it, of the Good Cause? With her permission, I will begin by trying to answer this question.

It is a remark as obvious as it is general that at the present moment most of our novelists of the first and second rank are Rationalists, or Freethinkers of some shade or other. If Christianity be rightly defined as a belief in the intervention of the supernatural in Nature and history, it would be very difficult to discover an unmistakable trace of it in their work. Mr. George Moore, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Miss May Sinclair, to mention only a few, are more or less definitely non-Christian in their philosophic attitude to life. Their Freethought is not something extraneous, something that can be easily thrown on one side; it is rather a pervading intellectual energy, giving harmony, depth, and spaciousness to their creative work. It is as natural to them as gesture or tone of voice, and, it may be, just as little a matter for argument. Their stories, like those of Tourgenief and Meredith, are Freethought fiction in the only sense in which there is such a thing. That is, they are written by men for whom the beliefs and affirmations of Christianity have no validity. But the ingenuous reader may here be inclined to ask why what is popularly known as the Freethought novel, the propagandist novel, is invariably left to inferior writers? It is, I fancy, because the more capable novelist is aware that it is no part of his business to argue and discuss, but rather to observe, understand, and represent. His aim is to represent the whole of life as it really is, not a mere fragment, however interesting that fragment may be to him and to others. He is careful not to allow his philosophical and ethical bias to stand in the way of a rounded conception of human nature. He is ever ready

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to recognize loyally the fundamental complexity of man. For him, the world is peopled with men and women, creatures of flesh and blood, not mere types of good and evil. He knows that even the most anti-social of men —the burglar, for instance—has his hour of relaxation, when he has pretty much the same tastes and sympathies as the average law-abiding citizen. I once knew an intelligent burglar who, after he had "brought off" a particularly difficult job, would find relief for his overwrought nerves in Richard Jefferies' descriptions of country life. Now, I have no doubt that I shall be told by people who think a work of fiction is all the better for being not a novel, but a tract, that my friend was not sincere; that it is ridiculous to think that a burglar could appreciate the harmonies of an exquisite prose style; that what he really enjoyed was Smiles' *Self-Help*. But this is a fatuously simple view of the human mind. Let me remind them of a popular song by which W. S. Gilbert must have shocked the too serious minds of the mid-Victorian moralists. It celebrated the strenuous activities of a hooligan who, when he had finished jumping on his mother, would go and lie abasking in the sun. I am certain that his enjoyment of the warm sun was not more real than my burglar-friend's enjoyment of Richard Jefferies. This inability to see that human nature is infinitely complex will explain the woodenness of so much of our fiction, especially the novel "with a tendency."

However that may be, any writer of fiction who is worth his salt must know that it is impossible to *prove* anything in a novel. Morality without a sanction is possibly a higher form of ethics than morality with a sanction, but you cannot prove it by merely writing a story around a Freethinker and a Christian. Obviously, by reversing the process, you can get a completely different result. A second-rate novelist like M. Paul Bourget will prove to the satisfaction of the less intelligent of his Catholic readers that modern Materialism must lead to unscrupulous hedonism, and finally to spiritual bankruptcy and suicide; and that all virtue, if not all intelligence, is on the side of an unquestioning faith in traditional religion. What could be easier? All you have to do is to invent your facts, and then interpret them to suit your purpose. This sort of novel is merely a sophisticated and extended form of the religious tract, in which the vicious infidel got what the Christians thought he deserved. The success of *Quo Vadis?* shows that the reading public generally has not a very intelligent interest in fiction. Yet I doubt if a Freethought tract on similar lines would become popular. The Freethinker has more brains than the Christian. We know that the object of fiction is to give pleasure, not instruction.

Another equally strong objection to the use of the novel as a propagandist tract is that the animus necessarily set up by controversy must dissipate the atmosphere of Olympian calm in which the genuine creative artist works. How often do we not see the genius of a novelist go to pieces the moment he ignores his privilege of broad imaginative sympathy! Take the pretty obvious case of Mr. Hardy. It seems to me that his *doctrinaire* partizanship, the preoccupation with social and philosophic ideas of a man who did not happen to come into his intellectual heritage till late in life, is largely responsible for the semi-vitalized characters in *Jude the Obscure*; which, indeed, has some of the qualities of the tract, notably dullness and over-emphasis. Not a few of us are inclined to see the same falling-off in the novels of George Eliot. The early stories are shaped by that imaginative sympathy with the thoughts and emotions of her fellow-creatures which gives so complete a veri-similitude to her pictures of religious life. In later life, when her philosophic environment had killed the artist in her, we have, instead of the emotional realism of *Silas Marner*, the dull and dry analysis of *Daniel Deronda*, a very dustheap of Positivism. The artistic balance of the novelist, it seems to me, implies an extremely delicate equation of life and ideas. Life alone will give you the superficial, if not unpleasant, fiction of Dumas, and Hardy in his first period. Ideas alone will give you the tendency-novel, a story intended to prove or disprove a certain thesis; the Freethought, Christian, or social tract masquerading as fiction. When there is this perfect balance of life and ideas, you get *Spring Floods*, *Madame Bovary*, and *Richard Feverel*.

If any Freethinker, after what I have said, still wants a list of works "suitable for Rationalists' reading," he will find one drawn up by the earnest young gentleman who discourses for our edification on bookish matters in the pages of the *Literary Guide*. Two stories by Edna Lyall, whom I have always had the misfortune to confuse with Emma Jane Worboise; a wretched pot-boiler by Robert Buchanan, who contrasts a violently lecherous and mendacious High Church clergyman with a frigidly virtuous disciple of Herbert Spencer; an excursion in didacticism by Mrs. W. K. Clifford, who ought to have known better than to spoil the reputation she had gained by *Aunt Anne;* and Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*, which seems to have slipped in by mistake, as it has nothing in common with the rubbish our young gentleman is pleased to recommend. My advice is that we should avoid anything in the shape of a story with a purpose. Fortunately, Freethinkers have the whole body of English fiction, from Fielding to Henry James, to choose from. Its spirit is sanely secular, and its sympathy with all phases of life cannot but have a broadening effect upon the mind.

George Underwood.

Unburying the Hatchet.

There has been a meeting at Rhyl recently for the purpose of establishing a memorial to the men of North Wales who have fallen in the War, and it has been agreed that the memorial will take the shape of new science buildings for Bangor University College. Mr. R. J. Thomas, of Holyhead, who has inaugurated the scheme and given it his most generous support, considers, "that the object would be a truly undenominational and unsectarian one for the benefit of all classes alike," a proposition both self-evident and creditable, and from the point of view of translating love for the dead into work for the living can make a fair claim to rational support.

But "Unsectarian" is not always a word to conjure with. Moreover, anything "for the benefit of all classes alike" fails to raise the enthusiasm of those who have always been accustomed to the "long pull" and the turn of the scales. So it was strictly in accordance with tradition that the Bishop of St. Asaph appeared as spokesman for a minority of eight, amongst whom were at least two other reverend gentlemen.

Now, there had been called to this gathering the County Councils, Boroughs, Urban and Rural Councils of North Wales, the lords lieutenant, the high sheriffs, the Members of Parliament, the peers connected with North Wales, representatives of Bangor College, the Cymmrodorion Society, the Liverpool and Manchester Welsh National Societies, the quarrymen and miners of North Wales, the Old Students' Association, the Agricultural Committees, and the Welsh County Schools Association. As a matter of fact, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, the assembly was remarkably large and representative of the five counties of Anglesea, Carnarvon, Denbigh, Flint, and Merioneth. Yet the first criticism

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that the Bishop felt constrained to offer was that the meeting was "somewhat limited" in character. The only conclusion to be drawn from this curious remark is that to the ecclesiastically minded no gathering is truly representative unless it shows a preponderance of the official Welsh Church and Capel-Sion element.

For a moment the Bishop exposed his hand by having a rap at science, but one could hardly expect that temptation to be resisted. He hoped that science when developed "would not be concentrated upon the invention and perfecting of still more deadly instruments of war." Such a concentration is inconceivable. But what we are concerned in pointing out is that if this War is, as it is represented to be, a war in which civilization itself is at stake, and if science is winning it, then it is impossible to resist the conclusion that science is going to prove the saviour of civilization. This may be discomforting to a Bishop; but, then, even a Bishop cannot have it both ways, though, of course, there is nothing to prevent him from trying. Then there was an attempt to make the scientific purpose of the memorial appear sectional and partial, in precisely the same way in which the Secular solution of the education difficulties is made to appear so by the same parties. Finally, he "was sure it would not command the universal heartfelt support of those who had a right to be heard."

The Bishop's opposition alone amounts to demonstration of this last statement. But why was he so disappointing? Why did he not give us some hint of a scheme which would command this universal heartfelt support? We venture to suggest that the Bishop was conscious of a lack of that spiritual sympathy around him which is such a great help to the proper appraisement of episcopal emanations. In the right atmosphere an extension of the scheme of Public Shrines, for instance, might have been hailed as a perfectly fitting memorial, and might have received *unanimous* "heartfelt support." But "universal heartfelt support" is an impossible desideratum in this world of pro and con. Even the *Daily Mail*, in its scholarly and dignified attempt to make us ashamed of being English, cannot achieve that.

We are sorry for these omissions, for we have an idea, which we would have liked confirmed, that the Bishop doesn't like the projected memorial because it has no relish of salvation in it. It must appear to a prelate that when anything concerning the dead is concerned, there should be room for him. It is his *metier*. "The bourne from which no traveller returns" is the matter about which he possesses most information. What is this memorial, then, but an impudent trespass on theological preserves?

* * * *

Why is it that when other prelates are quite willing, even anxious, for peace at any price, the Bishop of St. Asaph shows signs of trying a tilt with science? For the sake of the good Bishop Colenso, we should be charitable, and seek for extenuating circumstances. We think they are there.

The Gods have not dealt gently with the Bishop of St. Asaph. In their wisdom, they have chosen for his sphere of usefulness a neighbourhood which has been singularly fruitful to men of science, and has germinated the seeds of theological unrest in thousands of the faithful. A couple of miles south-west of St. Asaph are rocks and caves which breed suggestions most destructive to simple faith. In Cefn caves geologists and palæontologists brought to light the bones of the Elephas Antiquus, Rhinoceros Tichorhinas, and Hippopotamus Major, every one of which propounded an unanswerable Biblical conundrum. Three miles east of St. Asaph is the Bone Earth at Cae Gwyn, overlaid by boulder clay, in which side by side with the bones of the mammoth and hyæna have been found the simple flint implements of primitive man. It is not credible that a person could be called to such a neighbourhood without being eternally reminded of the bands of fearless and truth-seeking investigators, who, from the bowels of the earth, drew the material for blasting into a thousand fragments the Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture. And the words of Huxley must ring in such a prelate's ears:—

> Extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules and History records that whenever science and orthodoxy have been fairly opposed, the latter has been forced to retire from the lists bleeding and crushed, if not annihilated; scotched, if not slain.

The Cathedral of St. Asaph is the smallest in the kingdom, but small as it is, the red sandstone of which it is built is conspicuous enough to force itself upon the attention. And if meditating on the Old Red Sandstone drove Hugh Miller to madness, the probability is that it would make a Bishop at least irritable. Environment, we are afraid, has been too strong for the Bishop of St. Asaph. Human Nature must not be imposed upon. It would be the height of folly, in these circumstances, to expect his enemy's dog—when it has bit him—to successfully seek for warmth at his reverence's fire.

T. H. E.

The French Revolution.

VII.

VENGEANCE.

(Continued from p. 171.)

THE Revolutionary Tribunal, it will be remembered, was established by the National Convention in March, 1793, to cope with the internal crisis in France which was revealed by the news of the rebellion in La Vendee. During the first six or seven months of its existence it was a useful and necessary institution. Every prisoner brought before it had the fullest opportunity of defending himself through counsel. The number of death-sentences, from March to September, averaged about ten a month—high no doubt, but not surprising when we remember that France, for most of the time, was in a state of civil war. The daily procession of tumbrils to the guillotine was as yet unknown and undreamt of.

In October, after the reorganization of the Government already described, the Committee of Public Safety decided on the trial of Marie-Antoinette. She had been moved on August 1 from the Temple to the prison of the Conciergerie, where prisoners awaiting trial were usually kept. Her trial had been postponed, however, owing to some negotiations which the Government was carrying on with the Allied Powers for the evacuation of French soil as a condition of the Queen's release. These broke down, and the trial was hastened. It would, indeed, have been anomalous to have punished Louis XVI., a weak and stupid, though criminal man, and to have let off Marie-Antoinette, his prompter in evil—this vile woman, who would have been willing to drown her adopted country in the blood of its inhabitants, if this could have saved her crown and her luxuries. "L'Autrichienne" was tried accordingly, and guillotined on October 16—the same day as the victory of Wattignies over the Austrians.

As for her son, the boy of eight whom the Royalists called "Louis XVII.," he was entrusted to the care of a working-class family called Simon, to be brought up as a good Republican and not as a princely popinjay. Great

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has been the indignation expended by historians, and many the apocryphal stories circulated, respecting his treatment. Assuredly, if we concede the Christian-Conservative theory as to the "rights of the parent," a conclusive case can be made out against the action taken by the municipality of Paris in this respect. But to those who regard the individual as the unit of society, and who consider that a child has a right to a decent education irrespective of its parents, it will seem that the kindest thing that could be done, in the circumstances, was to try and neutralize the pernicious early influences under which this unfortunate boy had lived, and to make a man and not a king of him. As it was, young Louis was of a feeble constitution, and died in the Temple in 1795.

The next action of the Government was of a much more questionable kind. Of the Girondist deputies arrested on June 2, most had escaped to the departments and stirred up civil war, and only twelve remained in Paris. After the murder of Marat, the Convention had decreed that these should be sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal. This step was not taken at once; but on October 3 the Committee of General Security, which had the police and prison administration in its hands, proposed to the Convention that these twelve and nine others should be tried without delay, and that seventy-five other Girondist deputies, who had drawn up a protest against the expulsion of their leaders, should be imprisoned. This was agreed to, and virtually extinguished, for the time being, all Parliamentary opposition to the Government. The twenty-one, including Brissot and Vergniaud, were brought before the Tribunal in a batch on October 22. The course of trying so many men together was open to much objection, and created an evil precedent. It was difficult to find a charge that could be proved against every one of them. Some of them, no doubt, were involved in the insurrections in Normandy, Lyons, etc., and therefore could expect no pity. But others were guiltless of this; and one of them (Ducos) had actually been exempted by Marat's intercession on June 2. The trial lasted a week, and the result seemed doubtful. Then the Government made their first outrageous breach with the common rules of justice, and passed a special law providing that the jury, when they felt "sufficiently enlightened," might terminate a trial and find a verdict at once. The twenty-one were sentenced to death. One (Valaze) stabbed himself in court; the others went to the guillotine on October 31, singing the "Marseillaise" till there was not one of them left. Thus the Government embarked on that policy of mere vengeance, which was to break up the democratic party and run the Revolution on the rocks. The Revolutionary Tribunal passed only too quickly from salutary severity to needless and vindictive savagery. The twenty-one were quickly followed to the scaffold by Madame Roland, Bailly (ex-mayor of Paris, who had been responsible for the shooting down of the Republicans on July 17, 1791), Barnave, the constitutional Royalist, and Rabaut St. Etienne, a very harmless member of the Girondist party, and an early exponent of Socialist theory.

This is the best point at which to refer to the movement of "dechristianization." It has been mentioned already that some of the most advanced democrats, notably Anacharsis Clootz, were in favour of disestablishing the Church and organizing the State on a Secularist basis. This section was very strong among the working-class of the towns, who were beginning to see in Christianity only a means of making them content with hardship in this life by promising them consolations in another. This view predominated in the municipal council of Paris, where its principal advocate was Chaumette, a pioneer of Socialism. Hebert, the editor of *Pere Duchesne*, lent the movement the support of his official position in the municipality, and of his popular and disreputable paper. He was never far behind the popular lead in such matters. The anti-religious policy took definite body and shape in September and October, 1793, when the Convention decided to adopt an entirely new calendar. This was worked out by two advanced members of the "Mountain," Romme, a mathematician, and Fabre d'Eglantine, a poet and a friend of Danton. The year was to start on September 22, the day when the Republic had been proclaimed, and by a coincidence, the autumnal equinox. There were twelve months of thirty days each, and five odd days at the end to make up 365. A sixth odd day was added in leap-year. The twelve months were named by Fabre d'Eglantine according to the fruits and the weather, etc., characteristic of each. Beginning at the autumnal equinox, we have Vendemiaire, Brumaire, and Frimaire till mid-winter; then Nivose, Pluviose, Ventose till the spring equinox; Germinal, Floreal, Prairial till mid-summer; Messidor, Thermidor, and Fructidor till September; and, finally, the odd days called Sans-culottides ("sans-culotte" being the cant name applied to the common people, originally in derision, and then taken up as a title of honour). This calendar was in force until Napoleon re-established Catholicism, when it was dropped, and was revived by the Commune in 1871. It is certainly a neater calendar than ours, which has the months all of varying lengths, and is without any astronomical basis. If the happy day comes when Christianity is dislodged from the conventionally privileged position it now occupies, civilized mankind might do worse than adopt the Revolutionary Calendar. The only flaw in it was the substitution of a ten-day week for one of seven. Ten is too long; but there is much to be said for a week of five days, and this might be agreed to.

The new calendar, by disestablishing Sunday, necessarily struck a blow at religion as by law established. The Secularist party grew bold, and, not altogether wisely or well, attempted to "rush" matters. Some commissioners of the Convention in different parts of France took the initiative by prohibiting, on their own authority, the exercise of Catholic worship in the streets, pulling down crucifixes, destroying "relics," and inscribing over cemeteries: "Death is an eternal sleep." As the clergy, whether non-juring or constitutional, had mostly opposed the latest Revolutionary developments, there was much popular support for these measures. Many priests came forward, voluntarily or under pressure, to renounce their orders and their religion. On November 10, the Paris municipality organized a festival of "Liberty and Reason" in Notre Dame, at which Revolutionary hymns were sung, while an actress impersonated the "Goddess of Reason." This new cult had a great vogue for a few weeks, and in many towns festivals of Reason were held, churches were shut up, and bells and plate melted down for cannon. Such ceremonies, however, will hardly appeal to modern Freethinkers, who tend to regard as unseasonable and superfluous any attempt to erect a new cult, "ethical" or other, on the ruins of Christianity. The Government never recognized the worship of Reason. Robespierre and Danton were both opposed to it, the former violently so, owing to his Deistic fanaticism. In many places, too, the peasantry showed a dangerous spirit of resentment at attempts to close the churches; and eventually the Committee of Public Safety had to circularize its commissioners, begging them to go slowly, and to leave the undermining of Catholicism to the gradual operation of human reason.

The Revolutionary Government had now the mastery

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of its enemies within the country; and the best friends of democracy must agree that, too often, that mastery was tyrannously and cruelly abused. Lyons, the chief city involved in the Girondist rebellion, fell into the hands of the Revolutionary forces on October 8. The Convention decreed, on the proposal of the Government, that the city should be totally destroyed. This decree was not carried out, and was probably meant for effect; but the Committee of Public Safety sent down Collot d'Herbois, one of its own members, to punish the rebels. Local feeling ran very high against the wealthy classes of Lyons, who had used their power to guillotine Chalier and to terrorize the common people. Collot d'Herbois, under the influence of his own passions and those of the local democrats, took a horrible revenge; the wealthy and reactionary citizens of Lyons were taken out and mowed down by musketry in batches. Toulon, which was taken in December, was similarly treated by the commissioners of the Convention there.

If such vengeance was taken on the Girondists and Royalists at Lyons and Toulon, it may be guessed that the Vendean insurgents, who had themselves been guilty of the most awful atrocities against the Republicans, met with no mercy when they were taken. The Democratic party at Nantes, who had nearly fallen victims to the Vendeans themselves, and who heard from all sides horrid tales of torture and crucifixion by the priest-ridden peasants, went mad with revenge. The commissioner of the Convention at Nantes, Carrier, a weak-headed man, easily susceptible to such gusts of feeling, had the captured priests drowned in the Loire by boat-loads. These "noyades," as they were called, and the shootings and guillotinings which went on at the same time, were the most awful feature of the Revolution, and soon caused even the Democratic commissioners to denounce Carrier and demand his recall. He was summoned back to Paris, but escaped punishment for the present.

It must not be concluded, however, that Carrier and Collot d'Herbois were typical of their party. When the Committee of Public Safety had organized the administration, and had sent out commissioners to the various departments to enforce the central authority, many of the commissioners proved capable and humane officials. They relieved distress, organized defence, taxed the rich, provided work, and enforced the law of "maximum" against traders who sought to raise prices at the expense of the people. It must be admitted that most of them were public-spirited men, whose one object was to protect the poor against exploitation, and to secure victory over the foreign enemy. But such proceedings as those at Lyons and Nantes, however grievously provoked, have left a blot on the fame of the Revolution, which its admirers can only sorrowfully acknowledge. They should serve as a tragic example of the mischief that may be done by those who, in times of stress and strain, whether of war or Revolution, invoke and act upon the theory of "reprisals."

(To be continued.) ROBERT ARCH.

Obituary.

We regret to announce the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Hall, who died March 7, aged eighty-seven years. The deceased was a constant attendant at the Hall of Science, London, during the Bradlaugh *regime*, after which she came to reside at Failsworth. She was, until sickness and advanced age rendered it impossible, a regular attendant at our meetings here, and was held in high respect by all who knew her. Steadfast and true to her principles she remained unto her death. She was interred at the Failsworth Cemetery on March 10, our President, Mr. James Pollitt, conducting the Secular Burial Service.—J. SMITH.

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, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "Freethinkers' Theories *versus* Freethought." Introduced by J. J. Murphy; opposer, T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, J. T. Lloyd, "Religious Witchcraft."

MR. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Wednesday, March 28 (instead of Thursday), at 7.30.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Hyatt; 6.15, Messrs. Kells and Yates.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate); 6.30, Operetta, performed by Sunday School Children.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (Collingwood Hall, Clayton Street, opposite end of Nelson Street): 3, Meeting to consider Reorganization, etc.

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Views and Opinions.

Anthropology and the Soul.

To any one acquainted with all that the past fifty years of anthropological research has taught it will be clear that to discuss the question of a "soul" without taking these results into account is to conduct a discussion of very doubtful value. The anthropological data may be admitted or rejected, but it cannot profitably be ignored. But no one of authority does reject it in substance. The evidence is too conclusive for that. If it is admitted, then the conception of man as a duality, made up of the bodily organism we know, and of an independent, animating, and indestructible "soul," we infer, must be rejected as untenable. For the natural history of the "soul" is known. In its modern form it is a metaphysical survival of the bodily "double" which the savage assumed to exist owing to an admittedly erroneous interpretation of well known and otherwise explainable facts. And following the culture stage of primitive life, we see how the development of thought robs the "soul" of its definite character until it becomes the shadow of a shade, of importance only because it promises an intellectual justification of the primitive belief in survival. Thus the religious metaphysician and his theory of survival is found to rest on no other and no better foundation than the speculations of the savage. Here, as elsewhere, anthropology is the key to theology. Anthropology proves the unveracity of theology in the act of deciphering its history and showing its origin.

* * *

"The Soul and Its Story."

In *The Soul and Its Story* (Arnold, 10s. 6d. net), Mr. Norman Pearson brings to bear on the subject with which he deals a mind well stored with the results of modern science. He writes well and suggestively, does not rely upon theological doctrines, and provides discussions of many subjects that will interest readers who may not at all care about the purpose for which the book is written. But a fatal and fundamental flaw in his work is precisely the omission of that factor which, to our mind, is all important. And this makes Mr. Pearson's work, not a story of the 'Soul,' but a statement and a defence of a metaphysical theory which, while professedly based on scientific data, does not arise naturally from modern science. Mr. Pearson finds the theory of a soul in being, and his work may fairly be described as an attempt to frame a justification of that belief in a way which will not obviously conflict with scientific teaching. The result is an interesting work, probably as strong a case as can be made out for the belief in survival, but, nevertheless, an inconclusive case. It may satisfy the believer, it will leave the unbeliever where he was.

* * *

Metaphysics or Science?

Briefly and baldly put, Mr. Pearson's theory of the soul is this: There is an ultimate reality which we "may call" "Spirit." This ultimate reality gives rise (Spinoza would have said presents two "modes") to both matter and mind. Mind is nearer to matter (a statement which Spinoza, with a keener logical sense than Mr. Pearson possesses, would never have permitted himself to make), but with each atom of matter there is an atom of mind-stuff. At a certain point in evolution the development of mind has become stable enough to persist after the dissolution of the body. (Mr. Pearson conceives these mind-atoms as being built up into complex structures much as chemical compounds are elaborated). Finally, a species of reincarnation is assumed in order to permit continuous development, and a conservation of the experience required. This is, as we have said, only a bald outline of Mr. Pearson's thesis, which is complicated by a discussion of sex, the transmission of acquired qualities, and of modern scientific theories of life and matter. And the general effect on the mind of a philosophic reader will be that of a work which proves at once too much and too little.

* * *

Materialism, True and False.

One obvious criticism on Mr. Pearson's thesis is that it is mechanistic or nothing. The author would doubtless disclaim Materialism; and yet, if we pay attention to things instead of names, it is there. For one does not escape Materialism by writing "Ultimate Reality" in capital letters. To call it "spirit" tells us nothing, and adds nothing. In a chapter devoted to a criticism of Materialism, Mr. Pearson says that "matter" is no more than an inference from our sense of resisted motion. Well, granted; and what is "mind" but another inference from another group of phenomena? Of "matter" or "mind" we know nothing apart from phenomenal experience. Matter, *per se*, is an abstraction, and so is mind *per se*. But this is not antagonistic to Materialism; it is part of the case for Materialism. Matter, says Mr. Pearson, cannot be explained in terms of itself. Granted; but can *anything* be explained in terms of itself? We can describe matter in terms of matter, and we can describe mind in terms of mind; but we can explain neither in terms of itself. And we cannot do this because a scientific explanation consists in the establishment of equivalents. Thus, we explain the constitution of water

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by the formula of H_2O. If H_2O is not the equivalent of water, our explanation is faulty. If it is, the explanation is complete. On the other hand, we are bound to *describe* things in terms of its own class. Thus we frame chemical "laws" to describe the action of chemical elements, biological "laws" to describe the actions of living beings, and psychological "laws" to describe mental phenomena. Mr. Pearson, in his attack on Materialism, appears to have fallen into the common confusion of identifying a scientific description with a scientific explanation. And the two things are distinct. Thus, when Kepler propounded the laws of planetary motion, he described the path of the planets in the heavens. The *explanation* came when Newton showed that, on the principle of universal attraction, a moving body would of necessity describe an elipse. Consequently, the Materialist need not attempt to explain "matter" in terms of itself; it is enough that he can so describe it. And if Mr. Pearson were right in assuming that "mind" and "matter" (which are no more than names descriptive of groups of phenomena) are the expression of an "Ultimate Reality," that would in no sense be fatal to Materialism, particularly as Mr. Pearson asserts that as to what this "Reality" is, "Materialist and Idealist stand equally baffled before it." In that case it would seem wiser to cease talking about this "Ultimate Reality," which, in the circumstances, can hardly avoid becoming ultimate nonsense.

* * *

Mind and Body.

There is another assumption of Mr. Pearson's against which a protest must be made. This is that the problem before the Materialist is to explain how "mind" and "matter," or thought and organization, are connected. He is here in very numerous and distinguished company; but the assumption is quite unwarranted. "The interaction between mind and body," says Mr. Pearson, "is a highly mysterious matter, but its mysteries cannot be dispelled by attempting to suppress the distinction between the two." But who wishes to suppress the distinction between the two? Certainly not the Materialist. Would it be argued that because a musical note and a ray of light are both due to vibration, therefore the distinction between the two is annihilated? And if that is not argued on behalf of two such dissimilar things as these, why should it be the case with regard to mind and body? Identity of origin may well give rise to difference of result, as Mr. Pearson himself shows. Certainly "consciousness and thought belong to one order of phenomena; the chemico-physical changes of brain tissue to which they are correlated to another." But this furnishes no proof that in grouping these two sets of phenomena under different categories, we are proving independence of origin of one of them, any more than because we group music and light under different categories we are giving each of these an independent origin.

* * *

Turning the Tables.

And the really curious thing is the way in which the Spiritualist calls upon the Materialist to explain in what manner body and mind are connected. But, clearly, the first step is for the Spiritualist to show how they can be separated. The connection between body and mind is not a matter of theory; it is an observed fact. Here are two things always found together; the more we know of their workings, the more certain it is that changes in the one are paralleled by changes in the other. So far as the Materialist is concerned, he takes that connection as a settled fact in the discussion, and is warranted in so doing. But along comes the anti-Materialist. He takes two things never found in separation, and asserts that one is independent of the other. And having done this, he demands that the Materialist accepts that independence as a fact unless he can show the precise method of their connection. But the Materialist is bound to do nothing of the kind. It is not his place to show how mind and body are connected. It is the business of the Spiritualist to show how they can be separated. That is the real problem, and the Materialist should see that his critic does not escape that plain issue.

* * *

There are other aspects of Mr. Pearson's work with which we will deal next week.

Chapman Cohen.

Christianity and the Four Gospels.

I.

So far as the subject of the present article is concerned, it is wholly immaterial when or by whom the Four Gospels were written. They may have undergone many changes, numerous interpolations may have been introduced from time to time, before they assumed the form in which they are now found in the New Testament Canon. Whether they are to be regarded as products of the first or of the second century their relation to the Christian religion remains exactly the same. Taking them precisely as they stand the question to be considered is, Can their hero be legitimately claimed as the Founder of Christianity? Was it the intention or ambition of the Gospel Jesus to add another religion to the large number already in existence? That is to say, did the writers or final editors of the Gospels themselves foresee that ultimately their hero would occupy the proud position of the originator of a new cult? The answer to this question does not lie on the surface, for it is not at all clear to what extent those writers and editors were aware of, and understood, the various religious movements in the midst of which they wrote. No doubt there was an obscure sect in existence known contemptuously as Christians, who were supposed to worship Christ, believing him to be in some sense more than man and the Saviour of the world. We have no historical account of the rise of this sect. In both Jewish and Gentile worlds it was, at first, despised as a depraved form of superstition. The tradition was that Jesus had been supernaturally born, had lived a life crowded with all sorts of miracles, had died a violent death, had been supernaturally raised from the dead, faith in whom closed hell's gate, and opened heaven's for all who possessed it. According to Tacitus (*Annal* xv. 44), Christians were "a race of men detested for their evil practices," and on "account of their sullen hatred of the whole human race." But of Christianity, as we know it, there was, as yet, no trace in either the first or the second century. Now, looking carefully at the Four Gospels, we learn that they indirectly testify to the non-existence of what we understand by Christianity. There is considerable internal evidence to show that the Virgin Birth legend formed no part of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in their original form. Mark calls Jesus the Son of God, and John refers to him as the Saviour of the World; but no attempt is made to explain in what sense he is either.

The Gospel Jesus never alludes to himself as the founder of a new religion. It is in the light of a reformer of Judaism that he is usually presented. He deliberately repudiates the *role* of an iconoclast:—

> Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished (Matt. v. 17, 18).

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His one purpose in life was to bring the hope of Israel to a happy fruition. The kingdom of God, as he viewed it, was for Israel exclusively. On one occasion a Canaanitish woman appealed to him on behalf of her daughter, who had a devil, but he sought to put her off on the following score: "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." She was a shrewd woman, for "she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me."

> And he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. But, she said, Yea, Lord; for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table (Matt. xvii. 21-28).

In Mark's Gospel he displays many purely human traits, in spite of the fact that he is often represented as walking on the sea, feeding thousands off nothing, raising the dead, and giving other signs of being endowed with superhuman powers. In Matthew and Luke the process of deification is much more marked, and the stories of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection are quite new. In the Fourth Gospel the apotheosis of Jesus is complete. He is introduced as the Word of God, as being from all eternity on an equality with God, and as becoming, in the fulness of time, flesh, and dwelling among men full of grace and truth. But even here, again, Christianity is conspicuous only by its absence, though it is manifest that a movement is in progress the end of which is not yet. In John, salvation by belief in the Son of God is diligently proclaimed, and so thorough is the salvation that it is represented under the symbol of a second birth. We also observe in this Gospel a tendency to subordinate the life of Jesus to a theory of his person. He is constantly represented as having for his supreme object the manifestation of his glory. His miracles are regularly spoken of as "signs"; and this is a point on which John flatly contradicts the Synoptists, who declare on more than one occasion that Jesus flatly refused, on principle, to work "signs." But the Christianity of the Creeds is not here at all except potentially. What we can trace in the Four Gospels is the progressive activity of a movement, the consummation of which, no one could have predicted, not even those who played the part of leaders in it.

Is it not beyond all reasonable controversy absurd, therefore, on the part of Christian apologists, to claim the Gospel Jesus as the Founder of Christianity? There is an abundance of theology in the Gospels, but not the theology of the orthodox Church. Theology streamed incessantly out of the mouth of Jesus; but it was a theology in which there was neither the Fall nor Original Sin, neither a Deity at enmity with mankind because of something it had done at the commencement of its history, nor an Atonement in which to quench for ever the fires of Divine wrath. The sin of sins is declared to be unbelief in the Gospel Jesus. Most emphatic is the statement:—

> He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John iii. 18).

We may be told that this is Christianity in the making; but nobody could have foreseen what its appearance would be when the process of making it stood completed. This inability is accounted for by the simple fact that all the ingredients requisite to complete the making of it were not present in the process at the stage represented in the Four Gospels. As Alfred Loisy well says:—

> Less than thirty years after the death of Christ a religion had issued from the Gospel; and this religion was not a split (*dedoublement*) from Judaism, it was not a heresy or schism which would have broken Judaism up; it was an independent religion, and one which was even to detach itself entirely from Judaism before the first generation of believers had disappeared. This birth of a new cult, which came into being in the full daylight of history, continues to be for us a problem in many respects unsolved. It was not due to the will nor to the direct action of Christ. No more does it result from this—that Jesus, without having the express intention of so doing, virtually brought into the world a religion essentially new, the revelation of the good God, who pardons sin, and is honoured by trust in his mercy alone (*The Hibbert Journal*, October, 1911).

For that and much cognate teaching M. Loisy was deposed from an honoured position in the priesthood of the Catholic Church; but he finds himself in line with the leading scholars in Christendom to-day. The curious thing is, however, that several of these first-class scholars still call themselves Christians, although they have completely renounced historical Christianity, while M. Loisy himself continues to adhere to historical Christianity in a loose, vague, modernist sense, though repudiating its indebtedness to the Gospel Jesus. We, on the other hand, take our stand upon the utter unhistoricity of the Gospel narratives, maintaining that Christ is only one in a host of God-men and Saviour-Gods, but happens to be the one that has survived. Popularly speaking, this survival was a pure accident, though in the scientific sense it was the effect of exceedingly well-defined causes, the operation of which we shall find extremely instructive and interesting to trace. Meantime, let it be distinctly understood that the roots of the Christian tree are most numerous, and reach deep down into the soil of the past, much further back than the Four Gospels, as we hope abundantly to prove in future articles.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Bobby Burns of Science.

> Verse is the form most apt to preserve whatever the writer confides to it, and we can, I believe, confide to it, besides all sentiments, almost all ideas.
>
> —*Sully Prudhomme.*

Sully Prudhomme's name does not often meet the eye in these strenuous and exacting times, but a North Country newspaper report states that a lady has been granted a Fellowship at Durham University, and that her thesis was on the great French poet.

Prudhomme's significance lies in the fact that he caught a glimpse of the new poetry which science has revealed, and which is grander than that which it is destroying. People commonly assert that this is a scientific age, and that good poetry is impossible in such an atmosphere. The poets themselves help this delusion by seeking their subjects from the past. Instead of drawing inspiration from the world around them they find subjects in the Greek drama, the fables of King Arthur, or the legends of the Vikings, and other outworn subjects. Yet Sully Prudhomme was awarded the Nobel prize for the greatest work in pure literature. To those who admire the sham antique school of poetry it must be a shock that the prize for the ideal in literature was awarded to a man who, more than any other modern poet, has embodied in his verse the new material gathered by science, and has best expressed the sceptical spirit which characterizes the age.

Sully Prudhomme's imagination and his modes of thought are scientific. He foreshadows the "Bobby Burns to sing the song of steam" whom Kipling calls for. He is not a poet of the people like Beranger, or a writer of music-hall songs. But he differs from the majority of literary men in that he has caught a glimpse of the new poetry which science reveals. He does not hold to the theory that the vocabulary of three centuries

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ago is better fitted to express modern thought and feeling than the living language of to-day. A poet who sings of balloons and barometers, of submarine cables and photography, of evolution and specific gravity determinations, is a novelty to the critics. According to the vulgar standard the sword is more poetical than the revolver. Cavalry may be mentioned, but to introduce torpedo boats into poetry is to attempt too much. That Sully Prudhomme should utilize astronomy is taken for granted, but that he should sing of chemistry and biology is unpardonable. In English the difference between the literary and popular vocabularies is greater than in French, and there is all the more need of poets bold enough to bridge the gulf which separates literature from life. The success of Sully Prudhomme should stimulate our poets to develop the deeper meaning and hidden beauty of life.

This is not by any means an entirely new note in literature. Twenty centuries ago Lucretius made his readers thrill with his magnificent presentation of the atomic theory and other scientific ideas. His very method is but part of the modern method; it is the modern method in its infancy. We may gain some notion of the general effect of his masterpiece, *On the Nature of Things*, if we conceive Tennyson to have devoted his magnificent genius to versifying Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy*, or Swinburne to have subordinated his splendid gifts to the poetic presentation of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. But Lucretius' presentation of the hidden truths of nature hardly found any further poetic expression until the advent of the nineteenth century.

Among the qualities which sciences imposes in poetry are clarity and sincerity, and both these are prominent in the poems of Sully Prudhomme. Indeed, Brunetiere, a reactionary, complained that he was "too conscientious," and was too much afraid of the Sorbonne and the Ecole Polytechnique, and did not care enough for the ordinary reader. Brunetiere missed the freedom of phrases when poets sought rather to be musical than truthful, and did not care what they said so long as they said it beautifully. Granting that over-nicety is a blemish, is it not possible that poetry can acquire the exactness demanded by science without losing its charm? Sully Prudhomme has proved that it can. Tennyson, too, in our own tongue, has shown the same thing. Passages from *In Memoriam* and *The Two Voices*, as well as from *Le Bonheur* and *La Justice*, express scientific theories or metaphysical arguments as accurately as any technical treatise, and prove that it is not necessary to be false in order to be poetical.

It was once thought that the advance of science would make poetry impossible. We now know that this is not the case. There is as much poetry to be seen through the microscope and the telescope as with the naked eye. Sully Prudhomme has a truer insight into the significance of the effect of science on poetry than Keats, consummate artist that he was. Like Walt Whitman, Prudhomme does not find it necessary to use the old figures in the literary property-room. What beauty and force the metaphors of science may give to literature has been shown abundantly by Ruskin and Tennyson in English prose and poetry. Maeterlinck's *Life of the Bee*, and many another work, are examples of what may be achieved by those who can handle the new symbolism. It requires a master-hand to use the crude material excavated by science, because it is lacking in poetical association in the public mind. There is always the danger of embodying unassimilable matter. The average poet masks his incapacity by using words and thoughts which he knows are poetical because poets have used them for centuries.

Prudhomme has extended the domain of poetry. Maybe he occasionally passes over the boundary of poetry into prose in his use of unconventional expression. The boundary line depends largely on the reader. Oliver Wendell Holmes succeeded in *The Chambered Nautilus*, and failed in *The Living Temple*, although it would be hard to say why the anatomy of a mollusc should be more susceptible of poetic employ than that of man.

What seems foreign in the poetry of Sully Prudhomme is his frequent note of sadness, "the sense of tears in mortal things," sinking at times, as in the *Vœu*, into a mild meliorism. Not but what he is cheerful compared with so many French writers, who, though often joyful in life, are not often cheerful in literature. Sully Prudhomme's sadness never takes the personal and theatrical form of Byron or Baudelaire, but is clear and cold. In the last resort, like Voltaire, he bids us "cultivate our garden."

Death is to him, as to Whitman, the liberator as well as the supreme consoler, and on this subject he has written with the force and originality of a master-musician. Here is an example which preserves something of the charm of the great original. It is entitled *The Hour of Death*:—

Kindly watcher by my bed, lift no voice in prayer,
Waste not any words on me when the hour is nigh;
Let a stream of melody but flow from some sweet player,
And meekly will I lay my head and fold my hands to die.
Sick am I of idle words, past all reconciling—
Words that weary and perplex, and pander and conceal;
Wake the sounds that cannot lie, for all their sweet beguiling,
The language one need fathom not, but only hear and feel;
Let them roll once more to me, and ripple in my hearing,
Like waves upon some lonely beach, where no craft anchoreth,
That I may steep myself therein, and craving nought, nor fearing,
Drift on through slumber to a dream, and through a dream to death.

Mimnermus.

The French Revolution.

VIII.

On the Rocks.

(Continued from p. 190.)

In November, 1793, the Revolution had reached its most critical point. Under pressure of military necessity, and that alone, democracy had made conquests unprecedented in the history of the world. France had adopted manhood suffrage; taxes had been imposed, and prices regulated, in the interests of the common people as against the rich; and the nation had ratified a Constitution which was intended to place the Government of France for all time on a basis of the fullest democracy. The bulk of the middle classes who had no liking for these principles, and at first had no intention of applying them, had been forced to acquiesce in them in order that the country might be, so far as possible, united against its external enemies. The war had now turned in favour of France; her soil was free, or all but free, from invaders; and the democrats could not expect, now that this pressure was relaxed, to exact any fresh concessions from the reluctant middle classes. It was time for them to think of consolidating their gains, relaxing the "Terror," negotiating for peace abroad, and putting into force their hardly-won Constitution.

This was at once perceived by Danton. It will be recalled that, after helping to confer the extraordinary powers, which the crisis demanded, on the new Government, Danton had retired in failing health to his native town of Arcis-sur-Aube. He returned to Paris in November to find the organization he had helped to

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create being fatally misused; the guillotine in daily use, not only against proved conspirators and traitors, as he had intended, but against men and women whose only offence had been active political opposition to, or even written or spoken criticism of, the democratic policy; the mania of mere vengeance rampant; and the rash enthusiasm of the "dechristianisers" threatening the country with a new religious feud. Danton was himself a Freethinker, but he recognized the hold which Catholicism had in the country districts, and did not wish to engage in a political crusade against it. He wanted France to be a democracy; but, if possible, a united democracy, and no ulterior programme, social or religious, seemed to him worth a civil war.

Three forces were pitted against him in his desire to lead France back to peace and constitutional government. The common people were too unnerved and too excited to listen calmly, as yet, to prudent counsels. The successive betrayals of their interests by the constitutional Royalists and the Girondists had made them suspicious of treason in every quarter; and the insurrections in La Vendee, in Normandy, at Lyons, and at Toulon, had given them the sensations of a small garrison beleaguered by enemies on every side. Danton himself had waned in popularity. The Girondists, before their fall, and irresponsible extremists since then, had imputed all manner of personal and corrupt motives to him; he passed over such accusations with silent contempt; and the mud stuck as mud will. He had been a lawyer in good practice before the Revolution, and was well-off, and it did not seem to the uneducated populace that a rich man could really be their friend. They contrasted him unfavourably with Marat, who had died worth only a few sous, and with Robespierre, whose studied simplicity and frugality impressed them to an extraordinary degree.

Yet Danton might have led the people successfully if he could have secured the goodwill of the Government. The majority of the Committee of Public Safety probably held the same political principles as he did—*i.e.*, their supreme object was to unite the country against the enemies of democracy, and when they were beaten, to put in force the Constitution of 1793. But the two members of the Committee whose special work was the internal administration of France, Billaud-Varenne and Collot-d'Herbois, shared the popular suspicion of Danton, and had committed themselves too deeply to the policy of the "Terror" to be willing to draw back. Collot d'Herbois, in fact, had been guilty of the massacres at Lyons, and was, by now, past arguing with.

The leader of the Government, however, in the eyes of France and the world, was Robespierre. He was, at this moment, the most popular man in France. His political opinions were by no means more democratic than Danton's, and, in some ways, less so. When Danton had been focussing the demand for universal suffrage and the Republic in the Cordeliers' Club, Robespierre, in the Jacobins', had still been for constitutional monarchy and moderation. Not until after August 10, 1792, when the Republic was virtually an accomplished fact, was Robespierre known as a Republican at all. His popularity was due to the fact that he, more than anyone else, voiced the changing opinions of the more advanced section of French middle-class thought. The inspiration of this section came from Rousseau; and Robespierre had swallowed Rousseau absolutely whole. Without original ideas or strong feelings of his own, he was dominated by Jean-Jacques, just as the English Puritans of the seventeenth century were dominated by the Bible. The Jacobins' Club, the "caucus," so to speak, of the Democratic Party, was completely in his hands, voted resolutions and expelled refractory members at his bidding, and hung rapt on the inspired words that fell from his lips.

Robespierre was fully prepared to co-operate with Danton against the "dechristianisers." He loathed and hated Atheism, because it was contrary to Rousseau. That writer, while rejecting Christianity as generally accepted, had laid down that a "civil religion," a sort of Deistic undenominationalism, should be imposed on members of the community as necessary to morality, viz., belief in a deity, in immortality, and in future rewards and punishments. While condemning "intolerance," Rousseau inconsistently demanded the banishment from the State of any one who did not believe in this minimum of religion. Accordingly, Robespierre sought to impose this "civil religion" on France, and probably cared more for this than for any other part of his programme. His personal quarrel with the Girondists had been less with their social obscurantism than with their religious latitudinarianism. He now came forward, and at the Jacobins' Club delivered a violent speech against Atheism. Atheism, he said, was aristocratic; belief in God was democratic; and he denounced the "dechristianisers" as traitors in the pay of the foreign enemy. This was soon followed by a decree of the Convention in favour of the free practice of religion, and by the circular of the Government to their representatives in the departments, to which allusion has already been made.

At the same time Danton's friends began an attack on the "dechristianisers" in the press. The talented journalist, Camille Desmoulins, who had been prominent among Radical writers from the very beginning of the Revolution, started in December, 1793, a series of pamphlets, entitled the *Vieux Cordelier*, in which he attacked in unmeasured language the leaders of the anti-religious movement, Hebert and Chaumette. The most enthusiastic of them, Anacharsis Clootz, was expelled from the Jacobins' Club, after a vitriolic outburst against him by Robespierre, who reproached him with his German extraction and his large income. Danton's friends, who were now supported by all who, for one reason or another, from public-spirit or self-interest, desired a reaction, grew yet bolder. Desmoulins, in the third of his pamphlets, denounced the "Terror" itself, and demanded a "committee of clemency" to sort out the innocent from among the huge crowd of imprisoned "suspects."

For a moment the Government rocked. The fall of Toulon, about this time, brought home to men generally the fact that the country was again out of danger. The Committee of Public Safety, however, clutched tight at the reins of power. Robespierre ceased to encourage Desmoulins. He had conceived the idea, which was to be his ruin, of using the "Terrorist" machinery, now that the war crisis was passed, to enforce his Rousseauist views on religion and the State; and he was prepared to sacrifice everyone, Dantonist or Hebertist, Atheist or Latitudinarian, who stood in his way. Desmoulins, in his turn, found himself attacked and threatened. His friend and Danton's, Fabre d'Eglantine, who had helped to draw up the Revolutionary Calendar, was arrested on a trumped-up charge of forgery. At the same time Anacharsis Clootz and Thomas Paine were arrested as enemy aliens, although both were devoted to France and the Revolution. Thus, at the outset of the year 1794, the Revolutionary Government had become a grinding tyranny, as fatal to the democrats themselves as to their adversaries.

Why, then, did not Danton strike a blow? Why did he not come forward in the Convention, point out that

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the country had no further need of the "Terror," that the policy of the Government had degenerated into mere political persecution, and that the majority must pluck up courage and put an end to it? His inaction is most remarkable. His energy seems to have evaporated. Despondent remarks were attributed to him at this time, as "it is better to be guillotined than to guillotine," which suggest that the stress and strain of the preceding years had really broken him down.

It was the Hebertists, the "dechristianisers," whose strength lay in the Paris municipality and the Cordeliers' Club, who made the first move towards overthrowing the Government. It must not be supposed that they were turning against the "Terror"; on the contrary, they were as vindictive as the worst of the party in power, and even took to their arms Carrier, the commissioner who had been recalled on account of his atrocities at Nantes. They demanded the quickening of the guillotine, the extermination of the remnants of the Girondists, and the trial of Desmoulins, who had attacked them. On March 4 they appealed to the arbitrament of insurrection; but the common people did not respond. The Government struck; and Hebert and his principal associates were arrested.

Following the evil precedent set in the trial of the Girondists, the prisoners were judged in a batch; and to confuse the issue, a number of bankers and miscellaneous doubtful characters, as well as the unfortunate Clootz, were added to the batch. After a trial on more or less frivolous evidence, nineteen of them were guillotined on March 24.

Few historians have had a good word to say for these particular victims. Most of them had made themselves odious by their identification with the policy of blood; and Hebert, the gutter journalist, was not a character in any way worthy of respect. Yet the same cannot be said of all of them. Clootz, in particular, was a man of noble heart and intellect, a pioneer of the cause of international brotherhood, and a victim solely to the religious spite of Robespierre. Others of the Hebertist victims were zealous propagandists of land nationalization and early forms of Socialism, and were feared on that account by the Government. "Terrorists" as they were, they could not have shown themselves more ferocious, had they tried, than the Government which executed them soon became.

The Committee of Public Safety then struck at its other opponents. Danton, Desmoulins, and their chief adherents were arrested on March 31. The Convention servilely voted its concurrence. The new "batch" included Herault de Sechelles, author of the democratic Constitution, and a number of swindlers and forgers thrown in, as before, to prejudice the case. Danton defended himself eloquently; whereupon the Government obtained forthwith a new law, empowering the Tribunal to silence the defence of any prisoner who "insulted justice." Danton, Desmoulins, Herault de Sechelles, Fabre d'Eglantine, and eleven others were guillotined on April 5, 1794. Eight days later, the widows of Desmoulins and Hebert suffered, together with Chaumette, the popular and advanced official of the Paris municipality, condemned as an Atheist. Verily, the Revolutionary Government was emulating the worst of the kings and inquisitors of the old regime!

The execution of Danton was "worse than a crime, it was a blunder." Intended to preserve the Democratic Party by destroying those who threatened to split it, it took away the one statesman who could have consolidated the Revolution and headed off the now inevitable reaction. Henceforth, it was only a question how soon the "Marsh," the unorganized reactionary majority of the Convention, would have the courage to overthrow the Government and seize the reins of power. The real leader of the democracy had been sacrificed to save a Committee of incompetent second-raters.

(To be continued.) Robert Arch.

Acid Drops.

After all it seems that the clergy will be admitted into the schools as "emergency teachers" under the plea of National Service. It is all of a piece with the English view of education that it should regard a clergyman, without experience or training in teaching, to be fitted to fill the place of a man who has qualified for the work by years of preparation. The permission for the local bodies to employ clergymen as teachers comes direct from the Board of Education, and the permission indicates the view taken of the value of education in high quarters. Anybody or anything will do for a teacher. That is, apparently, the way in which education is regarded by the majority of people in this country. And it clearly presents but a poor outlook for the national regeneration that is so glibly promised us "after the War."

The full significance of the Board of Education's mistaken policy is seen when we bear in mind the fact that these clergymen who are to replace skilled teachers are, themselves, claiming and receiving exemption from military service. Physically they are as "fit" as the teachers whose places they are to take. But the physically fit teacher is to go, the physically fit parson is to remain, and to escape opprobium because of this specious pretext of National Service. National Service, forsooth! As though any National Service could really make good the neglect of education, and placing clergymen in the schools where their influence can be exercised for no real good, and may be productive of real harm.

Present-day religiosity is not so virile as that of preceding generations. Speaking at a meeting of the Southend Education Committee on the subject of juvenile crime, Alderman J. R. Brightwell said "it seemed a question as to whether the churches or the police would have the paramount influence. He did not know whether the love of religion or the dread of the 'bobby' would have the greater effect." Years ago the alternative would have been the fear of hell or the dread of the birch.

Rev. F. H. Gillingham, the well-known cricketing parson, complains that when the Zeppelins fell near London the people rushed about, singing "Tipperary" and "Rule, Britannia," "without a single thought of God." But what can Mr. Gillingham expect? "God" allowed the Zeppelins to come time after time, and did nothing to prevent their coming or returning. It was not God, but the aviators and the gunners, that did the trick. Without them, Zepps would be as busy as ever. When the people rushed into the streets and sang "Rule Britannia," it was evidence only that for once in a while sense had proved stronger than piety.

All but eight of the City of London churches are to be closed, and the Bishop of London says he cannot justify the retention of sixty clergy to minister to about 14,000 people. He did not add that the vast majority of the "14,000 people" were City policemen, caretakers, and charwomen.

A propos of religion at the Front, in his book, *Bullets and Billets*, Capt. Bruce Bairnsfather writes concerning a priest in a French village where he was billeted:—

> I am sorry to say I plead guilty to having cast a certain amount of ridicule at the Cure. He was so splendidly austere, and wore such funny clothes, that I couldn't help perpetrating several sketches of him. The disloyalty of his parishioners was very marked in the way they laughed at these drawings, which were pinned up the row of cottages.....He didn't like soldiers being billeted in his village, so Suzette told me. I think he got this outlook from his rather painful experiences when the Germans were in the same village.....He preached a sermon whilst we were there. I didn't hear it, but was told

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about it simultaneously by Suzette, Berthe, and Marthe, who informed me that it was directed against soldiery in general. His text had apparently been "Do not trust them gentle ladies." A gross libel! I retaliated immediately by drawing a picture of him with a girl sitting on each knee, singing, "The soldiers are going, hurrah, hurrah."

The egregious Bishop of London, referring to the needs of the East London Church Fund, said he had been trying to explode the superstition that "you put two pennies in a slot, and out comes a vicar, two handsome curates, and a peal of bells." The pious public may put pennies in the religious slot, but, assuredly, the bishops draw many thousands of pounds annually.

Herr Jacob Schaffner, the poet, characterizes non-German nations as being "godless and partially civilized." This is strange language from an "Atheist," as the clergy describe the Teutonic peoples.

The Bishop of Birmingham is pressing the claims of parenthood, and lamenting the declining birth-rate. Why does he not pen his appeals to the bachelor Bishop of London?

Some two thousand Church of England clergy hold commissions as Army chaplains. The pay is attractive, and they do not have to fight.

The Archbishop of Cologne has instructed the German clergy to pray for victory. Still another proof of the terrible "Atheism" of the Germans.

Among the new American religious notions is a "Christian Efficiency Congress," to be held next September. We welcome the admission of the present inefficiency of the Faith.

The *St. Mary's Parish Magazine* (R.C.) says that our soldiers, "keeping their night watches under starlit skies, feel the presence of a personal God.....Their hearts and their heads tell them with certainty that there is another world, and that there is a kindly Providence." In the next column it prints an account of a fire in a Catholic Home in Canada, in which 180 insane girls were kept, and which resulted in forty-five of the poor creatures being burned to death. Evidently the "kindly Providence" was too busy with the soldiers "keeping their night watches under starlit skies." Pity it could not have paid a little attention to that Catholic Home in Canada.

The "Blue Lion," a public-house without beer, has been opened under Church auspices in Bethnal Green, London. No wonder that lion was blue.

Newspaper editors are making paragraphs concerning the Rev. J. C. Sharp, of Wood Green, who is working six days a week in a factory. Is this so novel a thing for a parson to do?

Parish magazines often contain unconscious humour. One clerical editor writes: "Girls for confirmation at St. Peter's church are asked not to wear dresses." We wonder if there was a crowded congregation?

Providence does not respect vicarages any more than churches. At a fire at St. Stephen's vicarage, Canonbury, a woman of eighty was burned to death.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell says that prior to the War England was given over to Materialism. We know that "materialism," for it was adulterated with the new and old theology.

The Bishop of Lincoln, who has just taken his seat in the House of Lords, brings the number of "spiritual" peers up to the full complement of twenty-six. Of the thirty-eight bishops, only twenty-four are entitled to sit in the House, and the two archbishops always enjoy the privilege. This is one of the privileges of the Government religion, for the Non-conformists, who are almost as numerous as Church-people, have no representative whatever.

The Bishop of London rejoices that "agricultural labourers are at last to have a living wage." Quite touching; but the Bishop might have pointed out to the readers of *Reynolds's*, to whom the message was addressed, that his own Church has been a powerful factor in preventing the agricultural labourer getting this living wage. No single factor has been so powerful as the Church in keeping him the passive, overworked, underpaid animal he has been. The Church of England has done *that* work more effectively than any other Church in Europe. And the result is seen in the fact that the English agricultural labourer is without a single revolt to his credit. The parson and the squire have worked too-well together for that to have occurred.

Mr. W. C. Buckley, bachelor, aged eighty-five, has bequeathed over £200,000 for the benefit of the Church of England Diocese in Manchester. If any Christian retorts that we are jealous of the Church receiving this, we beg to plead guilty. When we think of the amount of good we could do with only a two-hundredth part of that sum, we confess we do feel jealous. We regret that the possession of so much money should have been accompanied by so little sense in its disposal.

The Rev. F. H. Gillingham, speaking at St. Michael's, Cornhill, said "the Church was full of decrepit deans, tottering canons, and infirm incumbents. We sing like a mighty army of God, but God help the army that moves like the Church at the present time." This is letting the cat out of the bag.

"The City Temple, living up to its reputation for modernity in religion, was crowded to hear Miss Royden, the first woman preacher to occupy the pulpit." Thus the *Daily Chronicle*. Christian ideas of "modernity" are curious, for after 2,000 years of the religion of Christ, the position of woman in the Churches is still subordinate to that of man.

The Chairman of the Lord's Day Observance Society has written the Archbishop of Canterbury expressing his deep regret that the Primate should have yielded to "the mere opinions of war as opposed to the definite commandment of God," on the question of Sunday labour. The impertinence of the extreme pietist knows no limit. We may remind such gentry of the verse in Galatians: "If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

Cardinal Bourne has written that Catholics may "lawfully" engage in agricultural labour on Sundays, provided they do not neglect their religious duties. Quite so; Cardinal Bourne cannot overlook the interests of the Church even in the midst of the War. We wonder that the Church has not hit upon the plan of *selling* dispensations to labour on Sunday.

"A West Country Parson" writes to the *Daily Mail* complaining that at a time when the country is suffering from a shortage of labour, he was called to a meeting about ten miles away, where, with fifteen able-bodied men, a discussion was conducted on "Foreign Missions." He complains that these calls are continuous, and asks: "What are the bishops doing?" Evidently they are practising "Business as usual." But whether we are at War or not the questions discussed by these clerical gatherings are of no earthly benefit to anyone, and if the War brings that home to people it will have done that amount of good.

The superstition of the ordinary Christian is unfathomable. One such was told of a clergyman who had gone to work in his fields on a Sunday, and recommended his parishioners to do the same; and this was her answer: "The wonder is God did not strike him dead for his sinful presumption." She was not in the least impressed by the fact that he still lived on, the only fact that counted for her being that he didn't deserve to live.

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A most astonishing commodity is the Nonconformist conscience. It must of necessity be up in revolt against the somewhat more elastic faculty of the Anglican Church. Since the Archbishop of Canterbury approved of Sunday labour under existing circumstances, the Free Church Council was morally obliged to express its disapproval. The Rev. F. B. Meyer and his associates could not possibly endorse his Grace of Canterbury's disloyalty to their Divine Lord. There is nothing that blinds people like religious prejudice.

The Bishop of Oxford condemns the present spiritualistic attempts to get into communication with the dead, forgetting that, according to Church teaching, the Christian life consists almost exclusively in imagined communication with a man who died two thousand years ago.

The Holy Ghost is always working amazingly great miracles through the notorious Gipsy Smith. Every revival conducted by him is the most marvellous on record, the number of conversions having exceeded any ever heard of before. The Gipsy has just spent six months at the Front, and most wonderful results have been reaped from his evangelistic labours there. It has become the talk of the Army, officers and men alike, this unexampled success of his mission. And yet, strange to relate, he needs to go back and stay there to the end!

The Rev. R. J. Campbell says, "Our civilization has got into a cul-de-sac." Yet so many of his colleagues try to assure us that civilization and Christianity are inseparable.

A large number of bakers will not make "hot cross buns" this Easter. Schoolboys will treat this holy time with high-sniffing contempt.

According to the clergy, sacred relics have been preserved miraculously in the War zone, and the faithful Christians believe them. Yet the British and Foreign Bible Society announce that 68,000 Bibles have been lost in four vessels sunk by submarines. Perhaps dear old Providence is a humourist.

According to the American papers, under the laws of some States, it is an offence to libel a dead man, and a citizen named Haffan has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for remarking in public that George Washington was "intemperate, a hard swearer, and a slave-holder." Perhaps someone will prosecute Theodore Roosevelt for his libellous description of Thomas Paine as "a filthy little Atheist," a record of three lies in three words.

Actors take themselves very seriously nowadays. Mr. H. B. Irving says that modern Germany had been brought up in a school of scoundrelism based on Frederick the Great. Is that so? The pious Kaiser and the German clergy seem to derive their inspiration from the "scoundrelism" of the Old Testament.

Dom Lorenzo Perosi, musical director of the Papal choir, has written a grand symphony, inspired by the world-war. The music of the hemispheres, eh?

The valiant Young Men's Christian Association has opened a hut at Goose Green, Dulwich. The place has an appropriate name.

Speaking at Temple Church, the Bishop of London said something must come out of the War. Just so! The clergy will emerge from the War—with whole skins.

Quite a large number of the clergy are out for Prohibition. Yet when they are in their Sunday-schools they profess a liking for "tiny tots."

The late Rev. Lord Blythswood left estate of the value of £105,197. If the Bible be correct in its denunciation of wealth, he should have trouble in entering the pearly gates of heaven.

A Yorkshire curate is doing shepherd work six days in the week say the newspapers. This suggests that some curates used to work only one day a week.

Mr. A. G. Gardiner, the editor of the *Daily News*, published a leading article with the arresting title, "The Twilight of the Gods." As may be expected, none of the deities of the Christian mythology were so much as mentioned.

"'Business is business' is the key to the character of Judas," says Dr. Lyttelton. Yet priests have made millions out of the Christian religion where poor old Judas made only shillings.

"The country is turning to God, but it is not turning to the Churches," says Dean Inge. This is a cryptic utterance, for in most churches they worship three gods.

The Reflections of Riquet (A Dog).

When, under the table, my master holds out to me the food that he is about to place into his mouth, it is in order to tease me, and he punishes me if I succumb to the temptation. For I cannot believe that he deprives himself for me.

When I am asleep behind my master in his armchair, he keeps me warm. And that is when he seems to be a god. There is also in front of the fire-place a warm hearth. That hearth is divine.

Prayer. O! my master Bergeret, God of carnage, I adore thee. Almighty one, be praised. Be praised, great one. I grovel at thy feet; I lick thy hands. Thou art very great and very beautiful when thou devourest, before the table laden with abundant viands. Thou art very great and very beautiful when, with a slender piece of wood, bursting out in flame, thou changest night into day. Keep me in thy house to the exclusion of all other dogs.....And thou, Angelique, the cook, thou very great and good divinity, I fear thee, and I venerate thee, that thou mayest give to me plenty to eat.

Invocation. Oh, Fear, Fear august and yet tender, Fear saintly and yet healthy, fill me when I am in danger, in order that I may avoid that which might be able to harm me, for fear that, throwing myself on an enemy, I may suffer for my imprudence.

There are carriages that horses pull along the streets. They are terrible. There are also some carriages that go alone, puffing and blowing very strongly. They also are full of enmity. The men in rags and tatters are hateful, and those also who carry baskets on their heads, or who wheel barrows. I do not like the children who, rushing hither and thither, utter great cries in the streets. The world is full of things, hostile and fearful.

ANATOLE FRANCE (Translated by H. W. Edwards).

Man and God.

The Food Dictator asks the clergy to urge the men to work on Sundays to remedy the food scarcity.—*Daily Press.*

THE Lord spake unto Moses,
"Six days to work," said he,
"And one, the seventh only,
Thou shalt reserve for me."

There was a Food Dictator
In a land that worships God;
He overruled the Maker,
"On the seventh turn the sod."

The moral of my story
You all can plainly see;
Man is his own creator,
And evermore shall be. FRANK BETTS.

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The "Freethinker" and the Paper Famine.

Following what was said last week, not very many readers will be surprised to learn that I have decided to keep the *Freethinker*, both as regards number of pages and price, unchanged for the present. After looking at the problem from all sides, and consulting with one or two friends, I think I see my way to doing this without having to face a much heavier loss than was the case last year. This deficit on the working of the paper—entirely due to the increased price of materials—was quickly made good by *Freethinker* readers, and I am confident they will respond as readily again when asked to do so. Some of my correspondents have urged me to raise the price of the paper to threepence, and so relieve myself of this source of anxiety, but that anxiety does not alarm me, so long as I see a way of pulling through. When I accepted the responsibility of maintaining the *Freethinker*, I did not expect an *easy* time. It was taken "for better or for worse," and if—during the War Period—it turns out worse than I took it for, one must just make the best of the situation. There is also the consolation that by this time I may reasonably hope the bulk of readers have enough confidence in my judgment to feel that the best is being done in the circumstances.

What I have kept before my mind all the time is the fact that the primary reason—if not the whole reason—for the existence of the *Freethinker* is that it is a propagandist organ. It exists to serve a great cause, and nothing must be done that will prejudice its utility in that direction. It is fairly certain that were the price of the *Freethinker* increased to threepence, it would lose few of its present readers. But there would be an added difficulty in getting new ones. *And it is new readers I am after.* They represent a clear gain, from both a party and commercial point of view.

The *Freethinker* will, therefore, continue unchanged in size and price—unless, of course, some wholly unexpected development takes place. The only difference will be that for about four weeks it will be printed on a thinner paper. At a time when it is a case of getting paper where and how one can, and at almost any price, this is unavoidable. But the change will be for a few weeks only.

Meanwhile, may I suggest to those who expected to pay more for their paper, that these unspent coppers could be usefully expended in taking an extra copy of the *Freethinker* and passing it on to a likely subscriber? This will be a real help and, perhaps, a permanent one.

All I have to add is that the position of the *Freethinker* continues to be quite satisfactory. The circulation is better to-day than when I assumed formal editorship, and the little advertising I have been able to afford has borne excellent results. But in the matter of circulation my appetite is insatiable. The *Freethinker* cannot be read by too many people. So we must hang on and fight on. And when the War *does* cease, we shall all reap the advantage of our tenacity.

Chapman Cohen.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 1, Portsmouth: April 8, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

Sapper J. Gorrock.—Very pleased to learn that so many of your comrades were sympathetic towards the *Freethinker* on seeing it for the first time. Your remark: "This War seems to have driven home to a large number the failure of Christianity," is the one truth which is being constantly endorsed by our correspondents in all parts of the War area.

C. Sibleigh writes: "I admire you for carrying on in these hard times, and sincerely hope you will continue to do so until peace brings back some thousands more Freethinkers than ever crossed the Channel before." We have no doubt whatever that when the "boys come home," many of them will read the *Freethinker* who have never read it regularly before.

T. C.—We quite agree with you that a good deal of the more extravagant and emotional outbursts of religion in young persons is little more than a perverted sexualism. We have a volume in the press dealing with the subject, which we hope soon to see published.

S. Lee.—We do not doubt that the bulk of our readers would cheerfully pay extra for their *Freethinker* during the continuance of the War. If we must do so, we shall; but it will be very unwillingly. Thanks for your own offer of help.

G. Daas (Lahore).—Will do our best to hunt up the articles named, but have been unsuccessful up to the present. Pleased to hear of the prospect of increased freethinking activity.

Warwickshire Miner.—We think the weekly quotations at the head of the *Freethinker* were greatly appreciated. We dropped them because to print them in addition to the weekly "Contents" gave the page a very "broken" appearance. Perhaps we may discover a method of reviving them.

Will the two gentlemen from Pendleton (initials "H. B." and "J. E. C.") who gave the chairman at Mr. Cohen's meetings on Sunday last their names at Manchester, please send same on to the Editor, as the slip containing particulars has been inadvertently destroyed?

H. Elliot.—Letter sent as requested.

J. De Lisle (N.Z.).—"Professor" Macintyre's address is, as you say, amusing—so far as absurdity can be described as such. And it is fortunate that absurd statements usually do have an amusing aspect. It helps to make us more tolerant of those who make them.

"Another Scotty."—Crowded out of this issue. Shall appear next week.

W. H. Harrap.—We have the fullest sympathy with the attempts to re-organize our land system. It is about the worst in Europe. But our hands are really too full of other matters to take it up as part of our work.

Freethinker Sustentation Fund.—Manchester Man, 3s.; F. C. Harding, 5s.

J. A. Leiper.—Will try, next week.

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.

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

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

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.

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.

Will all those who have written concerning the *Freethinker* and the paper famine please take this note as an acknowledgment of their communications. The letters have been too numerous for us to thank each writer separately. All who have written are unanimous in the promise of their full support, whether we raise the price of the paper, or continue as it is, making good the deficit in some other manner. The assurance of their confidence is deeply appreciated, and it sends us forward with renewed courage.

Mr. Cohen's meetings at Manchester on Sunday last were splendidly successful, and augur well for the revival of work in that city. Both afternoon and evening the hall was filled, and the audience appeared to highly appreciate the lectures. There was also a good sale of literature, and at the conclusion of both meetings the names and addresses taken of intending members for the new Branch.

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At the business meeting on the Saturday evening, at which Mr. Cohen presided, it was resolved that the Executive be asked to dissolve the old Manchester Branch of the N. S. S., and to sanction the formation of a new one. This was done with the full acquiescence of the old members; so there will be no real break, and their co-operation is assured. But this was felt to be the best method of insuring smoothness and efficiency in working. A provisional committee was appointed, and steps are to be taken to secure a permanent meeting-place. Whether arrangements can be made to secure the tenancy of the old hall, or whether it will be found advisable to secure a new headquarters, will be settled as soon as possible. Meanwhile, all who are willing to help in any way should communicate at once with Mr. S. Pulman, 68 Tib Street, Manchester.

To-day (April 1) Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures in the Trades' Hall, Fratton Road, Portsmouth. The afternoon meeting is at 3 and the evening at 7. We hope the local "saints" will make a special note of the time and place of the meetings. On Sunday next (April 8) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Elysium Hall, High Street, Swansea, at 2.30.

Last week we wrote a brief note regarding what can only be called the infamous treatment of a witness in the Clydebank Police Court. A Mr. Charles Stewart, whose address the court officials decline to give, and which we have been unable to obtain, was a witness in a case of theft. When he presented himself before the court he was invited to take the oath, but declined and desired to affirm. The following then transpired:—

> Mr. Hepburn: What is your reason for that?
> Witness: Because I don't believe its right.
> Mr. Hepburn: What Church do you belong to?
> Witness: I am not a member of any Church.
> Mr. Hepburn: Why not take the oath?
> Witness: I'll affirm, but I will not take the oath.

Mr. Stewart was then ordered to stand down, and at the close of the court, Superintendent and Deputy Chief Inspector Mackay had the accused brought to the bar of the court and informed the magistrate that he would have the case reported to the Burgh Fiscal. We have received information from a correspondent who tried to obtain the witness's address from the court, and who interviewed a reporter in the court, who affirms the accuracy of the above, and adds that the court officials did all they could to browbeat the man into taking the oath. The whole incident is disgraceful. We intend bringing the matter before the N. S. S. Executive, and it will be seen whether the authorities cannot be moved to take some action in the matter. It is monstrous that mere police court officials should be permitted to so openly set the law at defiance. Meanwhile we should be obliged if some of our Scotch readers could furnish us with Mr. Stewart's address?

The Pioneer Press has secured a limited supply of fine works all of which will prove more or less interesting to our readers. These will be found described in the advertising pages of this issue. The Hon. A. J. G. Canning's three works are sufficiently descriptive in their titles. The biography of William Hone, published in 1912, is a most interesting volume, and deals with one of the group of early nineteenth century reformers which played such a prominent part in the struggle for a free press and for free speech. His trials before Lord Ellenborough and Mr. Justice Abbott for publishing parodies of the Athanasian Creed and the Church Catechism are famous, and the account in Mr. Hackwood's work is well done. *The English Woman*, by David Staars, is an interesting and suggestive study of the woman question, published in 1909, on evolutionary and historical lines. That we commend to our readers with every confidence.

With the exception of a small number of copies—a little over 100—the edition of Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Free Will?* is exhausted. The remaining copies have the covers soiled, so it has been decided to strip off the soiled paper wrappers and bind them in cloth. These will be sold at 1s. 9d. per copy, and we have no doubt that many will prefer the work in cloth to any other form. As the number in hand is very limited, those who require a copy should apply at once. It will not be advisable to reprint the book until the supply of paper becomes greater than is the case at present.

The Monarch of Cereals.

The problem of the human food supply is always with us. The increased population, more and more concentrated in urban areas, in every part of the civilized world, provides a constantly decreasing proportion of agricultural workers. For various reasons, the leading nations, strenuously devoted to industry and commerce, ran grave risks of forgetting the eternal verity that all forms of wealth are ultimately derived from the soil. Not merely do we depend upon Mother Earth for our animal and vegetable products and by-products, but we are equally her debtor for all the coal, iron, clay, oil, and other raw materials utilized in the maintenance of modern civilization. Even before the World-War overwhelmed us there was a decided rise in the price of food, and this upward movement has been steadily progressing throughout the period of bloodshed and sacrifice of the accumulated savings of centuries, which has now set its seal on human kind.

We must procure bread, and whether it contains rye, maize, rice, potatoes, or any other plant product, it is essential to our very being. Important as the many cereal and leguminous foods are, and some 800,000,000 of the earth's inhabitants rely upon rice as their main sustenance, the wheat grain must, nevertheless, be regarded as the leading cereal of human consumption. Surveying the globe as a whole, wheat forms the chief food of man. Both from the standpoint of monetary value and quantity grown, wheat is the king of cereals. Yet, even in the immense corn lands of America, maize, or as it is termed "corn," is the grain crop most extensively cultivated in the United States. In 1899, the estimated value of maize raised in the States was 828,000,000 dollars, while the wheat produced was valued at 370,000,000 dollars only. And in 1906 the respective figures for corn and wheat were 1,100 and 450 for American farms, while the entire earth's annual harvesting and consumption of wheat was in 1908 nearly 3·5 billion bushels.

But while in special areas rice and maize are grown in enormous quantities, the wheat plant is of world-wide cultivation. The amount of wheat milled for human needs is greater than that of all the other cereals put together. In his authoritative volume, *The Book of Wheat*, Professor Dondlinger states that—

> 62 per cent. of all cereal products milled in the United States during 1900 were from wheat. It is essentially a bread cereal. Bananas, rice, potatoes, and other soil products will sustain a greater population on a given unit of land than wheat will, but they are not so well adapted to a high standard of living. Herein lies the present and increasing importance of wheat, for it seems to be the tendency of the civilized world to raise its standard of living. As the standard of living rises, wheat becomes a relatively more important part of human food. Rye and oats furnished the bread of the great body of the people of Europe during the Middle Ages. Wheat was high-priced and not extensively grown. England early became a wheat-eating nation, France and the other Latin countries followed later. Rye is still extensively used in Germany, but is gradually being superseded by wheat. Even Russia is using more wheat flour than she did twenty years ago.

Wheat is the world's premier food-plant, and for several reasons. Its nutritive qualities, particularly when eaten in the form of whole-meal biscuits or

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bread, are very great. The plant varies considerably—over one thousand varieties are known to botanists—and it readily adapts itself to dissimilar climates and soils. It is easily grown, and lends itself to the most economic methods of preparation for use, while the farmer eyes it approvingly in the light of its rapid and bountiful return for the cost and labour bestowed on its cultivation. And in addition to the wheat-kernel baked into bread, the plant supplies several subsidiary products, which greatly amplify its economic and industrial importance.

The rich golden grain of the ripened wheat as we behold it in the harvest-time does not, and never did, exist in uncultivated Nature. This is the outcome of artificial selection, and it has been developed from a wild waving grass. Its genesis, as a cultivated plant, is shrouded in prehistoric darkness, and its geographical origin is still a matter of conjecture. Before the dawn of history, wheat was cultivated by the late Stone Age people, whose dwellings have been discovered in the Swiss lakes. These ancient lake-dwellers, even in their day, were acquainted with at least four varieties of wheat.

Thousands of years before our era the wheaten staff of life was known in China, and it was also a carefully tended crop in Palestine and Egypt in ancient times. Wheat is referred to in the records of all extinct Old World civilizations, and its cultivation antedates all known tongues. It is evidently derived from the early attempts of primitive man to rear and garner the grasses of the field. Many regard Mesopotamia as its birthplace, and there exists some evidence to show that wheat once flourished in a wild state along the valleys of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, and it may have spread from that region in all directions. Homer declares that wheat grew wild in Sicily, and Siculus shared his belief. Manetho, the Egyptian annalist, attributed its creation to the goddess Isis. Even in his period the cultivation of corn seems to have extended back in the Nile country for many thousands of years. Its introduction into America dates from the discovery of that continent. Maize was previously the chief corn crop in the New World, and although it has been asserted that a wheat plant was native to Chili, this claim has been examined and rejected by no less an authority than Humboldt.

Scientifically, wheat ranks as a member of the grass group, and is in reality a vastly improved form of grass. Wild barley and wild rye are its near relatives. Other plants closely akin to it are various worthless weeds, while that abominable pest to the husbandman, quack-grass, is not a distant if disreputable relation. But, to its credit, several valuable forage plants are its cousins, rye grass among them. The wild cattle-feeding grasses, which grow so luxuriantly in Southern Europe, are probably the plants from which wheat has been developed. Various species of the genus Ægilops—the grasses in question—cross freely with the cultivated wheats. Recent attempts have been made to evolve wheat from these rude grasses, and it is highly probable that, given sufficient time, a very useful wheat could be evolved with heads bearing many grains, instead of the single miserable grain now borne on each stalk by these wild wheats of the South.

The arable areas devoted to wheat in all quarters of the world have been gradually increasing for many years. During the latter half of the nineteenth century it is estimated that the great centre of wheat production in the United States spread 680 miles in a westerly direction and nearly 100 towards the north. The growth of this grain has been steadily extending from the temperate regions, both towards the Tropics and the Poles. Agricultural authorities, like military experts, have been much mistaken. That wheat could be profitably raised in Siberia or Canada in latitudes north of the 55th parallel was dismissed as chimerical. But this contention had to be abandoned as the cultivation of wheat travelled further and further towards the Arctic circle. In 1900 and 1901, spring wheat, buckwheat, and other cereals were ripened at Sitka, Alaska, which lies 56 degrees north latitude. Various cereals, including wheat, have been most successfully harvested several degrees further north in Canada, while experiments prove that corn culture is practicable quite near the Poles in normal seasons. For example:—

> Spring wheat and winter rye have matured perfectly 65 degrees 50 minutes north latitude at Rampart, about 200 miles from the Arctic circle, and at Dawson, equally as far north, over 1,000 miles north of the United States.

Of course, the crop is more precarious in these high latitudes, and barley, oats, and rye will ripen in colder regions than wheat. Wheat will flourish in lands situated from 20 to 25 degrees south or north of the equator. It thrives in Cuba, South Africa, and Southern Brazil within these limits. It is also interesting to observe the heights at which the grain will mature. At the equator it flourishes in the mountain plains of Ecuador and Colombia at an elevation of 10,000 feet above sea-level. The United States census of 1880 shows that—

> over 80 per cent. of the grain was grown at an elevation between 500 and 1,500 feet above sea-level. In 1890, the altitudes at which wheat was raised varied from 100 feet below sea-level to over 10,000 feet above sea-level, and about 70 per cent. was raised between 500 and and 1,500 feet elevation.

In England, wheat does not succeed in elevated areas, but in Southern Italy the plains and hill slopes favour its growth, and it will mature at a height approaching 2,500 feet. In a damp atmosphere, such as ours, the late spring frosts of the upland areas tell against the profitable growth of the grain. Wheat, however, has been husbanded in the Himalayas at an altitude of 11,000 feet, and it is quite likely that a hardy wheat will be evolved by Burbank, or another scientific plant breeder, which will prove immune to the most inclement conditions which are experienced outside the regions of perpetual snow.

There are innumerable varieties of wheat, and this need awaken no surprise. Man has carried the plant to every part of the habitable globe, and the various climates, soils, and other surroundings have caused the cereal to transform itself in the most remarkable manner. Like the cotton plant, wheat displays extensive capacity for variation, and this instability of type renders any exact classification of its most diverse forms a matter of difficulty. Not only do special regions prove themselves peculiarly adapted to the cultivation of given varieties, but there is the added fact that the plant easily accommodates itself to new conditions in the most striking manner. Then there are the wheats which yield most abundantly when sown in autumn, and those that thrive best when planted in the early spring. Carlton, the famous expert of America, tells us that—

> about two-thirds of the wheat raised in the United States is winter wheat. Nearly 90 per cent. of the wheat grown in Russia is spring wheat. In Canada, Manitoba raises spring wheat exclusively, but Ontario and Alberta raise some of the winter variety. In Germany, over 90 per cent. of the wheat grown is of the winter variety, which is largely grown over Southern Europe and the British Isles.

A good illustration of the economic importance of certain varieties of wheat is furnished by the estimate of Professor Hays that the introduction of one variety into Minnesota, known as "Minnesota 169," "has increased the yield of that State from 5 to 10 per cent." Scientific agriculturists, in 1900, after careful experi-

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mentation with 1,000 varieties of wheat gathered from the various wheat countries of the world, arrived at the conclusion that, when tested by American standards, there exist 245 pronounced varieties of the cereal. No single kind can claim pre-eminence in all respects, and the value and importance of each must be determined by soil and climate, and the end for which any particular variety is designed.

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer.

Science and Spiritualism.

IV.

(Continued from p. 182).

> There are, indeed, always to be found some who are fond of dwelling on instances of the marvellous, as if opening a door to the supernatural; and others, who perhaps confusedly and inadvertently use language to the effect that we are surrounded by wonders and miracles, inscrutable to our faculties. But, as before observed, there are no real mysteries in nature: what is to-day a miracle, may become a well-known phenomenon, subject to law, to-morrow; and assuredly will eventually be so, if inductive inquiry be steadily carried out. The supernatural continually recedes and disappears from our view, and the dominion of nature, order, intelligence, daily advances.—*Professor Baden Powell, "The Order of Nature"* (1859), p. 473.
>
> History teems with delusions, and neither talent nor integrity, piety nor singlemindedness, religion nor law, nor all of them combined, have proved a safeguard against them.—*Brewer, "Dictionary of Miracles"* (1884), p. xiv.
>
> A mystery and a trick are generally two sides of the same object, according as it is turned to the view of the beholder. —*Robert Hall, "Miscellaneous Works,"* p. 383.

Even expert conjurers have themselves been deluded by spiritualistic physical phenomena. The great Robert Houdin himself testified to the clairvoyant powers of the Frenchman, Alexis Didier, after a visit he paid him in 1847. "Bellachini, Court conjurer at Berlin, in December, 1877, executed a solemn declaration before a notary to the effect that not only had he failed to discover any mechanical means by which the phenomena occurring in Slade's presence could have been produced, but that he regarded it as impossible to explain these occurrences by prestidigitation of any kind." Even the redoubtable Mr. Maskelyne, thirty years ago, put it on record that the movements of a table at a seance he had witnessed were not due to muscular force or trickery, but to some kind of "psychic or nerve force." It is needless to say that Mr. Maskelyne does not hold that opinion now. Harry Kellar, another famous conjurer, after his first seance with Eglinton, was of opinion that the slate-writing "was in no way the result of trickery or sleight-of-hand." Dr. George Herschell, a well-known amateur conjurer, after some months of practice and many sittings with Eglinton, failed to rival the latter's performances, and expressed his opinion that "they could not have been due to trickery or conjuring."[1]

This William Eglinton was a worthy successor to Slade. As we have said, the public has a short memory, and in 1886, ten years after the hurried flight of Slade, we find about a hundred persons, many of them men of distinction in various departments, writing to the Spiritualist newspaper, *Light*, testifying to the marvellous spirit-writing on slates produced in Eglinton's seances. Podmore says, "In the history of the movement no physical manifestation ever won such universal recognition," notwithstanding that he had been detected upon at least two occasions of fraud at materializing seances held in 1876, and of co-operation with Madame Blavatsky in manufacturing a Theosophic miracle.

Professor Carvill Lewis had two sittings with Eglinton in the winter of 1886, says Podmore, and, "by purposely turning his head away and pretending to divert his attention, Professor Lewis was able not only to hear Eglinton's doings as he wrote on the slates, unrolled a piece of paper on which a question was written, etc., but occasionally to see the movements of the tendons of the wrist in the act of writing, and other signs of muscular action on his part necessary for the performance of the trick."[1]

It was this Eglinton who converted the late Mr. Stead to Spiritualism. Mr. Stead was so impressed by Eglinton's performance that he suggested a seance should be arranged for the benefit of Mr. Maskelyne and a mutual friend. Mr. Maskelyne consented to attend; "but," says Mr. Maskelyne, "Eglinton flatly refused to meet me under any conditions whatever."[2] Thereupon, Mr. Maskelyne procured two slates, upon one of which he wrote a question. "The slates," says Mr. Maskelyne, "were then screwed together, with a morsel of slate pencil between them, and then put into this tin case, which I soldered up as roughly as possible, leaving marks from the soldering bolt which it would be impossible to reproduce, and which were photographed. I sent this case to Mr. Stead, desiring him not to let Eglinton know that it came from me, but to tell him that if he could get an answer written inside, it would be of the greatest possible advantage to Spiritualism, and would make a convert of a great antagonist who had promised to proclaim the result to the world. Eglinton was to be allowed to take the slates home with him and keep them as long as he pleased. He promised to do so, but he ultimately refused to have anything to do with the test."[3]

"Subsequently," says Mr. Maskelyne:—

> Mr. Stead arranged with my son to photograph a spirit under conditions which would preclude the possibility of trickery. To this end, Mr. Stead endeavoured to find a medium of unimpeachable character, but was informed by the spiritualists that they only knew of one —a lady who had left for Australia, and therefore was not available. Some months afterwards, I received a letter from Mr. Stead, saying that he had met with a wonderful materializing medium, and desired that we should attend to photograph a spirit at a seance to be held the next day; but as usual, the next post brought the information that the medium had been taken ill, and the seance was postponed. Since then the camera and accessories have been constantly in readiness, but we are still waiting.[4]

The wonderful lady medium was Mrs. Mellon, who, as we have seen, was exposed at Sydney.

In 1853, five years before his death, Robert Owen, the great reformer, was converted to Spiritualism by the tricks of Mrs. Hayden, an American medium on a visit to England, through whom, Owen declared: "I had then for some days various communications with the spirits of my deceased brothers and sisters, all of whom gave me true answers respecting the time and place of their death."[5] Communication with the "spirits" at Mrs. Hayden's seances was obtained by means of raps. The visitor was given a card with the alphabet printed on it, and told to ask a question of the spirits, and to run the pencil slowly down the alphabet until a rap was heard; the letter thus indicated would be written down, and the process repeated until the whole word or sentence had been given. "At about the same date," says Mr. Podmore, "as Owen's manifesto, G. H. Lewes, in the *Leader*, had explained to his readers how the trick was done, and related that by carefully emphasized hesitation

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. i., p. 143; vol. ii., pp. 204-5.

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 296-7.
[2] *The English Illustrated Magazine*, January, 1895, p. 79.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 80.
[4] *The English Illustrated Magazine*, January, 1895, pp. 80-81.
[5] Podmore, *Life of Robert Owen*, vol. ii., p. 606.

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at the appropriate letters he had held a conversation with one of the Eumenides, receiving much information, not to be found in any classical dictionary, about his interlocutor's domestic relations; and had induced the table to confess, in reply to his mental questions, that Mrs. Hayden was an impostor, and that the ghost of Hamlet's father had seventeen noses."[1]

Mr. Moncure Conway relates how, at a seance held at his house, the famous medium, Williams, was exposed by himself and Professor Clifford, as follows:—

> The method of Williams was that we should surround the table, finger hooked in finger; then in the dark he would make some excuse for changing the finger, and contrive to get those on each side of him to hook the forefinger and little finger of the same hand, leaving one of his hands free to do the tricks. Clifford had heard of that device, and warned me. When we had been seated for some time, Williams said his finger held by Clifford was weary, and proposed to change it; but Clifford in a low voice declined on his side, as I did on mine. Whereupon Williams raised the light and rushed out of the house, leaving his accordion and banjo, which I sent to him next day. Several credulous ladies who had been victimized by Williams were present, and had the detection explained to them. Williams was broken up in London by this exposure, and the last I heard of him was at Rotterdam, where the Customs officers seized his paraphernalia of wigs, masks, rag hands, and phosphorus.[2]

Moncure Conway also relates how, being challenged to test the equally famous medium, Mrs. Guppy, he accepted the challenge, and took Professor Clifford along with him. A dozen sat round the table; raps were heard from the spirits, ordering the lights to be put out and each one of the company to choose something to be thrown on the table. The door was locked, and the key given to Conway to hold. Various things were called for—a rose, a slipper, violets, etc. Says Conway: "Clifford demanded a small plate of artificial teeth, which were in the pocket of his overcoat in the hall. I said it was necessary to call for something not easily concealed under a dress, and demanded a large bandbox. When the lights were turned on everything was on the table except what Clifford and I had demanded. Mrs. Guppy admitted the seance to be a failure, and did not venture on any further experiments."[3]

Dr. Carpenter, after much experience with spirit mediums, declared: "With every disposition to accept facts when I could once satisfy myself that they were facts, I have had to come to the conclusion that whenever I have been permitted to employ such tests as I should employ in any scientific investigation, there was either intentional deception on the part of interested persons, or else self-deception on the part of persons who were very sober-minded and rational upon all ordinary affairs of life."[4]

W. Mann.

(To be continued.)

The Peace Council in Heaven.

[The following appeared originally in *Sondagsnisse*, a well-known Swedish comic paper enjoying a very wide circulation. As our readers will be interested in knowing the state of Freethinking opinions in foreign countries, it is here reprinted for that purpose. We are indebted to a correspondent for the translation.]

After the Great War had been in progress for two and a half years and no sign of peace was to be discovered. The heavenly dignitaries were summoned to a peace council. In answer to the summons, the Son, the Holy Ghost, Moses, and Saint Peter gathered round the throne. Saint Peter was only admitted on his assurance that the heavenly gates could safely be left unguarded for a few hours. "There is no great demand on the gates nowadays," he said regretfully, "most people have to be sent downstairs." This statement of Saint Peter was confirmed by other members of the council, and the scarcity of new arrivals was greatly deplored by the assembly. A general opinion seemed to prevail that things were getting rather monotonous in the establishment.

After the angel Gabriel had been appointed to keep the minutes of the meeting, Javeh opened the proceedings by delivering the following discourse:

"Gentlemen,—It is time we put a stop to this sanguinary quarrel going on upon earth, otherwise we shall be made responsible to posterity for too much passivity. So far, I have been hoping that my servants on earth would do their duty and make for peace, but I find that, instead of so doing, the rascals have actually engaged themselves in the service of the belligerents. The only alternative, therefore, is for one of us to depart to earth on a peace mission, and the problem we have now to consider is the election of the one who is the most suitable for the task. Now, there can be no question of going myself, since it would evidently be useless. I have never been on earth before; I have no passport; nobody knows me; and I am therefore most likely to be interned at once as an undesirable. As for you, all of you have at one time or another been staying on earth, and know the conditions prevailing there. Who is willing to play the part of peace-maker? Hullo, where has Peter gone to?"

The latter just then returned from the gate, where he had been to dismiss a Swedish butter merchant who naively imagined he had merited eternal bliss.

"Can you undertake to bring about peace on earth, Peter?" asked the chairman.

Peter hesitated a moment. "No, Your Majesty, it's very awkward for me indeed. I have for centuries been the patron saint of the French fishing population, who during the War is making no end of money on its regular occupation, while the shores are every now and again blessed with sundry flotsam and jetsam which can easily be turned into cash. However much I should personally like to see an end to the misery, therefore, I really cannot betray the trust these people put in me. It would show a great lack of solidarity on my part to interfere. I beg to propose Moses."

"Moses has been proposed," said the chairman; "what has he got to say to it?"

The old patriarch twisted himself uneasily on his cloud cushion and replied after some reflection:

"No, Your Majesty; I am afraid it is impossible for me also. The race of people whose representative and protector I am, would consider an interference on my part highly improper. Most of my people are so heavily engaged in war-work that a sudden stoppage of hostilities would spell rack and ruin to them, and shatter many a prospect of domestic happiness. This is the actual state of affairs, and I regret my inability to act in the capacity of peace-maker. I beg to propose the Holy Ghost."

"Well, having previously accepted an apology from Peter," said the chairman, "I suppose I shall have to accept yours as well; but what about you?" he added, turning to the Holy Ghost, "I don't suppose you are governed by commercial considerations?"

The Holy Ghost shook his head and adopted a reserved attitude. "No thanks, the job is somewhat too risky for me. Look at the way I was slandered the last time I visited earth! I was then accused of being connected

[1] *Leader*, March 12, 1853. Cited in Podmore's *Life of Robert Owen*, vol. ii., p. 609.
[2] Conway, *Autobiography*, vol. ii., p. 352.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 352.
[4] Cited by E. Clodd, *Pioneers of Evolution* (1887), p. 138.

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with a scandal with which I had nothing whatever to do. The same, or worse, may happen now, and I won't risk it."

"There is something in that," said the chairman. "Consequently, you are the only one left," he said, turning to the Son. "You will have to go. In fact, you are the most suitable, for, after all, it is your teaching that is being trampled upon. You go down and make them respect your teaching."

"Alas, Pa," said the Son wearily, "what you say is all very well, but you forget one or two very important facts. In the first place, it should be remembered that I was 33 years old when I left earth. I should therefore come under the military scheme, and I might even be punished as a deserter. In the second place, being really a Turkish subject, I should be drafted into the Turkish Army, and instead of devoting myself to the instilling into my adherents of a better understanding of my teaching, I should be compelled to fight them along with the infidels."

It was with a countenance of utter despair that Javeh listened to this last declaration of impotence. "It comes to this, then, that.....hullo, what is that?"

An angel came flying with a telegram which had just been transmitted by wireless.

"London, 22nd, President Wilson has sent the belligerents a note offering them his co-operation in the opening up of preliminary peace negotiations. Great slump on the New York Stock Exchange."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the chairman, "while we are engaged in unfruitful parleying, an ordinary little mortal sets to act with speed and determination. Well, let us see what this Wilson can do in the matter. The meeting is adjourned."

Everyone retired.

As Peter left the room the angel Gabriel pulled him by the tail of his coat and said: "I say, you with your French fishermen whom you are so afraid of. What about Wilson? He is the patron saint of thousands of American millionaires who simply swim in war securities, and yet he is not afraid of tackling the peace problem."

Peter waited with his answer while he treated himself to a pinch of snuff and blew his nose with a violence that shook the cloud walls.

"Well! But then, you see, he has just been elected for four years, while my patronship is fixed for an indefinite period. Now, there is that Holy Benedict of Amiens who is constantly touting after my job, so you will understand the necessity of my being shrewd and diplomatic if I want to retain the only little earthly honour I have left. Damnation! There is that knocker going again."

The old saint betook himself to the gate and looked out through the gate window. A scared voice was heard outside.

"A coal dealer are you, desiring admission," repeated Peter, imitating the vernacular of the visitor. "Oh, no! It's rather too cold for you up here, my boy; you will find a much warmer place downstairs, second division, five flights to the left, ta-ta." B. B.

Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Renie Santos, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raphael Santos, of 33, Lime Grove, Shepherd's Bush, W., who died suddenly when only two-and-a-half years old, and was buried at Fulham Cemetery on Tuesday, March 20, when a Secular Service was conducted at the graveside. The parents are staunch Freethinkers, and the grandfather, Mr. N. C. Himmel, took a prominent part in the Freethought movement under the leadership of the late Charles Bradlaugh. We tender the sorrowing family our sincere condolence.—J. T. L.

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 London Branch N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, Open Debate, "Is it Reasonable to Believe in God?" Introduced by V. Roger, negative.

Mr. Howell Smith's Discussion Class (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, April 5, at 7.30.

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Views and Opinions.

More About the Soul.

Last week we were concerned with Mr. Norman Pearson's attitude towards Materialism as expressed in his work *The Soul and Its Story*. We left untouched there the question of the nature of the "soul" as well as that of the nature of the sense of personal identity persisting amid continuous change, which forms so large a part of the religio-philosophical case for survival. And against that the argument may be reckoned as fairly decisive. Personal immortality must mean the survival of *me*. If *I* am to survive death then it must be the *I* which is known both to myself and others by certain bodily and mental peculiarities. To say that something survives which does not possess these peculiarities—which looks, feels, and thinks differently to what I do, is to say that it is not *me* that survives but someone or something else. Under such conditions I should be unrecognizable either by myself or others. It would be a change, not a perpetuation of personality. Everybody would survive as somebody else. And, thus, while on the one hand, the survival of a changed personality renders the whole case absurd, the survival of an unchanged *me*—unchanged in all those mental and physical peculiarities that make up my personality, is so ridiculous in the light of present knowledge that no educated person believes in it.

* * *

"Self" and "Soul."

What, then, is it that survives death? An easy and popular answer is—the soul. But this answer only serves to raise the further question of "What is the soul?" General thinking identifies the soul with the "self," or with a consciousness of personal identity. Neither of these are satisfactory. Mr. Pearson is careful to discriminate between the "soul" and the "self," treating the "self" as the medium through which the soul is revealed to us. He sees that a man's "self" is made up of more than his bodily organs, or of even these and his mental powers. It includes all that has any influence upon him. As Professor William James says:—

> In its widest possible sense, however, a man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes, and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and houses, and yacht and banking account. If they wax and prosper he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down.

Self—the ego—is not, in short, an indivisable, or insoluble, or indestructible fact, it is something that is gradually built up. It can be caught in the act of construction, and it can be observed undergoing destruction. A newborn child has no conception of "self." One can observe it being created, in the first place, probably by the sense of touch, later by intercourse with the family, the school, the outside world, and all that these things involve. And as we can watch the self being created, so we can watch it being disintegrated under the action of disease. Loss of memory, the psychic side of neural derangement, may create a complete gap between the "self" that is and the self that was. The phenomena of dissociation furnish us with an example of two "egos" accompanying the same organism. And these two sets of facts seem to be absolutely conclusive against any theory of a "self" as being either in itself, or in its manifestations, the expression of an independent entity. Under normal conditions we can watch the creation of the self, and under normal conditions we can observe its disorganization and disintegration.

* * *

Progress and the Individual.

In a rather oblique manner Mr. Pearson recognizes all that is here said. But, so far as we catch the drift of his argument, he assumes the necessity for a soul for two reasons, first because it is the essence of his metaphysic that there should be a continous development of the "soul," and, second, because social influences are quite inadequate to account for the fact of moral development. Now, we think the answer here is that continuous *individual* development is in no wise essential to *human* development as a whole. The last may be a fact, while the first remains an illusion. When we look at the problem carefully we see that the individual does not, and, indeed, cannot, progress indefinitely. Old age and death is an assurance of that. The *growth* of an individual may be great, his acquisitions rapid, but neither are without limits. Man, we say, has evolved from the lower animals, but man the individual has not. The evolution of man is true only of the species. And when we take statements that are only true of the species and apply them to the individual, we are necessarily led into error. This seems to us a root fallacy of Mr. Pearson's, as it is of the ordinary religious writer on the subject of a future life.

* * *

The Condition of Progress.

Why is progress not as true of the animal as of the human world? Animals are educable in a degree; they

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possess the capacity of acquisition; they learn, within their degree, from experience. Why, then, do animals not present the spectacle of continuous progress? The answer is that in the animal world there is lacking a true social medium—of which language is so great a part. But for this true social environment, the experience of the individual would count for no more in the case of man than it does in the case of animals. With it the experience of the individual is conserved, reduced to a formula, and handed on to the next generation as a part of its inheritance. What one generation thinks, the next re-thinks. These thoughts, experiences, inventions, discoveries, become stereotyped in laws, principles, and institutions. The racial inheritance becomes gradually greater, and man progresses because a new generation commences its career with a greater inherited capital. It is capable of more because it inherits more. Indefinite progress is, therefore, not really a fact of individual human nature; it is a quality of the species. It is expressed through the individual, who becomes greater because of that expression. And it is by a trick of the imagination that we transfer the capacity for unlimited progress, achievable only by the race, to the individual. The only conceivable—perhaps the only desirable—immortality is that of the race. And to the expression of Christian egotism which professes to find all vanity unless each individual has a guaranteed immortality, we may well prefer the old Greek idea of successive generations to a swift runner carrying a torch, whose duty it is to receive it from the one who preceded him, and hand it, still burning brightly, to the one who follows.

* * *

An Inherited Guess.

We are sorely tempted to follow Mr. Pearson in the discussion of the many interesting issues raised by his book; but space forbids. His work is an able presentation of what we cannot but regard as a bad case. And the theory of a "soul," however ably argued, is really unnecessary. As William James says, a "soul" is quite "needless for expressing the actual subjective phenomena of consciousness as they appear." It explains nothing that cannot be better explained without it, and it adds a number of new difficulties to those which already exist. James also agrees with Shadworth Hodgson that the soul is an outcome of that sort of philosophizing whose great maxim is, "Whatever you are totally ignorant of, assert to be the explanation of everything else." To explain a thing is to bring the unknown within the category of the known. The believers in a soul reverse the process. They attempt to explain the known by referring it to the unknown. And that way nothing but confusion lies. Moreover, when both the metaphysician and the theologian have had their say, the fact of our knowledge concerning the history of the "soul" remains. We know how the belief in a "soul" began; we understand the conditions that gave the belief birth; and that knowledge is conclusive. When Johnson was asked how he came to insert a certain definition in his dictionary, he replied, "Ignorance, sir, pure ignorance." That, in a word, is the history of the beginning of the belief in a soul. Ignorance, pure ignorance. And nothing that plausibility or special pleading may do and can make the belief in a soul more than a guess hazarded by the primitive savage, perpetuated by false sentiment and priestly self-interest.

Chapman Cohen.

Some people's minds are like a place of public meeting—all kinds of opinions appear there in turn, and leave it just as they found it, empty and open to every comer.

Arnold Toynbee.

The Roots of the Christian Tree.

II.

What is Christianity? Professor Fisher, of Yale University, in his *History of Christian Doctrine*, defines it thus: "Christianity is a revelation of God through Jesus Christ, whereby reconciliation and a new spiritual life in fellowship with himself are brought to mankind." That will serve as a fairly accurate description of orthodox Christianity throughout all the ages of its history. Of Christianity as thus defined there is, as already intimated, no trace whatever in the Synoptic Gospels, though they contain certain phrases which were evidently interpolated from time to time while the new cult was in the making. Among such passages are those referring to baptism as a condition of salvation, and the Lord's Supper as a symbol of mystical union and communion with the slain and resurrected Deity. The Fourth Gospel marks a farther stage in the evolution of the Christian myth, and is a metaphysical treatise rather than a biography. In the Pauline Epistles the process has reached a much more advanced stage, and may indeed be regarded as being, in all vital points, complete. That is to say, the Epistles represent the Christian religion as a distinct cult which claims, not only superiority over all other existing cults, but also to be the only absolutely true one, all the others being utterly false. The truth is, however, that Christianity cannot boast of even one original idea or tenet, but is an ingeniously constructed patchwork. Its conceptions of God, revelation, and tradition were taken over, with scarcely any alteration, from Judaism, while its doctrines of the God-man or Saviour-God and of redemption through mystic union with him as slain and risen from the dead, it borrowed, with but slight modifications, from the Oriental mystery-religions which inundated the Græco-Roman world during the first and second centuries of our era. Those religions had their origin in Egypt, Babylonia, Syria, Persia, and even India, and from each of them was taken what was considered most deserving of preservation, or at least what was believed would prove most useful to the new religion. Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Dionysus, and Mithra were all Saviour-gods in their respective cults, who died and rose again for the salvation of their votaries. The chief difference between Christianity and those religions lies in the personality of its Redeemer, whose life and work are delineated in the Gospels.

To some orthodox divines the foregoing statements may seem extravagant or far-fetched, but it must not be forgotten that they are largely endorsed by several first class Christian scholars. Professor Wernle, of Basel, says:—

> It is no doubt true that Christianity is a daughter of the Jewish faith; yet it strikes its roots deep down into a soil which we may call beliefs common to all the religions of antiquity. In that soil the characteristic features of the various religions of the ancient world are not as yet distinguishable. Among these common beliefs may be included the whole body of ideas concerning the earth, nature and man, the soul, and the world of spirits (*The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 1).

Dr. B. W. Bacon, Professor of New Testament Criticism and Exegesis in Yale University, whilst fully recognizing the indebtedness of Christianity to Judaism, is fully awake to the fact that even Judaism itself was more or less tinged with Pagan ideas, and more particularly to the ever-growing evidence that the Pauline Gospel owed its distinguishing characteristics to Heathen mythology. To him there is a fundamental contrast between the apostolic or Jerusalem Gospel and the Pauline, and he is convinced that the latter borrowed

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its central tenets from ideas current in the Gentile world. He says:—

> Hellenism contributed the individual ideal: personal redemption in mystic union with the life of God.....The influential religions of the time were those of personal redemption by mystic union with a dying and resurrected "Saviour-god," an Osiris, an Adonis, an Attis, a Mithra. Religions of this type were everywhere displacing the old national faiths.....The starting-point of Paul's own conceptions was not Israel's bondage in Egypt, but a conception already tinged, like the late book of Jewish philosophy called the Wisdom of Solomon, with the Stoic conception of "flesh" as prison-house of "Spirit," already inflamed, like the contemporary Jewish apocalypses of Esdras and Baruch with lurid visions of a Universe rescued by Super-human power from the thraldom of demonic rule (*The Making of the New Testament*, pp. 53, 50, 51).

In an important article, "The Mythical Collapse of Historical Christianity," in the *Hibbert Journal* for July, 1911, Dr. Bacon makes the following significant admission:—

> For Paul, with his Hellenistic culture and purely inward religious experience, it may have been inevitable that his interpretation of "the things concerning Jesus" should take the form of an incarnation doctrine. To admit this is to admit that mythology has entered into Gospel story.

There may be a certain amount of truth in Dr. Bacon's assertion that "legend is but history in the making, the embroidered robe of traditional fact"; but we have noticed that the great aim of Liberal Christian critics of the Gospels is to disentangle fact from legend, to discover the historical Jesus in a heterogeneous mass of legendary and semi-mythical elements. With another of Dr. Bacon's assertions we are in hearty agreement, namely, that "myth is but philosophy in the making." Philosophy, metaphysics, theology, these three, in the scholastic acceptation of the terms, are founded almost exclusively upon mythical assumptions. The Yale Professor says:—

> We cannot conceive any other vehicle of thought or speech through which the preachers of the new religion could give utterance to their undisciplined sense of the teleological significance of what they themselves had witnessed. To what else could they resort if not to the transcendentalized Messianism of Peter and the Hellenistic incarnation doctrine of Paul? Our difference from the monistic idealists lies not in any unwillingness to recognize the sources and character of these primitive speculations, or to reinterpret the data from the standpoint of modern psychology and philosophy of religion, but in the fact that we have some appreciation of the facts of history as well, and therefore recognize that neither in the Apostolic age nor to-day could Christianity be successful if speculation and fact were inverted in relative importance (*The Hibbert Journal*, July, 1911, p. 752-3).

Let us test Professor Bacon's "appreciation of the facts of history." On his own showing, it is one of the facts of history that the Gospel *of* Jesus differed in *quality* from the Gospel *about* Jesus. Of this difference the erudite Professor makes great capital. Now, in the former Gospel, as held by the pillar apostles at Jerusalem, and as advocated in the Epistle of James, there is no Atonement, no salvation by faith, no Saviour-god; the whole duty of man consisting of conformity to the teaching of the Lord Jesus. As James puts it: "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." But the Gospel *about* Jesus practically ignores the life and teaching of the man Christ Jesus, and concentrates its attention upon the death on the Cross by which the eternal Christ became a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and salvation is the outcome of a mystic union with him both in his death and resurrection. This conception of salvation is foreign to Judaism in all stages of its evolution, but in Heathen religions nothing was more common long before Christianity made its appearance. This is admitted by Dr. Bacon himself, when he says that modern criticism has come to see that the difference between the Gospel *of* Jesus and the Gospel *about* Jesus "was in higher degree a difference of *quality*. Paul's whole message of redemption through the Cross and Resurrection started from other premises than those of the Galilean apostles, and was conceived in other terms. For this reason it leads over to a new Christology." This admission is of first-class importance, because it shows that Christianity not only took over its leading ideas from other religions, but also omitted to acknowledge the fact. Paul went the length of boasting that they had been specially revealed to him from heaven. But, according to Professor Gilbert Murray, Gnostic sects were "scattered over the Hellenistic world before Christianity as well as after." Tarsus was probably one of their centres even prior to the reputed date of Paul's birth; and this is the Oxford Professor's testimony concerning them:—

> Their Saviour, like the Jewish Messiah, was established in men's minds before the Saviour of the Christians. "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." 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).

Our only possible conclusion, face to face with the evidence, is that the author or authors of the Pauline Epistles appropriated, not only the Gentile moulds of thought wherein to formulate Christian theology, but even the substance of the Gospel that came to be known as Pauline. Had it not been for the few Oriental cults that were aiming to win and dominate the Western world, Christianity would never have been heard of. And yet, after enriching itself by pursuing a policy of wholesale robbing of its stronger rivals, Christianity, as soon as it gained political ascendancy, initiated a system of persecution, which eventuated in the forcible suppression of all the cults by the help of which it had obtained the supremacy.

J. T. Lloyd.

In the Name of the Prophet—Lies.

> John P.
> Robinson, he
> Sez they didn't know everythin' down in Judee.
> —*Lowell, "Biglow Papers."*
>
> The vain crowds wandering blindly, led by lies.
> —*Lucretius.*

None of the four Gospels profess to give an exhaustive account of the acts of Christ, and "John's Gospel" concludes by saying:—

> There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

It must be confessed that tradition does make startling demands even on the childlike faith which is nurtured on the fairy-tales of the Gospels. No more instructive volume could be placed in the hands of anyone interested in the Christian religion than the tabooed Scriptures known as the *Apocryphal Gospels*,

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of which few Christians have much knowledge. Even the Old Testament *Apocrypha* has been pushed into the background by astute ecclesiastics, and when Queen Victoria placed a quotation from the volume upon the tomb of the Prince Consort, she fluttered the dovecotes of orthodoxy. Yet down to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the *Apocrypha* was an integral portion of "God's Word." Since that date it has almost disappeared from the public eye, and is mainly read by students who are interested in the origin and history of Christianity. The far more interesting *Apocryphal Gospels* are not easy to obtain. An edition was issued by Hone and sold for many years, but it was a cumbersome volume; and a more scholarly version, edited by a Mr. Cowper, published later, was too expensive for ordinary readers. Some day, perhaps, an enterprising publisher will put a handy edition of these Gospels upon the market at a low rate, For in these accounts of Christ one finds the gospel legend in the making, the studies for the completed painting of the "Old, Old Story." And the fact of the volume being taboo to the religious world is all the more reason why it should once more appear in an easily accessible form.

Much of the matter in the *Apocryphal Gospels* covers unfamiliar ground. Listen to this passage from the *Second Gospel of the Infancy*, piously attributed to "Saint Thomas":—

> 1. When the child Jesus was five years of age, and there had been a shower of rain, which was now over, Jesus was playing with other Hebrew boys by a running stream; and the water running over the banks stood in little lakes.
>
> 2. But the water instantly became clear and useful again; He having smote them only by His Word, they readily obeyed him.
>
> 3. Then He took from the bank of the stream some soft clay, and formed out of it twelve sparrows; and there were other boys playing with Him.
>
> 4. But a certain Jew, seeing the things which he was doing, namely, His forming clay into the figures of sparrows on the Sabbath day, went presently away and told his father, Joseph, and said:
>
> 5. Behold thy boy is playing by the river-side, and has taken clay and formed it into twelve sparrows, and profaned the Sabbath.
>
> 6. Then Joseph came to the place where He was, and when he saw Him, and said, Why doest that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day?
>
> 7. Then Jesus, clapping together the palms of his hands, called to the sparrows, and said to them: Go, fly away, and while ye live remember me.
>
> 8. So the sparrows fled away, making a great noise.
>
> 9. The Jews, seeing this, were astonished, and went away, and told their chief persons what a strange miracle they had seen wrought by Jesus.

This story is elaborated in the *First Gospel of the Infancy*, where it is stated that the extraordinary boy performed a similar miracle in his seventh year, astonishing his playmates by making clay figures of asses, oxen, and birds, walk, fly, eat, and drink, as he commanded them; and the account concludes:—

> When at length the boys went away and related these things to their parents, their fathers said to them: "Take heed, children, for the future, of his company, for he is a sorcerer; shun and avoid him, and from henceforth never play with him."

A childlike credulity runs through the entire Ages of Faith, manifesting itself in a thousand ways. Tradition, that "lying jade," says that the ass has borne a cross on its back ever since Christ made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, "sitting on an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass." We strongly suspect that this great discovery was made by some forgotten genius like the man who first elaborated the dogma of the Holy Trinity, and who tried to make a religion out of the multiplication table.

According to Didron, the praises of the Cross were sung in the ninth century in like manner as people celebrate those "of a god or of a hero," and right reverent and most ignorant Fathers of the Great Lying Church did not fail to remark that its figure was "engraven in the productions of Nature, seen in the works of men, in the position of inanimate objects and the gestures of the living." Joyful indeed must have been the heart of the early Christian who, gazing on the coat of an ass, was first struck by the illusion that the markings were cruciform.

Attention being once called to the evidence of Christianity supplied by the ass, it is natural that it should be used in pious encounters with Freethinkers. It is to be hoped that it proved a more effective weapon in the hands of some than it did in those of the Abbe who endeavoured to subdue the Atheist Boindin. The pious Abbe had brought all his artillery to bear against the Atheist without avail, and, when almost in despair, broke in, "Well, Mr. Boindin, will you deny that since the day Our Blessed Saviour made his entry into Jerusalem on an ass, they bear a cross on their backs." "Very forcible," replied Boindin, "turn round, if you please."

This carefully cultivated credulity of pious folk blinds their eyes to facts. The Gospel legends are poured into their ears from earliest childhood, and the "Old, Old Story" has a familiar ring even when half believed. But the unblushing mendacity of the *Apocryphal Gospels*, being in an unfamiliar setting, should make the most bigoted believer rub his eyes. And one thing must be evident to every honest reader. The Christian religion is based upon similar nonsense, for Christianity is based upon miracles. It is on the truth or falsehood of miracles that the very personality of Christ must stand or fall. According to the Gospels, it was by miracles that he attested his divine mission. It was by miracles that he won his first following. It was by miracles that he proclaimed himself the "Son of God," and without credulous belief in miracles, Christianity would have long since died out. It is not a creed of "love" and "brotherhood" which has fascinated ignorant millions through so many centuries, and caused them to fill the priests' coffers with gold.

Christ claimed that he was "God," and his "proofs" were that he multiplied loaves and fishes, healed the sick, and restored the dead to life. The whole question is reduced to one of facts. If we can believe that Christ was really born of a virgin, that he performed prodigies, that he died and was buried, and afterwards left the earth by ascension, then we need not hesitate to accept the priestly pretensions for Christianity. If, on the other hand, we believe that the proofs for the miracles are inadequate, or that natural laws are never broken, no talk of "love" or "brotherhood" will make believable the nonsense upon which Christianity is based.

The most important Christian body—The Roman Catholic Church—recognizes this, and affirms that its own miracles are a continuation of those wrought by Christ, his disciples, and the saints. They tell us that the so-called "cures" at Lourdes, and elsewhere, and the questionable liquefaction of the blood of Saint Januarius, are precisely such as those mentioned in the Bible, and that the apparition of the Virgin to children at La Salette is as genuine as the miracles in Judæa. The priests of the Greek Church take the same attitude, and contend that the theatrical revelation of the Holy Fire at Jerusalem every year is simply the latest link in a great chain that extends back to Biblical times. The two greatest Churches of Christendom leave Humanity chained within the prison of Superstition. It is the life-purpose of Freethinkers to break those fetters and set Humanity free.

Mimnermus.

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Science and Spiritualism.

V.

(*Continued from p. 205.*)

The present promoters of spiritual phenomena divide themselves into two classes, one of which needs no demonstration, while the other is beyond the reach of proof. The victims like to believe, and they do not like to be undeceived. Science is perfectly powerless in the presence of this frame of mind. It is, moreover, a state perfectly compatible with extreme intellectual subtlety and a capacity for devising hypotheses which only require the hardihood engendered by strong conviction, or by callous mendacity, to render them impregnable. The logical feebleness of science is not sufficiently borne in mind. It keeps down the weed of superstition, not by logic but by slowly rendering the mental soil unfit for its cultivation. —*Professor Tyndall, "Fragments of Science"* (1876), p. 321.

"The chronic belief of mankind," says Professor James, "that events may happen for the sake of their personal significance is an abomination." It is this chronic mental habit that broods upon the problem of subjective experiences, and is ready to recognize in signs and omens the guiding principle of rationality.....The victim of this unfortunate habit will remain logically unfit to survive the struggle against the occult.—*Professor Jastrow, "Fact and Fable in Psychology,"* p. 41.

Spiritualists claim that mediums are, like poets, born, not made; that they are different to other men in that they are sensitive to spiritual influences unfelt by the average man, just as the dog can detect scents and sounds inappreciable by our senses.

It is true that to be a successful medium requires a combination of qualifications not often found in the same individual; but they are not by any means supernormal or supernatural. He must be of prepossessing appearance—an ugly medium might be suspected of dealings with the Evil One. His personality must also inspire confidence and trust, with an outward appearance of innocence and simplicity.

Do the mediums themselves believe in Spiritualism? It will be replied that they must know that Spiritualism is false because they manufacture the phenomena. It is true that they know that the physical phenomena is a fraud. But let us be perfectly fair. I see no more reason to doubt their belief in the spiritual world than I doubt the repeated statements of travellers and students of the mental habits of the lower races; that the witch doctors and medicine-men are themselves, in spite of their abominable frauds, strong believers in the spirits they pretend to commune with.

There is no more inconsistency in their conduct than there was in the late Mr. Jabez Balfour calling for his Bible after he was arrested. To say that Mr. Jabez Balfour did not believe in the Bible and religion because he was a swindler would be quite false.

I once knew a man of good natural ability, clever and clear-headed above the average, not at all religious. I had known him intimately for several years, conversing with him daily, when one day he confided to me a very singular belief he firmly held. We were talking of hypnotism, when he suddenly remarked: "Do you know that, if I am in an assembly, I can make anyone in the audience in front of me look round if I fix my eyes on them and exert my will?" It appeared from further remarks that if, as occasionally happened, the person stubbornly refused to turn round in response to this optic bombardment, that did not disprove his power; it only proved that the person he was practising upon possessed a stronger will than his. I knew it would be futile to argue with him; the effect would be only to close him up on the subject. It appeared from further conversation that he had some years previously been to a public exhibition of hypnotism and mesmerism, and had come away convinced of the power of mind of one person to work on the will of another, provided it was the stronger. This led him on to the purchase of several of the trashy (some of them expensive) works on Will-Power and How to Hypnotise, so widely advertised in the popular press. These had confirmed him in his belief. He was an unread man, quite unacquainted with the scientific explanation of these now well-understood phenomena. Here we have a medium in the making, and I should never be surprised to see my one-time friend on the platform as a professional mesmerist; and I know that he would not be above helping out his performance by trickery if the chance availed. Probably most mediums have commenced their career from similar beginnings.

Daniel Dunglas Home was the cleverest and most gifted of all the mediums. It is the standing boast of Spiritualists that Home was never caught practising trickery and fraud. Home was the very Napoleon of mediums. He hobnobbed with princes, kings, and emperors; he held several seances at the Tuilleries with the last Emperor and Empress of the French, also with the Czar at the Russian Court, and many other royal and noble families. He succeeded in marrying the young and charming daughter of a noble Russian family, possessed of a moderate fortune; and after she died he married another Russian lady, also possessed of a fortune. This made him independent of the spirits, and he rarely disturbed them to fetch and carry for him after this.

Home appears to be the only recorded case of a medium who rose from poverty to wealth, and maintained his prosperity to the end; most of the others ending miserably, like Slade, victims of drink. The only real spirits they were acquainted with were those in the bottle.

Home's only serious fall happened when he had to disgorge a sum of £24,000 bestowed upon him by Mrs. Lyons, a wealthy widow, who changed her mind a few months later, and brought an action for recovery. Even the late Mr. Andrew Lang, who was more than a half-believer in Home, admits: "The judge held, and I think rightly held, that the gift was prompted, at least to some extent, by what Home declared to be spiritual rappings. That quite destroys his moral character, as far as this case went."[1]

"It seems certain," says Mr. Podmore, "that Home began life in extreme poverty, and probably as an illegitimate child. From the age of seventeen onwards he lived by the exercise of his mediumship, none the less if he never actually received payment in cash down. Throughout his life, first in the Eastern States of America and later in every country of Europe, he found wealthy patrons to welcome him. Such formal education as he received in his youth was paid for by the New York committee to which I have alluded. When Home was not actually a guest in their houses, his patrons, in one way or other—by taking tickets for his lectures, by commissioning busts from him, by subscribing to pay his debts, by making him presents of costly jewellery—managed to provide for his wants."[2] Thus Home lived, not merely in comfort, "he lived in what is commonly called the 'best' society, the society of persons of rank, wealth, and fashion, and occasionally of intellectual distinction."

Home is described as having been "slight, fair, and, without being actually handsome, attractive and even distinguished-looking," and "produced on most persons the impression of a highly emotional, childlike nature, full of generous impulses, and lavish of affection to all comers.....he was a good performer on the piano; and his recitations, whether in the drawing-room or on the platform, are said by competent judges to have been

[1] Long, "Historical Mysteries," *Cornhill Magazine*, April, 1904.

[2] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 226.

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distinguished by brilliant dramatic faculty and emotional expression. Even on those who were brought only into momentary contact with him he produced commonly the impression of frankness and sincerity; in those who stood in more frequent and intimate relations with him the confidence which he inspired seems to have been unlimited. The belief in the honesty of the performer became for them hardly less instinctive than the belief in the trustworthiness of the senses which took note of the performance. The trust upon which other mediums relied was built up mainly by adventitious devices; with Home it was inspired and maintained by the charm of his personality. But there were two other causes which contributed in no small degree to the confidence felt in Home's integrity. Home himself professed a fervent belief in his own mission as a teacher of the truth of immortality; and in his trances habitually delivered discourses on religious themes."[1]

We have no doubt that Home had a genuine belief in Spiritualism. When nine years of age he was taken to America by an aunt; about five years later the spirit-rapping epidemic—started by the Fox sisters—broke out in America, and proved the starting point of modern Spiritualism. Home was infected with the belief, and two years later, at the age of seventeen, left his aunt's house, and went out into the world to live by his wits.

Home's success was due mainly to two causes: first, the manner in which he inspired people with a belief in his honesty and sincerity, and so putting their critical faculties to sleep; and second to the fact that he did not come in the guise of a common paid professional, but as an honoured guest, not to be spied upon and suspected.

(To be continued.) W. Mann.

Correspondence.

THE CLERGY AND THE SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Following up your comments on the keenness of the Scottish ministers to get into our schools as teacher substitutes, may I state that some weeks ago a committee, composed of the two large Presbyterian bodies, circularized the School Boards over the country for information as to the time devoted to religious knowledge education in the schools under their management? This is undoubtedly the first move in an effort to get more in touch with the children in the day-schools. Some of us anticipated such a step would be taken; for in conferences and district meetings of the clergy it was urged that, owing to the alarming decline in Sunday-school attendance, and also at church services, means should be taken to get access to the day-schools. This is the official or trade reason, but no doubt not to the School Boards' further action will be founded on concern for the better moral upbringing of the young; just as, some four years ago, what is known as the "Rural Schools Question"—an agitation to bring free, higher education to the children in the remote village and lonely glen—was discussed in all the presbyteries, and the chief reason urged was the scarcity of students for the ministry, and the prospect of an increase if the country youth could be tutored without leaving his locality, as formerly, in Scotland, in Latin, Greek, and those subjects that would enable him to pass into the university. When the same clerics appeared at education conferences, there was nothing said about students, but great concern manifested for justice for the poor man's clever children—his "lad o' pairts"—that he might be enabled to pass right from the parish school into the university. Let Scottish readers watch particularly the development of the clerical raid on the day-schools. Observe that the clergy wield a double power, and more, in such matters; they largely predominate in School Boards and National Education Associations, influencing decisions; while, on the other hand, they memorialize Education Departments from their several presbyteries.

Another Scotty.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—The letter of "Scotty" in your issue of March 25 prompts me to pen a few remarks on the state of the Freethought movement in Scotland.

As one of the very few active Scots Freethinkers, I have been amused and somewhat amazed at the "sheepishness" of Freethinkers of all kinds in this land o' cakes. As a member of a very small, and very reactionary, School Board, it has been my privilege to strike one or two shrewd blows for freedom of thought, and I must say that the extreme modesty of the rest of the Freethinkers, both locally and nationally, in ignoring the issues raised, surprised even me. In fact, I may state here, that on any occasion when my name was mentioned in controversy it was Englishmen who wrote me in support and sympathy, while on one occasion a letter of mine on "Hell" brought one souvenir—from a Frenchman residing in Leith—of all places.

I share my diffident countryman's concern as to the fight the Church will make to get control of the schools, and as one behind the scenes, I may say that the meenisters will be very welcome to the average School Board—as teachers, if they act as unpaid, or very poorly paid, substitutes. Thus a very interesting situation will arise. The greed, however, of the "meenister" class will, I think, on the whole, equal the niggardliness of the School Board members; and as the War cannot last much longer, there may be no great invasion of the schoolrooms by the clergy. But let "Scotty" be under no illusion. It is only by chance, or the mutual distrust of parson and the average member as to the money, that has kept the meenister from indoctrinating the minds of our Scots youth with that aforetime abomination—the Shorter Catechism.

A word with "Scotty" privately. Dinna, ma freen', be ower crouse on the waning influence o' the Auld Kirk. If the meenister gets into the schoolroom, the Auld Kirk will renew its youth like the eagle's. Are ye, ma freen, if ye hae weans at schule, gettin them taught the beliefs and doctrines ye ken to be false? If so, why? Please reply—and dinna be blate—sign yer name—like

Jas. W. K. Leiper.

Acid Drops.

The question of the nation's food supply should bring into special prominence the ancient and pre-Christian festival of Easter. For the celebration of Easter is nothing more than a carrying over into civilized times of the primitive magical performance intended to assist vegetation in its recovery from the sleep of winter, and to secure food for mankind. In its primitive form this involved the sacrifice of a victim—literally the creation of a god or ghost—to watch over the crops. Hence the story of the sacrifice of a number of gods—Attis, Osiris, Jesus—at or near the spring equinox. Try as they may, Christians cannot successfully hide the nature of Easter. The fact of its being a movable festival is alone enough to prove its origin. It is a festival connected with the sun, and the sun is the parent of vegetation. In the less advanced Christian communities the connection is open and confessed. The peasantry of Russia and of various parts of Europe still perform the magical ceremonies of their far-off ancestors in the name of Christ. And amongst the peasantry of Greece we may meet with the expression, "If Christ does not rise to-morrow, we shall have no corn this year." A vegetation god evolved from the ignorance of primitive man—that is the origin of the Christian Saviour. To the informed student, "Christ" is no more than one of the groups of gods whose death and resurrection stood for the revivification of vegetation. The Christian of to-day remains on the stage of primitive savagery in religious practice, and often enough in his thought.

The end of March saw the end of the public sale of opium in China. For years China protested against its sale and though the old East India Company did not engage

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 228-9.

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directly in the traffic, with characteristic Christian hypocrisy it supplied the opium to those engaged in smuggling the stuff through. By the Treaty of Teinstein the preaching of Christianity in a large part of the country was forced upon Chinese by the British, and also the legalization of the opium trade. China continued to protest both against the evils of the opium trade and the insolence and provocatory nature of Christian preaching. But Great Britain treated these protests with the contempt a Christian power usually displays towards a pacific people. Gradually, public opinion in this country was educated and excited against the traffic, and two years ago China was permitted to refuse the admission of, and prohibit the sale, after a given date. But it is well to observe that here was an evil forced upon a non-Christian country by a Christian one, and with no other possible justification than that of reaping a pecuniary benefit.

One must give the Church credit for the part it took in the anti-opium agitation. It said nothing when the trade was forced on China; it blessed our Government in the war that established the traffic on a legal basis; but, let the fact be stated to its credit, it did form an Anti-Opium Committee. It did this in 1906—when it was recognized that the trade would have to be abolished. In this it was true to its policy, its traditions, its own interests. Support anything so long as it pays—that is the one guiding principle of our glorious Church.

The town of Mexboro is a pious place with a pious council, but, alas! there is a fly in the ointment. Some shops are open on Sunday, and the Sunday Closing Association appealed to the Council for "Moral Support," and a Mr. Ward moved that this be given. Other members of the Council agreed that the opening of shops—other than Gospel shops—on Sunday was disgraceful, and Mr. Ward's motion was carried. The only dissentient was a Mr. Athion who said he did not see why the Council should take the bread and butter out of the mouths of people, many of whom were widows. Mr. Athion evidently knew his fellow councillors, as he said he did not expect to get support, nor was support given. Pious humbug had its way, and the sale of sweets, etc., is morally condemned by the Mexboro Council. Oh, the colossal impertinence of little people!

The following extract from the *Daily Telegraph* of March 27 is interesting:—

> Mr. J. W. Barnett, probationer officer at the Westminster Police Court, told the Cinema Commission that he had brought together as many as ninety married couples who otherwise would have separated. "I take them to a picture show," he said, "and they can squeeze together as closely as they can, and very often the picture and their appreciation of them bring a new understanding into their life.

Here is testimony to ninety cases of "conversion" brought about by purely rational and non-supernatural methods. No penitent form, no holy guest, no miraculous intervention, no, nothing but a simple picture telling a moral story which pulled these poor couples and set them on their feet again. Had ninety couples been so reunited in St. Paul's Cathedral, our imaginative friend, the Bishop of London, would have predicted the immediate coming of the King of Glory.

Replying to the reproach that 30,000,000 Christians are trying to murder one another, a pious journalist says that Indians and Turks are not Christians. Just so! But the Indians and Turks were forced to fight by Christian nations.

The House of Commons Tribunal says that a verger's work is not of national importance. Yet 50,000 parsons and theological students are exempted from military service.

The dear clergy have told us that war benefits religion; but the National Mission is a frost, and there is no prairie-fire of piety among the soldiers. The Rev. N. S. Talbot, Assistant Chaplain-General, says "on the whole there is not a great revival of the Christian religion at the Front."

The Rev. W. C. Piggott, a Nonconformist minister, declares that Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, and Arnold Bennett are "enemies of the Church." To-day the impeachment will invite a smile, but in the days of faith it would have meant death and dishonour.

We have been so accustomed to read in the religious and secular press, hypnotized by religious writers, of the hymns that are always sung by persons in circumstances of extreme danger, that it is instructive to find that in a well-authenticated recent instance hymn singing was not the case—as probably it was not in some other cases, had impartial witnesses been there to report. The *Cape Times*, describing the splendid behaviour of the troops on board the mined steamer *Tyndareus*, off Cape Agulhas, says:—

> As soon as the roll had been called and the order "Stand easy" had been given, someone started "The Long Trail," and in a few seconds the whole gathering from end to end of the ship had taken up the haunting refrain of the latest marching song. Then came the oldest favourite, "Tipperary," and for half an hour afterwards, while the ominous incline of the deck towards the bows became more and more noticeable, chorus after chorus swept along the lines and over the sea, where both the other steamers were racing to the rescue.

The heroism of these gallant fellows is by no means lessened, but rather heightened, by the fact that when they were apparently *in extremis* they did not give way to superstitious fears or invoke divine assistance—which had failed to protect them—but faced the situation like men.

Some of the clergy do not like Sunday labour, even when it is for the national welfare, and the Rev. A. D. Belden, of Westcliff-on-Sea, says it is "sheer humbug and wicked nonsense," and that "the suggestion to close local churches on Sundays had made Southend the laughing stock of the country." Brother Belden protests too much. Surely he will want bread for his Communion services, even if he sniffs at the meat that perisheth.

Appeals for additional literature for soldiers and sailors have been made by Sir Douglas Haig. Evidently the boys are not satisfied with the Bibles which are sent to them by the ton.

Clocks have been put forward an hour in order to effect daylight saving. Yet millions of Christians believe that the world's clock struck at Jerusalem two thousand years ago, and has never moved since.

The general discussion of what is euphemistically called "the hidden scourge" has naturally given rise to much wild talk, and has been a perfect boon to bachelor parsons, moral purity crusaders, and crowds of those who either love to indulge their taste for dabbling in unsavoury subjects with a "moral purpose" or furthering their interests in other directions. And as it is the fashion to idealize everything in khaki, it is the men—the poor, innocent, undesigning men—who must be protected against the wicked, designing woman. Withal, there is no clear evidence that the evil is to-day greater to any appreciable extent than it was before the War. But the War serves as an occasion, and the desire to protect our innocent, ladylike soldiers enables those to pose as social reformers who are eternally tinkering with effects, while lacking both the courage and the intelligence to grapple with causes.

For some reason or other, special attention has been directed to the Waterloo Bridge Road and Victoria Station, and Australian soldiers. We have all along regarded these stories with considerable suspicion, and we have now had in our hands evidence from a number of responsible persons, some of them connected with Church Army hostels and Y.M.C.A. huts, who flatly deny the stories that have been so freely circulated. The stories are said to be eighty per cent. exaggerated, and that in the majority of cases where Australian soldiers are seen in the company of women, the women are respectable and well-behaved, and there is little more than the attraction of the uniform for the girls and the pleasure of the soldier in getting feminine companionship. Naturally, there is vice; but those who remember the boom in "white slave" stories only a few years back will receive the stories current with considerable care.

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All over the country thousands of "one-man businesses" are being broken up on the plea of national necessity. Many of these will never be revived, since their closing will mean the diverting of custom to the large stores, and these will certainly not allow their patriotic fervour to stand in the way of the capture of trade, even though the trade be that of their fellow-countrymen. But there is one "one-man business" that remains inviolate. The Government continues to allow thousands of able-bodied clergymen to remain at large. Their business interests are to remain untouched. Surely, if the Government can do nothing else, it might arrange a substitution scheme. It need not shut up the Churches; it could provide women substitutes for parsons. The change, we think, would be for the better.

Alone amongst our Allies freethinking France has set the example of treating its clergymen as ordinary citizens. And the irony of it is that our own clergymen, skulking behind their pulpits, are using the fact of the French clergy being in the Army (because there is no exemption in France) as evidence of their own greatness. Christian Germany, like Christian England, considers the clergy too important to put *them* in the Army. It remains to be seen what the new Russia will do when it has had time. The probability is that the mass of the Russian people are too illiterate to be ready for a secularization of the State, as in France. And although the majority of the leaders of the Russian Revolutionists are Freethinkers, it would perhaps be as well for them not to jeopardize the safety of the new *regime* by a too extreme policy in that direction.

Should Russia declare in favour of a Republic, we shall then have China, America, Russia, France, and Portugal all republics, and it will be a moot question as to how long the other monarchies of the world will survive. And once monarchy is rejected and militarism crushed, the two great props of religion will have disappeared.

The publication of a life of Spencer by Mr. Hugh Eliot has enabled a lot of newspaper men—some of whom are quite obviously unacquainted with his work—to express an opinion on the value of his philosophy. The writer, who is responsible for the weekly religious article in the *Times*, declares quite authoritatively of Spencer's teaching: "We do not attack it, we ignore it." "It does not answer, it does not even ask the questions we ask." The "we" is impressive to many, but it is much in the nature of a bogey to frighten those who are not accustomed to do their own thinking. Modifications of Spencer's teachings are naturally called for by the developments of thought, but a large part of Spencer's work remains quite unaffected by these. If it was once the fashion to praise Spencer, it is certainly becoming the fashion with a set to belittle him. We observed Mr. W. L. Courtney selecting for special depreciation *The Study of Sociology*—one of the wisest and most suggestive volumes Spencer gave to the world.

The motive actuating the *Times* writer is disclosed in his closing words. The intellect of the world he tells us is turning towards the belief in God. "And we reject the philosophy of Spencer because there is no hint or promise or hope of religion to be found in it." There, the murder is out! If Spencer had provided any room for religion "We" might still have found some good in him. As he did not, as he demonstrated that all religious belief rests upon the ignorance of the primitive savage, "we" have no use for him. And, perhaps, after all "we," if he were known, would turn out to be some mentally enæmic parson who, having failed to impress the limited circle that knows him, hopes to impress a larger circle in virtue of his anonymity.

Billy Sunday, the famous baseball player of U.S.A., has made the pilgrim's progress from notoriety to respectability, from "Billy" to "Mr.," and, later, "the Rev. Mr. Sunday." The process has left him with a high opinion of himself. He recently announced that he would turn his tabernacle into a recruiting office in case of war, and preach war as a religious act, and ask "the servants of the Lord" to fight. It sounds like a far-off echo of the utterances of another Bill, of Berlin.

The Free Church Presbytery of Inverary has put on record its "grief and apprehension of the introduction within its bounds of the timber felling on the Sabbath Day." It also declares its conviction that such a policy is directly responsible for the prolongation of the War. So there you are! Archdeacon Wakeford says God kept the War going to spiritually benefit *us*, and the Inverary Presbytery says God is prolonging it on account of our desecration of the Sabbath. And these gentry are all exempt on the ground of their being indispensable to the welfare of the nation.

"The revelation of the aloofness of the majority of young men from the Church, especially the soldiers in the cities," was driving the Church into conference, said the Rev. Dr. Ogilvie at a Church conference in Glasgow. We wonder what they expect as a result of their conference? They can't really throw the old religion overboard without throwing themselves with it. And it is quite certain that the younger generations are drawing away from the old creed. It would be quite fitting if this old man's War killed the old man's religion, and so left the world clearer and sweeter for the younger generation.

The Rev. Dr. J. M. Littlejohn, of Thundersley, Essex, says Christianity will no longer be the religion of material forms. Perhaps he will advise his congregations to abstain from singing "Oh! for the pearly gates of heaven, Oh! for the golden floor."

Transatlantic Spiritualists profess to have held a conversation with Mark Twain in "heaven," and the great humorist is stated to have said, "I hope they won't throw me out." It sounds too good to be true, unless the other "Mark," who wrote one of the Gospels, was jealous.

Twenty thousand State schoolmasters are serving in the Army and Navy, but the 50,000 clergymen are exempted from military service. And now some of the parsons are attempting to take the place of the school teachers. Thus the instruction of the rising generation is likely to be entrusted to men "too proud to fight."

From *The Autobiography of an Irish Octogenarian*, by J. F. Fuller, F.S.A. (1916), p. 121. "The Rev. Augustus Toplady, philosophical Calvinist, who went carefully into the matter, says that, because we always fall short of that perfection which God requires, we commit a sin every second, so that at ten years old a man might reckon on a debit account against him of 315,036,000, and an octogenarian, like myself, on 2,510,288,000."

"The religious instruction given in Elementary and Secondary Council Schools, in Roman Catholic and Anglican Schools, is still in the pre-Darwinian stage," says the Rev. R. Roberts. Pre-Darwinian! Such stories as those of "Adam and Eve," "Noah's Ark," "Jonah and the Whale," are nearer the Stone Age than the Victorian era.

"To-morrow the issue will be between Christ and utter Paganism," says the Rev. R. J. Campbell. Dear, Dear! And Christ has been dead two thousand years, and to-morrow never comes.

The Rev. Dr. Westwood, of Winnipeg, says that Colonel Ingersoll "was one of the greatest servants religion ever had." Indeed! The Colonel laughed at the mistakes of Moses, but Dr. Westwood and his colleagues get their living by retailing them.

A foreigner was charged at Bow Street with begging and failing to register as an alien. The defendant denied all knowledge of the War. He reminds us of those dear Christians who have never heard of evolution.

Cardinal Gibbons says Jesus was not a pacifist. Prodigious! Catholics are not encouraged to read the Bible, but a Cardinal might look at it now and then.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 8, Swansea.

To Correspondents.

A. Millar.—We do not of necessity endorse the opinions of all our contributors, but so long as what they say is worth the saying, it is the wisest policy for an editor to "keep the ring" and give them all a free hand. Glad you find our "Views and Opinions" to your liking.

G. Lawrence writes that on Sunday afternoon, April 22, at 3.15, the Vicar of Willesden is opening a "Conference" on "Why I believe in God," and suggests that some Freethinkers might like to attend and "confer."

Mr. J. A. Cross writes: "I am pleased to say that although I have been in five different battalions since I joined the Army, I have always enjoyed religious liberty, and no responsible officer has wished to force me to attend church." We are very pleased to hear this, and regard it as complimentary to both Mr. Cross and to his officers.

C. E. Ratcliffe.—The whole of the *Freethinker* is a reply to your question of what are we doing to counteract the growth of Spiritualism. It is possible to spend too much time on side issues, or in pursuit of a passing hobby, and so overlook the main issue.

S. H. Haysman.—It is rather exasperating for an Atheist who has reached his position after serious thought to be looked down upon by a professed Christian who has never, perhaps, devoted five consecutive minutes to thinking about his religion. The only remedy is to treat such superior persons with the contempt they deserve.

National Secular Society (Manchester Branch).—All applicants for membership are requested to attend a meeting at 7.30 on Monday, April 16, at the Merchants' Hotel, Oldham Street, for the purpose of electing officers and discussing future work.

E. Robertshaw.—We read Bronterre O'Brien's book many years ago, and our present impression of it is that it was an able work, but hardly deserved the rank of a first-rate authority. Certainly Robespierre did not deserve the character of a "bloodthirsty barbarian" given him by orthodox historians. One must allow for the English prejudice against the French Revolution.

L.—We agree with you as to the evil of taking the early morning hour, when the children are freshest for imparting the religious lesson. One day, when people are tired of discussing the various "rights" connected with education, they may commence considering the rights of the child.

Eric A. MacDonld.—We deeply regret to hear of the loss of your brother in France. It is pitiful to see so many promising careers cut short in this barbaric contest. It is the death of such as your brother that constitutes the vital wastage of the war. Thanks for good wishes and congratulations on the upkeep of the *Freethinker*.

H. J. Baylis.—Mr. Arthur Machen writes very interesting newspaper articles, but we do not think any competent person is likely to take him as an authority on philosophical subjects. The man who thinks he has disproved Hume's wise counsel to treat with suspicion doctrines favoured by our passions, by taking it as analogous to the attraction offered by food to a hungry man, has nearly reached the limit of banality. And for Mr. Machen to say that Huxley believed in the "absolute justice of things" is to say that which is the reverse of the truth.

E. B.—We are very pleased to have your opinion. You will see from our last issue why we do not adopt the plan of raising the price of the paper, and we hope the reasons there given will appeal to you as adequate.

F. B. G.—Thanks. Will use as soon as we can make room. The amount of good "copy" we have in hand makes us long for a paper double the size of the present one.

Keridon.—Hope to publish next week.

W. C. Holt.—We quite fail to see anything more in a "sense of connection with the Divine" than a refinement of theology. The sense of a connection with something greater than one's own individual existence is no more than an expression of the *social* side of human nature.

S. Harding.—Thanks for congratulations, but we are not yet out of the wood, and so do not feel inclined to crow very loudly. But if we do get out unscathed, we really feel we shall be entitled to one good, loud "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" And we believe our readers will be pleased to hear it.

J. G. Bartram.—Pleased to hear there is a promise of renewed activity on Tyneside. Will consider your suggestion *re* pamphlet.

H. G. Farmer.—Your letter reached us too late for this week's issue.

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.

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

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

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.

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 (April 8) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Elysium Hall, High Street, Swansea, at 3 o'clock. His subject is "Will Christianity Survive the War?" and judging by his previous experience in Swansea there should be no fear as to the success of the meeting. There are reserved seats at 1s. and 6d., with a silver collection in other parts. Tickets may be obtained at 60 Alexandra Road, Swansea. Those willing to assist at the meeting should send their names to same address.

In the evening, at 6.30, Mr. Cohen will meet all the local friends interested in Freethought propaganda, with a view to founding a Branch of the N.S.S. in Swansea. It should be a good centre for such a movement.

To the books offered for sale by the Pioneer Press, there has just been added one of more than passing interest. The criminal prosecution of animals, with all the elaborate formulæ of an ordinary trial, and their subsequent execution with all the formalities accompanying the execution of human beings, offers one of the most curious of superstitions that flourished during the Mediæval period. Such studies as those presented by Mr. Evans in his *Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, sheds a strong light on the type of mind that for so long dominated Europe, and incidentally enlightens us concerning many surviving superstitions. The book was originally published by Messrs. Heinemann at 7s. 6d. net. It is now offered at 2s., postage extra.

We have received from the Vicar of Bromyard a rejoinder to Mr. Lloyd's article dealing with the former's criticism, which, we regret, did not reach us in time for insertion in this week's issue. It will appear in our next.

An unexpected result from one of our readers on the "Paper Famine":—

Dear Editor, the "Paper Famine" should make papers thinner.
The *Freethinker*, however, might be brought out on "Tissue."
No "Food Controller" interferes to stop my mental dinner,
Which satisfies and pleases more with every weekly issue.
You bravely fight that fear of death, from which most men are shrinkers,
And show how "Man for Man" is best to help us on through life;
You prove the utter fearlessness of genuine "Freethinkers."
So keep on thinner paper, as "Cartridges" mean Strife.

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An Amazing Flight.

As Easter approaches the minds of Christians are, naturally, turned towards the incredible story of the crucifixion and the substantial symbol of hot cross buns; their thoughts are also centred on the equally incredible stories of the resurrection and ascension of their Lord and Master Jesus. Most of them seem never to have heard the theory of Jesus being nothing more than a sun myth, the whole story of his existence being related in the most remarkable manner to each phase assumed in the twelve signs of the zodiac.

But incredible and contradictory as the stories of the crucifixion and resurrection are, as narrated in the Gospels, the story of the alleged ascension of Jesus into heaven is no less difficult of belief to any person who relies upon reason and experience as his guide in such matters. According to the Bible story, Jesus, after having had a personal interview with his disciple Thomas, who would not believe in the resurrection unless he had ocular proof that the resurrected Jesus was the same person who was crucified, dead, and buried, and would not believe in the story unless he could feel the wound-prints—a few days afterwards, Jesus ascended bodily into heaven. But where is heaven? Nobody knows. If, however, you ask the first Christian you meet, he will, without hesitation, tell you that heaven is somewhere "up above." But if you tell him that there really is no up above, that the question of position is purely relative, that what is up above in England is down below in Australia, he will merely shake his head and say that "heaven is somewhere above the stars," but where precisely he cannot say. But if, when Jesus ascended, he was only going somewhere above the fixed stars, if he travelled at sixty miles an hour, he would not have reached his destination yet, and he would have had to stop several times on the way for refreshments. Is such a statement as that blasphemy? Surely a material body, whether on the earth at rest, or in rapid movement in the heavens, needs some kind of material food to replenish its lost energies? During the past two years and a half, I have seen scores of aeroplanes in flight. Some of them go at great speed, the latest going at something approaching one hundred miles an hour; but such a speed cannot be maintained without an adequate supply of petrol. During the past two years I have seen several Zeppelins in flight. They can attain a great altitude; but let them fly never so high they could not reach the nearest fixed star; in fact, if they only went up about thirty miles, the atmosphere would become so rarified that the occupants could not possibly breathe. But Jesus, the Christian will tell us, went up without the aid of a machine; he did not even require the aid of wings. He simply glided along, and ascended up and up, until he was lost to the wondering gaze of mankind. If Jesus thus ascended where was he going? Did he not know that the universe was practically without limit? If he did not know it, he was not God, and if he did, what was the object of his journey? Was it merely to mystify his followers?

When I was a boy I was a witness of a very extraordinary performance. I saw a "flying man." A gentleman, who evidently believed himself capable of doing something out of the ordinary—essayed to fly in the air. He manufactured a machine with wings, let himself up into the air by the aid of a balloon, and all of a sudden cut himself free, and flew for a minute or two in the air, when, one of the wings failing to act, he was precipitated headlong to the earth beneath, and was taken up a mangled and bloody corpse. Yes, I saw him fly, and thousands of other people in various parts of London witnessed the spectacle. Many of them, no doubt, are still alive, and would be willing, if necessary, to swear or affirm that they saw a man fly with the aid of some artificial wings.

Well, now, if Jesus ascended into heaven, his ascent must have been witnessed by thousands of spectators. Yet who saw him fly?

Profane historians are silent about an occurrence which, if it happened, was one of the most extraordinary in all history. Why do they not mention it? Because it never took place. The story is pure fiction. If we turn to the Gospels we shall discover that neither Matthew, Mark, Luke, nor John was an eye-witness of the ascension. Indeed, Matthew says nothing about it. John is equally silent, while Mark and Luke merely declare that when Jesus had finished talking to his disciples, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. All this is strange indeed, and, if we wished to be hypercritical, we might say that as God is now represented as a Spiritual Being, he had no hands, either right or left, to sit upon, or to sit by the side of. We may, however, reasonably ask whether Jesus in the flesh was able to defy the law of gravitation, and ascend as easily as ordinary mortals fall to the ground?

According to the Bible, Elijah did a similar flight to heaven hundreds of years before Jesus made his appearance on the earth. And his ascent was even more sensational than that of Jesus. For when Elijah was about to do "the vanishing trick," there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And, like Jesus, he never came down again; he went travelling on through space for ever and ever. Some theologians say that although Jesus showed himself to his disciples after the resurrection it was not in a material body; it was "in a glorified body," whatever that may mean, that he appeared, and then disappeared. But how are we to know "a glorified body" when we see one? The doubting disciple Thomas evidently thought that the body of Jesus was material enough, otherwise he would not have demanded to thrust his hand into the wounded side of his Master, or to have felt the wound-prints made by the nails that fixed him to the cross.

The rational explanation of these stories is less ingenious and more straightforward than that of the Christian. It is easy to understand how years after Jesus had mingled with the dust—assuming that he ever existed—his followers invented the story of his resurrection and ascension, how expecting and desiring a Messiah who should save them from the Roman yoke, the early Jewish Christians manufactured these legends of a risen and ascended Redeemer who was soon to return and restore the kingdom of Israel.

When it is further remembered that the world was already familiar with legends of the sun-gods, who rose again from the death of winter to midsummer glory, it will be seen how easily the ignorant masses could be persuaded to exchange Osiris or Adonis for Jesus of Nazareth.

Arthur B. Moss.

The Monarch of Cereals.

II.

(Continued from p. 204.)

At the season of sowing, soon after the seed is scattered over the soil, the wheat grass commences to sprout. The grain sends forth a root called the radicle, and the appearance of this is succeeded by two secondary roots, and the three together form the seminal or temporary attachments. This root group usually penetrates to an inch

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below the surface, and from these, in their turn, develop whorls of permanent roots. The roots at the base of the plant grow directly downwards, while lateral roots spread sideways through the surrounding soil for a short distance, and then dip down into the earth. The main roots will descend to a depth of from four to six feet in search of moisture, but beyond this distance there is no appreciable growth, although a depth of seven feet is on record. The root arrangements are elaborate, and it has been proved that if the appendages of a single plant were placed end to end they would measure a length of 1,704 feet. And while mean soil is very unfavourable to the well being of the roots, copious spring and summer showers promote shallow rooting, while dry conditions impel the plant to send its roots deep into the soil. From seed to harvest the life of the cereal is a constant series of chemical transformations. Its several food materials are mineral substances such as potash, phosphate, lime, and magnesia salts, and these, in company with nitrogenous compounds, and its indispensable water, are secured from the soil, while the whole of the carbon is obtained from the atmosphere. The complex workshop in which all the food stuffs of the wheat are fabricated is the leaf. The various substances prepared in the green leaf are ultimately stored in the grain as nutrient matter for the wheat of the ensuing year. Acted upon by light, the leaves absorb carbonic acid from the air. This they decompose, and while eliminating the contained oxygen, they construct from the residue of the acid sugar, cellulose, and all their other compounds composed of oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon. Every part of the plant is penetrated by a network of canals which contain water that is sucked up by the roots from the soil. The leaves themselves—the breathing organs of plants—absorb little moisture. And the water filling the canals, which circulates through the plant, much as the blood moves in the animal body, is in constant motion until it is exhaled by the leaves. And just as an animal is sustained by the blood stream, so, along these channels of flowing water are distributed the raw materials utilized in the plant's cell factories for its life and growth. In seasons of warm rain the cells toil ceaselessly, produce rapidly, and the plant grows fast.

A further resemblance to animal metabolism is furnished by the fact that wheat cultivated on suitable soils in the northern hemisphere where there is a brief but rapid period of growth, produces an abundance of glutinous substances and a smaller amount of starch than when raised on more parsimonious land, and in countries where the season of growth is longer. In young and growing creatures muscle and bone develop when the animals are properly fed. Surplus food supplied to developing organisms leads to the production of fat, and the super nourishment proves deleterious to the animals. And with our cereal the initial stages of growth are chiefly concerned with the elaboration of the chemical compounds corresponding to the bony and muscular framework of the animal organism, while the later stages are devoted largely to the evolution of starch, which is analogous to the fattening processes of the animal. Now, if the normal growth of wheat is in any way obstructed, its kernels appear prematurely, and form poor material for man's sustenance. Well grown and ripened wheat is highly nutritious, containing 67 per cent. of carbo-hydrates, 13 per cent. of albuminoids, in company with small quantities of such mineral substances as soda and potash, all immensely beneficial to body and brain, while its average water content is only 14 per cent. The quantity of moisture in wheat, however, varies very considerably. As a rule such fluctuations do not exceed 6 per cent., but, in special circumstances, they may reach 25 per cent. As Hunt has noted:—

> When wheat is shipped, especially if it is transported long distances, this may be a matter of great commercial importance. Wheat transported from the dry atmosphere of the inland of California to ordinary temperate regions will invariably gain from 5 to 15 per cent. in weight. In a voyage from San Francisco to Liverpool the increase in weight due to moisture absorbed en route may be sufficient to pay all expenses of transportation. Every portion of the wheat grain is so susceptible to influence from hydroscopic conditions that all the products of wheat exhibited similar oscillations in weight. Two days equalized the moisture content in samples of flour varying from less than 8 to over 13 per cent.

Gluten is one of the most valuable ingredients of wheat. This substance is composed of several nitrogenous elements, and the wheat loaf owes its supreme quality to the special properties of gluten which confer its digestible character as well as its lightness. In these respects wheaten bread ranks higher than loaves prepared from any other cereal. But in very white bread many of these invaluable nitrogenous ingredients have been discarded because they coarsen the appearance of the loaf. The almost universal fashion in pre-war days was to prize the tasteless and innutritious, starchy snowlike bread despite the plain truth that whole-meal or even standard bread is better for the brain, body, blood, and bowels. The genuine brown loaf was too unprepossessing in appearance, and much too rough in texture for the modern fastidious palate.

Contrary to common opinion wheat is a flowering plant. Some evolutionary botanists regard it as a degraded lily. The spike, which at maturity, bears the golden grain, may be observed in the opening stages of the plant's growth, and it develops within a hollow stem. As Edgar states in his *Story of a Grain of Wheat*:—

> As the plant grows and larger leaves are produced, the earlier leaves become less active and give up their substance to the plant, the heads are unwrapped from their leafy covering and the grain passes through the various ripening stages to maturity. The blossoming stage is one of the most interesting periods in the development of the plant. The floret is complete in itself having all the parts and organs of an ordinary flower, including ovule, stamens, pistils, filaments, anthers, and pollen.

Cross-fertilization occurs with comparative rareness in wheat, which is essentially a self-pollinating plant. At the flowering season, the male organs—the anthers—are thrust upwards and burst, when their contained pollen grains are showered upon the stigma. This represents the normal process of wheat reproduction; but occasionally a few pollen grains become scattered, and the inconspicuous flowers expand sufficiently to permit the male element of one plant to fertilize the female organs of another.

Among the civilized peoples of antiquity, the culture of wheat reached a moderate stage of efficiency; but with the decline and fall of Pagan power, agricultural darkness descended on the face of Europe. During the Christian Middle Ages, in the words of Professor Dondlinger, "agriculture ebbed to the lowest degree of respectability. It was revived by the Saracens of Spain, and by their successors, the Moors, and it was carried to a height perhaps not surpassed in Europe before the last quarter of the nineteenth century." This is one only of several instances of the reintroduction of civilizing agencies into a Church-cursed continent by a non-Christian race. Scientific husbandry is a quite recent institution, and the constitutionally conservative farmer is now being drawn into line with the advancing activities of the age. The progressive tiller of the earth no longer attaches any real importance to prayers for sunshine or for rain, or willingly pays the priest to bless his

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cattle or crops. To again quote Dondlinger, the modern agriculturist "no longer relies for information upon the elucidations of subtle shamans revealing the will of elusive, evasive, and ever-vanishing gods, creations of the fancy. In nearly every civilized country of the world he is supported by scientifically grounded institutions."

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer.

Evil and God.

The existence of evil in a world said to be the work of a perfectly good being, unlimited in knowledge and power, who continues to sustain and direct what he has made, has always presented a serious problem to the theologian. It is, moreover, the crux of Theism for the man-in-the-street. Metaphysical arguments for and against the existence of God generally leave him puzzled, but "of the same opinion still," whatever that opinion may happen to be. A sense of unreality attaches, from his point of view, to idealistic and materialistic controversies alike. He is inclined to agree with Byron that "when Bishop Berkeley said there was no matter, it really didn't matter what he said." But confront him with the query, "If God can prevent suffering and sin, why does he not do so?" and at once the argumentation of Atheism against Theism assumes a human glow, and takes philosophy out of the region of academic studies.

It is best to put the issue in the simplest form by way of homely illustration. A group of pious enthusiasts are holding an evangelistic meeting at a street corner. By the aid of a melancholy harmonium and untuneful voices they are seeking to persuade the passer-by that God watches over and cares for every one. "Father-like, he tends and spares us, well our feeble frame he knows, in his hands he gently bears us, rescues us from all our foes"—that is what they are singing. How soothing and consoling for those who, unlike George Eliot, are only too willing to "take opium"! But presently a tiny girl breaks away from her fond mother and rushes into the middle of the crowded road. Before it is possible to attempt to save her a motor-car has knocked her down and crushed and mutilated her poor little body; and what had been so beautiful but a few moments before has become revolting ugliness. Can the stout withers of orthodoxy remain unwrung in the teeth of such a challenge to its affirmation that "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world"? Will the evangelists of the street corner venture to sing over the baby's corpse "Father-like, he tends and *spares* her"? Will they tell the weeping mother that the "Friend of little children" has graciously permitted a piece of soulless mechanism to run over one of them?

"Well our feeble frame he knows." The words have a devilish ring about them for one who candidly faces the world as it is, refusing to deceive himself with the coloured spectacles of theology. Yes, the omnipotent "Father" knows "our feeble frame" *so* well that he has furnished the world with an infinity of hideous contrivances for inflicting tortures surpassing those of the Spanish Inquisition. Kepler prayed that he might think God's thoughts after him. If Kepler's prayer had been granted and Kepler's thoughts had become deeds, what should we have said of Kepler as a man? If the lamb is an actualized thought of God, so must the tiger be. If God is smiling in the morning light, he must also be frowning in the storm-cast sky. If Florence Nightingale is the expression of God's love, must not Catherine de' Medici be the expression of God's hate? Did the "Friend of little children" design the fiendish brain of Gilles de Retz, the violator and torturer of little children? Or was it the Devil who did so? Who, then, designed the Devil? And why, as Man Friday asked Robinson Crusoe, does not God kill the Devil?

There is any amount of beating-about-the-bush in the various attempts to handle this question. Numbers of theological "red herrings" are made to do service in obscuring the real issue. Nor do the apologists of Freethought always go straight to the bed-rock of the matter.

A favourite "red herring" is to try to strike a balance in favour of Omnipotence, and to urge that the preponderance of good over evil is greatly to the Divine credit. As though it were a question of less or more! Omnipotent goodness is as much compromised by a single evil as by a billion evils. Other theologians argue that evil is a mere shadow, or only a lesser degree of good. But they do not act as if they felt so. Then we are told that evil is the necessary condition of good, that the one implies the other. This is quite true, but it proves too much—for the theologian. If evil is the necessary condition of good, it is as eternal as good, that is, on theological premises, as eternal as God. Ahriman must be inseparable from Ormuzd.

It may be said that a universe without evil, if, indeed, such is conceivable, would be insipid. I agree. Heaven is the quintessence of boredom. One would wish for a "lost soul" to come and introduce a spice of wickedness into the interminable angelic tea-party from time to time.

> You bid me lift my mean desires
> From faltering lips and throbbing veins
> To seraph souls, ideal choirs,
> Unwearied voices, wordless strains.
> My mind with fonder welcome owns
> One dear, dead friend's remembered tones.

Man does not want to get rid of evil; he wants to get rid of evils. Evil is a valuation. So, too, is good. Nor do we all value in the same way. The progress of civilization involves a continual "transvaluation of all values"—Nietzsche's pregnant phrase—and what is this but a continual creation, or rather re-creation of good and evil? The disappearance of evil from human society is quixotic nonsense, although some "advanced" persons, who think themselves emancipated from theology, profess to be working to bring this about. The raising of the conflict between good and evil to higher and higher planes, the increasing enrichment of life—an enrichment that involves immorality as well as morality (I speak as unto wise men)—that is a reasonable hope and a reasonable task.

The realization of the fact that good and evil are valuations, human points of view, and not qualities inherent in things or persons, proves the futility of arguing that one bulks larger than the other. There is just as much good and evil in the world as we feel there is. Weights and measures have no meaning in this connection. If good and evil are just valuing, what does this imply? Simply two different types of reaction to stimuli. If I feel aught to be good, my will goes out to it, accepts it, and seeks to assimilate it. If, on the other hand, I feel it to be evil, my will is by that very fact conscious of limitation, frustration, injury, and is impelled by its own nature to seek to subdue or destroy the hurtful person or thing. That we are not, in every case, aware of striving for a good or against an evil shows only the difference between what John Henry Newman termed notional assent and real assent, between an attitude determined by convention and an attitude determined by imagination and sympathy. The real scale of values for the individual is measured by the degree of volitional response that is evoked in each case as it arises.

To believe in good and evil is to take sides. Mr.

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Balfour, in his Gifford Lectures on Theism, published a few years ago, asserted that he believed in a God who "takes sides." He was logical in doing so. A personal creator must "take sides." Creation means selection, and personality means preference. But how all this is consistent with the attribution of omnipotence and infinity to God has never been made clear. "Taking sides," valuing in terms of good and evil, selecting this and rejecting that, are ideas implying limitation, and the sense of obstacles to be overcome. We discover, then, that the God of the modern Theist has a limited infinity, and is conscious of hindrances to his omnipotence! To state the position frankly and clearly is to abandon it.

Is our evil God's good? If so, how can there be a moral tie between us and him? To say that evil might vanish for us, if only we could view everything *sub specie æternitatis*, is virtually to admit that evil is relative, and this implies that good is relative. The transcendental standpoint must needs reduce both to nullity. But, in sooth, to use such a phrase as "transcendental standpoint" is to indulge in a counter-sense. Unfortunately, that is what all theistic argumentation and definition finally reduce themselves to. The apologist for God seeks to conjoin infinity with personality, goodness with omnipotence, will and intelligence with freedom from limitations. He seems unable to see that he is piously engaged in destroying the very doctrine that he is out to defend against Atheism. The Atheist, *as such*, is not committed to any counter-construction. It is sufficient for him to point out that the modern theologian, no less than the Freethinker, rejects as absurd the more anthropomorphic ideas of deity that have flourished and continue to flourish among peoples of lower culture, while the theologian's own alternative to all this concrete mythology falls, not by the test of evidence, but by the test of analysis. To refute Theism one need only try to make it perfectly consistent.

A. D. Howell Smith.

Stories Concerning Authority.

By "Multatuli" (Eduard Douwes Dekker).

I.

Socrates.

Socrates was a presumptuous fool, and the Athenians did well to condemn him to death. But in my opinion, they let him off too lightly. Mere death is not in itself a severe punishment. Everyone must die, even those who have never done a good action in the whole course of their lives. It was flagrantly unjust that a man who had given the whole of his energy to the public good should have the same sentence as the the most insignificant of imbeciles. The Athenians were in too much of a hurry, just as the Jews were when.....

But now let us see what Plutarch says: "In Athens the accused, when he was brought before the judges, generally defended himself in beautifully rounded sentences, and tried to draw sympathy by tears and supplication. Socrates disdained to use such means....."

I have already remarked that Socrates was a fool.

"In his simple defence he called their attention to the facts of his life, which were well known to everyone....."

Surely but another piece of fatuous simplicity! Evidently he thought they would be interested in what he had *done*. That, without a doubt, was nothing to the point, O Socrates! You should have said: I am "liberal" or "conservative," according to the fashion of the day; you should have talked about your religion, "orthodox" or "modernist"; you should have proclaimed your adherence to such or such principles; you should have sustained some thesis or other, always following the fashion of the moment. It was there that you went astray. Plutarch was right when he said your defence was simple. It was even less than simple—it was silly.

Well! he continued his defence by talking about his life. But Plutarch tells us: "This form of pleading found no favour in the eyes of his judges who condemned him to death....."

You will notice here the foolish weakness of the Athenians, who, as wretched Pagans, were ignorant of the beneficent effects of Christian torture.

"In accordance with the Athenian custom, the accused was allowed to indicate the punishment which he considered he had merited. This question being put to Socrates, he declared that he had as much right to be kept at the expense of the State as any victor in the Olympian games....."

Now, are you inclined to quarrel with me for calling Socrates a fool? Why, he hadn't the faintest shadow of Christian humility! Is it any wonder that "by this reply he only irritated his judges"?

How amusing it must have been to hear a man claiming a reward when his judges had made up their minds to condemn him to death without any unnecessary formalities! Surely their irritation is pardonable enough. "Many of them who at first had spoken against the sentence of death, now voted for it. He was condemned....."

So much for Plutarch's narrative. It must be said that this dry-as-dust historian has not a single word of praise for these irritated and angry judges.

I fancy that he must have been "liberal" and the judges "conservative," or *vice versa*. For in Greece they never praised anyone who belonged to the opposite party.

—*Ideas* (1862-1874).

(*Translated by*) Geo. Underwood.

National Secular Society.

Report of Executive Meeting held on March 29.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Bowman, Brandes, Gorniot, Leat, Lazarnick, Neate, Neary, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, and the Secretary.

Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed. Monthly cash statement presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for Birmingham, Liverpool, North London, South London, and the Parent Society.

The death of Mrs. M. E. Pegg, Vice-President of the N.S.S. and Secretary of the Manchester Branch, was formally reported, and a letter of condolence ordered to be written to the family.

The President reported the result of his attendance at a specially summoned meeting of the Manchester Branch. In view of the special circumstances, a fresh start was considered desirable. It was then formally resolved: "That the present Manchester Branch be, and hereby is, dissolved." The application for the formation of a new Branch at Manchester was granted.

A letter from the L.C.C. solicitor, declining further information as to the reasons for the withdrawal of permits, was read, and the proceedings of the last meeting of the Protest Committee reported.

Invitations and suggestions from Branches for the holding of the Annual Conference on Whit-Sunday were read, but no definite arrangement could be made at that stage in consequence of the difficulty in procuring a suitable hall. It was finally resolved: "That in the event of the present negotiations falling through, the matter be left in the hands of the President and Secretary."

Outdoor propaganda was discussed at some length.

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The President called attention to the press reports of the illegal and insulting treatment of a citizen who desired to affirm, and from the chair moved the following resolution:—

> That this Executive, having had brought to its notice the case of a witness in the Clydebank Police Court on March 12, in which the witness was denied his legal right of affirmation, and treated as an offender by the officials present, resolves to call the attention of the Secretary for Scotland to the matter, with a view to eliciting an expression of opinion from him regarding the conduct of the officials, and to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the future.

The Secretary was instructed to write, calling the attention of the Chief Secretary for Scotland and other responsible officials to the matter. E. M. Vance, *General Secretary.*

N.B.—In order that the strongest possible protest may be made against the action of the officials of the Clydebank Police Court on March 12, who debarred a witness from his right as a citizen to make an affirmation, friends in the neighbourhood who are in possession of further facts, or who are willing to take some little trouble to ascertain them, are earnestly invited to at once communicate with me. The strictest confidence will be preserved.—E. M. V.

At a Graveside.

(E., *ob.* Easter Eve, 1916.)

I.

Could wizard tune or sainted vehemence
Bid pitiful life its wonted days resume,
I, for thine own dear sake, would bid thee hence,
Yield not, O never more, the kinder tomb;
Yea, though the Trumpet bray to better birth,
Stay—the Best-possible bore tragic Earth.

II.

Son, thy grave-fellow, I shall perish here,
Fearless, familiar, native where thou art;
The coil of conscious change shall disappear,
And from the living whole no Self dispart:
Immortal Evil doles one grace supreme—
Last nothingness without perchance of dream.

Nevil Bourn.

Obituary.

We regret to announce the death, at the residence of his son, Mr. Victor Collins, 60, Queen's Road, Finsbury Park, on Friday morning, March 23rd, of Councillor John Collins, of Crispin Street, Spitalfields. The deceased gentleman, who was seventy-four years of age, was a very well known and respected public man in East London. He was an ardent Radical in politics, and a zealous advocate of freedom of thought and speech. He never concealed either his political or his religious opinions, and he openly avowed his Freethought. He was an enthusiastic follower of Charles Bradlaugh, of whom he always spoke in strong terms of admiration and affection. Universally respected, he was known as "Honest John." He was a member of the Stepney Borough Council from the time of its inauguration, and before that had been a member of the old Spitalfields Vestry. He was also recently elected to a vacancy on the Whitechapel Board of Guardians. The doctor who attended him in his last illness, himself a Freethinker, was specially struck by the strength of his views. Conscious and in full possession of his keen intellect to the last, he upheld his convictions to the end without wavering or faltering. The fear of death was not in him; and his last expressed wish was that a Secular Service should be read over him, a wish which was faithfully carried out. We offer the bereaved family our sincere condolence and sympathy.—J. T. L.

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.

Mr. Howell Smith's Discussion Class (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, April 12, at 7.30.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales; 6.15, Messrs. Hyatt and Yates.

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Views and Opinions.

Christendom and the War.

The existence of a state of war between Germany and the United States brings all the great Christian nations of the world into the conflict. It is difficult to see how America could have remained outside much longer, the submarine warfare making its decision no more than an act of self-defence. Its influence on the War is likely to be as much moral as material, although in a war such as this one the moral factor is of more than usual importance. Still the situation is ghastly. Over nineteen centuries after the alleged birth of Christ, creator of the Gospel of the doctrine of human peace and brotherhood —to follow the orthodox legend—and three-fourths of the human race at war. And a war forced upon the world by Christians. That is the outstanding fact. Against the will of Christians no such War would be possible. The non-Christian peoples—Turkey, Japan, China—have admittedly been dragged into it through the action of the Christian nations of the world. And people ask: "Is Christianity a failure?" as though the question admitted of discussion. The War itself is proof of failure—failure unmistakable and complete.

* * *

A Blow at Nationalism.

One thing America's appearance in the War area has certainly done. It has put yet another nail in the coffin of the doctrine of the narrower form of Nationalism. Situated 3,000 miles away, it might have been thought that America could have stood apart from the War until the end. But the logic of events has been too powerful for that. The course of affairs have shown that American interests—moral and material—are not distinct from, and independent of, European interests. America can no more live a *full* life shut off from its 3,000 miles away neighbours than can any one of the countries of Europe. Inter-communion of ideas, interchange of commodities have robbed nations of their old-time independence. Such independence as is left is political only, and even that has its limits. The fact of one nation after another being dragged into the War, the kindred fact that the intense nationalism of Germany is blamed for the outbreak of War, is proof that as an end nationalism belongs to an order of ideas that have largely outlived their useful application to life. Nationalism leads direct to that deification of the State as the supreme end which finds its expression in the worst aspects of German political life. As a means to an end the conception of the State is tolerable. As an end in itself it is with civilized peoples wholly vicious. Against the conception of the State we must learn to place that of the community. For the State is exclusive—a closed circle. The community is expansive and inclusive. It expands as life expands; it includes all that ministers to the fullest human life. More than ever we are driven to the conception of an internationalism based upon co-operation, goodwill, and the fullest and freest exchange of all that ministers to human welfare.

* * *

Opportunist Christianity.

Let it be noted, and remembered for use after the War, that in not one of the belligerent countries have the Churches stood as a force for peace, restraint, or security. Statesmen *may* have wished for peace so long as it was possible for them to do so. The Churches everywhere remained passive and ineffective. And yet the chance was before them to play such a part as might have served to win some measure of respect from even their intellectual opponents. In a world at war they might have stood as the visible symbols of a doctrine of human fellowship and goodwill. That the world is at war, and the passion of ill-will of necessity rampant, did not make the need for their restraining influence less, but more. We do not mean that the clergy should have opposed the War, only that the more determined the nation was for war, the more united it was in the pursuit of the War, the greater the need for holding aloft those ethical ideals which run the risk of being trampled under foot during war, and which must be maintained and enforced if the world is to resume the march of civilization. As it is, thousands of Christians have experienced an almost unconscious revulsion at the belicose attitude of the Churches. Large numbers have, we are convinced, broken their connection with the Churches on that account. The Church had its chance during the War—and lost it. We are convinced it will pay the full price of its blunder when the War is over. It would have been wiser to have left war to the layman.

* * *

Christianity in Russia.

And of all the countries engaged in the War, the influence of the Church has been nowhere so evil as in Russia. For centuries the Christian Church in Russia has acted as the great instrument of the Government in the enslavement of the people. To keep the mass of the people drunken and pious was the policy, and to that policy the Church lent its full assistance. With sixty to seventy per cent. of the population unable to read or write, the task was not hard. But all students of Russia

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are aware that the tyranny of the Government would have been impossible but for the mental dragooning by the Church. And to all the evils committed by the late Russian Government since the outbreak of war—the pogroms of Jews, the outraging of defenceless peoples, the imprisonment of reformers—the Church gave its blessing. And that Church, it should never be forgotten, received the blessing of sloppy pietists like Mr. Stephen Graham, and empty-headed prelates like the Bishop of London. The new Russia will have yet to deal with the Church. Policy will demand—in view of the superstition of the people—caution; but we venture to predict that any reaction that is attempted will again have the support of the Russian Church. There is too great an element of freethinking among the leaders of the Revolution to leave doubt on that head.

* * *

"God's Justice"!

Meanwhile, our own Churches can only meet the catastrophe of the War, and its impeachment of Christianity, by the repetition of formulæ that are an insult to human intelligence. How ridiculous the Christian talk of "God's justice" and "Divine retribution" looks in the face of facts. Put it that Germany is wholly responsible for this War—not a very sensible or scientific view when one takes the records of *all* nations for the past century and a half. Or take the more defensible view that Germany is immediately responsible for the War, and add that of all Germany, the Kaiser and a small group with him are the responsible persons. How will "God's justice" work itself out? Suppose the Kaiser were dethroned, and the governing group in Germany destroyed. That may be justified on the ground of expediency, of punishment for evil done, of the need for protecting the world against similar outbreaks in the future. But what has justice, ethical justice, to do with all this? Over a large part of Europe thousands of peaceful homes have been ruined, myriads of peaceful lives destroyed, and the living left with a memory of such horrors as all of us only three years ago thought impossible in a civilized country. How can any punishment that either God or man may invent and inflict wipe out all this suffering and terror? Suppose hell be a fact instead of a myth, and that God will deal with these men in the after life. Will that make the matter better? The lives remain lost; the homes remain ruined; the wrong done remains done.

> The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
> Moves on; nor all thy Piety nor Wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line
> Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.

* * *

An Impeachment of Deity.

I know all the talk of the benefits that will accrue to civilization from the War, of the idealism that has sent the world's youth into it, of the cheerful spirit of sacrifice evoked. All of this—grossly exaggerated as it is—might be true, and still the pious jargon about "God's justice" remain viciously untrue. It is not they who have sacrificed who will reap the reward. We who remain reap whatever good may come from their death. The old, the young, the unborn, all may have cause to bless those who have laid down their lives in defence of freedom. This is a statement of fact, but it is not a justification of the process. Advance in civilization may be possible by no other method, and recognizing this we bow to the inevitable. The Atheist may do this without shame, but not the Theist. For he believes that lack of this process is a personal, intelligent, powerful, and *loving* God. He designed it; he set the process going, and now calmly watches its course. And it is *man* who steps in and tries by every means in his power to correct the iniquity of God's plan. Surely it should have been his place to prevent as it is man's ambition to redress? The burning, shell-ruined towns and villages of France and Belgium, the shattered homes and outraged women, and hecatombs of corpses, all constitute an indictment of the Kaiser and the Junker class. But still more strongly is it being borne in upon the minds of thousands of men and women that, if there is a God, the War is, above all, an indictment of *him*. "God's in his heaven; all's right with the world" will satisfy only those minds narcotized by an irrational creed. Rather is the world a picture of men killed and women outraged in a world governed by a God too omnipotent to rule or careless to intervene. And both the intellect and the humanity of man must sooner or later revolt against a deity of that description.

Chapman Cohen.

The Roots of the Christian Tree.

III.

Christianity was by no means the only religion that borrowed ideas and customs while it was being made, the fact being that practically all religions did the same on a larger or a smaller scale. Harnack is of opinion that Christianity was an unconscious borrower; but he frankly admits that it did "learn and borrow from many quarters," and that "it would be impossible to imagine it existing amid all the wealth and vigour of these religions, had it not drawn pith and flavour even from them." Then he adds:—

> These religions fertilized the ground for it, and the new grain and seed which fell upon that soil sent down its roots and grew to be a mighty tree. Here is a religion which embraces everything, and yet it can always be expressed in perfectly simple terms.....The Syncretism of this religion is further shown by its faculty for incorporating the most diverse nationalities—Parthians, Medes and Elamites, Greeks and barbarians. It laughed at the barriers of nationality (*Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 392).

Harnack goes so far as to state definitely that in Asia Minor, "more than in any other country, did Christianity amalgamate with Hellenism, with the result that an actual transition and interfusion took place, which, contrary to the development at Alexandria, affected, not merely religious philosophy, but all departments of human existence." Then he significantly adds:—

> Here Paganism was absorbed. There were no fierce struggles. Paganism simply disappeared, to emerge again, in proportion to the measure of its disappearance, in the Christian Church. Nowhere else did the conquest and "extirpation" of Paganism occasion so little trouble. The fact is, it was not extirpation at all. It was transformation (*Ibid*, vol. ii., p. 328).

We shall now proceed to enumerate some of the doctrines for which Christianity was indebted to older religions. It is well known that in the Pauline conception of the Christian religion the Fall occupies a fundamental position. Two heads of humanity are recognized, two representative men, the one being Adam, in whom humanity fell from the state of perfection in which it had been created, and the other, Christ, in whom humanity may recover all that it lost in Eden. These two men are contrasted in Romans v. 12-21, and 1 Cor. xv. 20-22; and out of this contrast is formulated the Pauline Gospel. But whence came the doctrine of the Fall? The story is told in Genesis; but in the rest of Old Testament literature there is no reference whatever to it. Neither Psalmist nor Prophet

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seems to possess any knowledge of it; and the Gospel Jesus shares the ignorance. As a matter of fact, Paul is the only Biblical writer to make use of it; and in his scheme of redemption it is all important. Had it not been for Adam there would have been no Christ and no need of salvation; and in the absence of Eden there would have been no Calvary. Now, this doctrine of the Fall is to be found in a document known as *Kore Kosmou*, which was composed between five and four hundred years before Christ. This work treats of the origin of all things. It tells us of the creation of heavenly souls and of sacred animals. Unfortunately, the heavenly souls rebelled and lost their heavenliness, with the result that they were embodied as men. Salvation comes through the interposition of Osiris and Isis. The souls objected strongly to their enfleshment by God, and continually wailed at their sad fate.

> The wail of the imprisoned souls is answered by God, that if they are sinless they shall dwell in the fields of Heaven (fields of Aalu), if blameable, then on earth; if they improve, they shall regain Heaven; but if they sin worse, they shall become animals (Petrie, *Personal Religion in Egypt Before Christianity*, p. 43).

This closely resembles the view promulgated by Plato in several dialogues. Hesiod, too, describes the primitive state as free from toil, sickness, sorrow, and all kinds of evil; and with this description most Greek poets and philosophers agree. Now, the writer of the Pauline Epistles was evidently acquainted with Pagan mythology, and could adapt the various theories therein contained to the requirements of the new cult in process of formation.

Humanity fell, then, in Adam, its first head, and in its second head, Christ, it is raised to a higher elevation than it occupied before its fall. This is what Paul says about them:—

> The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. xv. 48, 49).

M. Loisy characterizes the two men thus:—

> The Messiah whom they (the Jews) expected was not come for them, did not belong to them; the Heavenly Man belonged to humanity. Neither did the Gods of the mysteries belong to the country of their origin; they had ceased to be national Gods that they might become universal Saviours. And the Christian myth was no more a fact of history than were the Pagan myths; the Heavenly Man of Paul was no more a real person than Attis; the idea of universal salvation by the death of Christ was no more consistent in itself than that of salvation procured by the death of Osiris. These are analogous conceptions, dreams of one family, built on the same theme with similar imagery (*The Hibbert Journal*, October, 1911).

In the Oriental religions salvation was effected by a mystic union with a dying and resurrected Saviour-God, and on consulting the Pauline Epistles we find that Christianity advocates the same doctrine. There were two rites which symbolized that conception of salvation in its fulness, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Usually Baptism is thought of as simply the door of admission into the Christian Church; and in the apostolic age it signified little more. The ritual was exceedingly simple, and needed no special minister to perform it. Converts were baptized immediately upon their recognition of Jesus Christ as their Redeemer. But ere long the influence of the mystery-religions began to show itself. Dr. Hatch tells us that "so early as the time of Justin Martyr we find a name given to baptism which comes straight from the Greek mysteries—the name 'enlightenment.' It came to be the constant technical term." "Seal" was another name derived from the mysteries, and in course of time it became customary to seal the baptized upon the forehead as a sign of a new ownership. In the Epistle to the Romans the indebtedness to the mysteries is most perceptible. In chapter vi., verses 3-11, there is no trace of the simple apostolic rite:—

> Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

That whole passage could have been written only by one who was under the sway of a deeply realistic mysticism. The idea of dying in order to undergo a new birth came from the Pagan mysteries. As time went on the mysticism in baptism became more marked still. "The Marcosians and some Valentinian schools believed in a baptism that was an absolute sundering of the baptized from the corruptible world, and an emancipation into a perfect and eternal life." What was this?

> It was but the old belief in the effect of the mysteries thrown into a Christian form. So also another Gnostic school is said to have not only treated the truths of Christianity as sacred, but also to have felt about them what the initiated were supposed to feel about the mysteries—"I swear by him who is above all, by the Good One, to keep these mysteries and to reveal them to no one"; and after that oath each seemed to feel the power of God to be upon him, as it were the password of entrance into the highest mysteries. As soon as the oath had been taken, he sees what no eye has seen, and hears what no ear has heard, and drinks of the living water—which is their baptism, as they think, a spring of water springing up within them to everlasting life (Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, pp. 306-7).

In the face of such incontrovertible facts what can be thought of the following claim so proudly advanced by Paul in Galatians i. 11-12?

> For 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.

Let us wait and see.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Funniest Book in the World.

> Do I view this world as a vale of tears?
> Ah, reverend sir, not I. —*Browning.*

It has ever been a source of wonder to Freethinkers how Christians have ever been able to maintain, after a perusal of the Bible, that their deity was entitled to the credit of benevolence. The pious opinion really seemed in the nature of an unmerited compliment, unsupported by any evidence. The grim exponents of the religion of the "Man of Sorrows" seldom smiled themselves, the study of "God's Word" having, apparently, a depressing effect upon them. So much was this the case that one could tell Christians by their facial expression. Nay, more, the tell-tale features advertised how far the victim was suffering from the disease of religiosity. From the slight droop of the mouth which distinguished the Catholic and the High Churchman to the resemblance to a tired funeral horse worn by the flat-chested warriors of the Church and Salvation Armies, one might classify them accurately.

Christians were cankered through with austerity. Generation after generation had been stifled under a

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religious system which was sunless, joyless, and graceless. The results were to be seen in the dull, dismal, dreary, rectangular frequenters of the churches, chapels, and tin tabernacles. The professional pulpit-punchers and Bible-bangers were, so far, incapable of honest laughter than any undertaker was a merry Andrew compared with them. In short, the Christian world was in the meshes of darkness and despair. This Gospel that life for the majority of the human race was but the ante-chamber to an eternal torture-chamber, which was in reality an arraignment not merely of the Christian deity but of human nature itself, finally transformed this fair world of ours, for all Christians, into a darker and more terrible hell than the genius of Dante or Milton conceived.

All this unmerited suffering might have been avoided if the earliest theologians had possessed the saving grace of humour, and been able to see a joke without a surgical operation. It is entirely owing to the mental shortcomings and density of these Oriental gentlemen that the Christian religion is a nightmare rather than a pleasant dream. These intellectual babes and sucklings misconceived the central idea of the Bible. Innocently and artlessly they took a work of humour and read it in all seriousness. We all know the fearful results, besides which a madman's dream appears as perfect sanity.

The Bible is, in reality, a work of humour. We must, however, "speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us." The Holy Ghost's humour is not as our humour, nor his jests as our jests. Transcribed by barbarians, the Bible is not so satirical as Heine, so ironical as Gibbon, nor so modern as Anatole France. Quip, repartee, and epigrams are strangers to the Biblical pages. Maybe, a ghostly humour is best suited to a book by a ghostly author. Although we cannot say that there is a laugh on every page, a smile in every chapter, the prehistoric fun of the Bible will suffice. There are sly stories, Rabelaisian anecdotes, and quaint burlesques, sufficient to have enlightened the theologians, had they possessed the capacity of being amused.

As a humourist, the Holy Ghost somewhat resembles Artemus Ward, although he is the famous American's superior as a writer of fiction. The Ghost is a showman, absolutely calm about his exhibits, as a showman should be. He says the most deliciously funny things without turning a hair. That astonishing story of Jonah and the lodging-house whale is the perfection of unemotional joking. Whilst reading, we fairly sympathize with the poor whale who had a bed-sitting-room in his interior. The humour, too, of the tale of the grand old gardener, Adam, is infectious. He is stated to have been the first man. If he had been a shoemaker, he would also have been the last man. He starts life at full age, and without the assistance of any parents. He is able to throw hundredweights about on his first day on the earth, and he lives to be near a thousand years old. The nautical yarn of Noah's Ark is a masterpiece, in its way, including, as it does, the suggestion that millions of creatures, from elephants to lice, were crammed into a seaworthy pantechnicon. The climax is reached in the further suggestion that only two fleas accompanied eight Orientals on the excursion. The stories of the talking snake in Eden, Daniel in the lion's den, the ten plagues, the tower of Babel, and Ezekiel's memorable banquet are also examples of Eastern humour. The life of the "Man of Sorrows" in the later pages is sufficient to make a bronze statue burst into smiles. When the hero walks the waves, argues with a fig-tree, turns water into wine, feeds thousands with some buns and a few sardines, and finally sails away in the ether like an aeroplane, we feel that the *Arabian Nights* and the *Adventures of Mother Shipton* are sober history in comparison.

We admit cheerfully that there is a falling off in the latter pages. There is, however, a sprinkling of fun, a day's march between each jest, but what of that? A pearl is none the less a pearl even if it is surrounded by an intolerable deal of oyster. Learned men, who find out everything in time, have discovered some additional jocosities. Mark Twain has pointed out that the phrase, "the street which is called straight," is ironic; for he adds, the thoroughfare in question is "straighter than a corkscrew, but not so straight as a rainbow." Lord Byron, a gallant admirer of female beauty, found a sarcastic reference to a lady's nose as resembling "the tower which looketh unto Damascus." Professor Huxley extracted much fun from the anecdote of the bedevilled pigs, but never met a rasher opponent than Gladstone, who was as innocent of humour as the "high-brows" who find Bacon in Shakespeare. Colonel Ingersoll, too, made tens of thousands laugh with his *Mistakes of Moses*, founded entirely on the sacred volume.

Fed on such food, Christians should have waxed fat and jolly. To class the Holy Scriptures as sober history, or earnest fiction, is absurd. It is a wonder-book of riotous, exuberant, Oriental imagination. If people would only read the volume instead of chattering about it, such innocent misconception would be impossible. The Ghost is a more subtle humourist than people give him credit for, and rightly read, would add to the gaiety of nations. The refusal of the stupid, good, pious folk to see his jokes must have astonished and perplexed the Ghost. He never expressed his own amusement, but "let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on his damask cheek." If he had let himself go, he must have held his two sides, which are six, until his three heads, which are one, fairly ached from the explosion.

Mimnermus.

The Monarch of Cereals.

III.

(Continued from p. 220).

Washington, its first President, in 1796, submitted to the United States its need of a national board of agriculture. But it was not until 1839 that Congress voted the magnificent sum of 1,000 dollars for the improvement of husbandry, and in 1862 Lincoln established a National Department, while in 1889 Cleveland developed it still further; and now the reigning Executive Body is one of the most efficient in the world. In Germany, the pioneer labours of Liebig, those of Gilbert and Laws in England, and of Boussingault in France, in the realms of experiment, were followed on a large scale in the States; so that over twenty years ago fifty-five stations were in active operation in the great Republic. These have more than fulfilled all reasonable expectations, and at several of these agricultural centres important new varieties of wheat and other cereals have been evolved, which amplify the return some bushels per acre without adding to the cost of production, thus increasing enormously the annual yield. And it may be stated that splendid agricultural colleges of the most progressive character now exist in most of the territories and States.

Virgil, the Roman poet, in his *Georgics*, mentions selection in a manner which indicates that in classic times its advantages were understood. Early in the nineteenth century, Shireff, the northern agriculturist, proved that, by selecting the best wheats, the stock could be advanced; and in 1857 Hallett, in England, conducted a series of experiments with excellent results.

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For each successive sowing he invariably selected the choicest heads and kernels, and in five short seasons the length of the original ear of corn was doubled, "the number of grains per head was nearly trebled, and the tillering power (the number of ears springing from one root) was increased over fivefold." Such are the results that the experimental stations are designed to secure. And hybridization has also yielded most satisfactory returns. Not merely is the crop increased, but the quality of the kernel is improved and the value of the straw enhanced. Some of Biffen's Cambridge creations and Farrer's Australian products prove immune to disease, while hybrids evolved by Dr. Saunders and others display valuable economic characteristics.

Saunders desired to develop early maturing wheats, and this he has achieved by hybridizing Russian and American varieties. It has been asserted that the acquired characteristics of these artificially bred cereals fail to retain permanently their acquired features; but the hybrids originated by Hays and Saunders certainly appear to do so. The improvements already accomplished are remarkable, but the achievements of the future will doubtless eclipse all these. Luther Burbank declares that if "a new wheat were bred that would yield only one grain more to each head, Nature would produce annually, without effort or cost for man, 15,000,000 extra bushels in the United States alone."

There is every reason to assume that, once these improved varieties have been created, their general excellence may be maintained, if they are cultivated in an environment of similar character to that which witnessed their birth and upbringing. The vegetable kingdom as a whole responds readily to the application of the selective principle. To cite the sugar beets alone, the use of scientific selection has increased, in less than a century, their sugar contents more than 100 per cent.

With rude implements the primitive agriculturist first turned the soil to receive his poor but precious grain. And even now manual labour remains the leading factor in tillage in vast regions of the globe. Where man-power is plentiful, as in India, it is to-day possible to successfully compete in the corn-markets of the world with cereal-producing countries provided with all the advantages conferred by modern labour-saving machinery. Despite her backward agricultural condition, India ranks fourth among the wheat-raising centres of the earth. Muscular labour is almost universal among the corn-growers of China, Japan, and other States, while it is still very largely employed in Egypt, Southern Europe, and the less advanced Republics of Latin America.

In the grey mists of antiquity man subdued the horse and ox and bent them to his service. In order of development the ox appears to have been subjected to agricultural requirements before the horse, but customs varied in different lands. Still, generally speaking, the ox was yoked to the plough in periods of tillage more primitive than those that witness the use of the horse. The plough to which the tamed animals were attached was evolved from the early hoe. Very ancient ploughs were drawn by a couple of men, two others holding them to the ground. In ancient Egypt and China wooden ploughs, little better than bent boughs, were in use. In later times of antiquity improvements were made, and the rude ploughs were pointed with metal among various communities. During the long Dark Ages no material advance took place, and the Pilgrim Fathers, in the seventeenth century, carried to their new home in America the archaic ideas of their time. The earliest ploughs employed in Illinois were those of the French settlers. These—

> were of wood with a small point of iron tied on with straps of raw hide. The oxen were yoked to them by their horns. This method of hitching was rivalled only in Saxony and Ireland, where the horses were fastened to the plow by their tails. An attempt was made to abolish this practice in Ireland by Act of Parliament in 1634. Arthur Young (1741-1820) mentioned it in his time however, and Gibbins maintained that it was still to be found in remote parts of Ireland as late as 1896 (*Book of Wheat*, pp. 61, 62).

So persistent are ancient agricultural types that a crooked branch was utilized as a plough in California in 1835, while ploughs practically the same as those employed in the period of Pericles (450 B.C.) are still in use in modern Greece. In the more secluded parts of Russia the implements are equally rude, and some of the more advanced nations of Europe have made little progress since Roman times.

It is a far cry from such antiquated implements to a steam-plough, or a plough drawn by five horses, which turns 250 acres of arable land in a few weeks. For over a thousand years progress was at a standstill, and even when economic and other necessities cried loudly for improvement, discovery and invention were impeded by popular prejudice and superstition. Even after British farmers had been persuaded to test the improved iron plough, they asserted that the iron caused the weeds to grow, and in the New World metal ploughs were accused of poisoning the land and preventing the progress of the crops. Seeders, drills, threshing machines, and other implements of modern invention have encountered stern opposition from the rural community. And the writer remembers ancient peasants, and even veteran farmers, who sulkily deplored the vanished glories of the old-fashioned scythe when this had receded before the mowing machine, an implement which they regarded as a noxious example of new-fangled notions.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

The Red House on the Hill.

There is a spray of eglantine in a shady corner, the white buds expanding still; in a neighbouring pot are white marigolds, clover, grasses, and the wondrous hues of the wild vetch; in another corner a young sycamore adds storey to storey of gracious twin leafage, each new pair appearing at the top as the old divide. A miracle, a study in determinism, these shapes go back to carboniferous times, faithfully preserved in the mould of Nature, that never weighed a scruple wrong, and never can! Outside, the soft, cloudy dawn, where the sky looks through like the very eye of love, and grey mists crown the azure hills and tint with many-coloured light and shade the quiet seas.

What a sad and miserable world we inhabit; what wretched life the benighted Freethinker leads! Let the following letter prove the pious contention. God bless our holy men. Amen!

"It is a long time since we broke the silence of the void, and now perhaps the thunder of our diction will make the space between us a shaky expanse for the little midges. I liked your little pen-picture. It put me in mind of *Beulah, Vashti, St. Elmo*, those luminous pen-pictures of the American authoress, Wilson, but *minus* their 'ridiculous excess.' I see again the Red House on the Hill overlooking the Bay, that we passed so often on our cycles, and called it the Shell House. Everybody knows it. To them it is an oasis in the desert, an inn on the road; or, better still, like a kindred soul met at length by the languishing spirit of long isolation, and, in the words of Dickens, 'recalled to life.' Since last writing, I have been living in a condition of, say,

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dolce far niente. I think our moods are like the weather: they are good and bad; and when the weather does not go with them, we rail at the gods, and think we could have managed better. However, I believe it is contrast makes life worth living, or at least interesting, and there is zest in the sport of circumstance. Perhaps there is more interest in life when you have money—principle and interest; both sweet things! You can invest it in some factory where women waste their being and children crook their bones. Money is power. Ah, it is great to have power—not the power that kings and statesmen wield, but the power of mind, of vision, that rises far above these, and sees all things in true perspective, point of view and proportion, with the natural order of human relationships and social duties that helps, and the disorder that hinders, progress. He is a true hero who can use this power wisely. What though the world rise against him; it will just have to sit down again, as it has had to do before.

No man can tether time nor tide.

And there is a tide in the affairs of men. The mind in question is the highest by-product of evolution. From thwarted light leaps colour's flame. It is loved by the wise, to whom its thought is known; it is loved by the simple because it is simple too. As the child looks with eyes of wonder at its parents as each new wonder is unfolded to the curious mind, so the simpletons look up to the great man when they see the thing is true the sage has told them; for they know, also, there is a 'greatness' which is not simple and beneficent, but that only confuses and ensnares. So he who runs may read. Even the simple know the Emancipator. The sages are not prophets, but they look from a higher elevation; they see life constantly, and see it whole. The average man is in the valley still, with all those glorious peaks to scale.

"I must tell you of my great find. My mother attended a sale where were put up eight volumes of poetry. The man next her said 'Sixpence,' and of course she said 'Sevenpence,' and the eight volumes were handed to her. She gave them me last time I was home. It was like getting a windfall. Eight volumes, still uncut, published at 5s. each, for 7d.—not a penny for each! Pope, two volumes; Dryden, two; Milton, two; Shenstone, one; Thomson, of *The Seasons*, one. So, you see, brains are very cheap at times. Have got through Shenstone, and find him a master of pathos and humour. You can see at once Burns's indebtedness to this poet, and whom he refers to in 'The Vision,' *i.e.*:—

Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape glow;
Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
With Shenstone's art;
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

"I am going to read Pope next; have read the *Essay on Man*, but none of his pastorals or tales.

"I think that Mr. Palmer has settled the foxglove controversy; but since writing, I was speaking to a botanist friend, and he says the name 'dead man's fingers' is applied to the foxglove in the rural districts all over Scotland; but he could not say how the name originated, unless it were that the bells represent fingers, and the foxglove is a member of the nightshade family, and rank poison."

So ends the epistle, with the customary etceteras. Such are some of the mental and physical hues and shapes that float and glow, adrift or still, this rich, sweet evening in July around the Red House on the Hill.

Menander.

Holy Wars.

When all is said and done the fact remains that all the great Holy Wars in history have been fought by Christians. It was a holy war when Charlemagne offered the Northern Pagans baptism or death. It was a holy war when Alva butchered and burnt in the Netherlands. It was a holy war when the Great Armada sailed for England. It was a holy war when the heretics were destroyed by myriads in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. It was a holy war when Louis XVI. dragonnaded the Huguenots and swept the survivors out of France. It was a holy war when Germany was devastated and depopulated for thirty long years. It was a holy war when the Moriscoes and the Jews were driven, in the midst of unspeakable barbarities, out of Spain. It was a holy war when the Spanish conquerors of America, with the Pope's blessing, carried fire and slaughter amongst the mild and hospitable Indians. It was a holy war when the Protestants and Catholics, from England to Poland, fought each other all over the continent of Europe. It was a holy war when the Catholics burnt the Protestants, and the Protestants burnt the Catholics, for a mere difference of opinion. And it has been a holy war every time the Christians have let themselves loose, with massacre and violation, upon the poor, inoffensive Jews.

But the greatest of *all* holy wars was *the* Holy War—the Crusades. It lasted a hundred and ninety-four years, and was, as Fuller said, "for continuance the longest, for bloodshed the cruellest, for pretences the most pious the world ever saw." Christianity hurled itself against Mohammedanism in nine successive crusades, with the professed object of wresting the Holy Land from the hands of the "infidels." It was captured and held for a while; and then lost again for ever. The bogus Sepulchre of Christ—for it is no more—was still left in the custody of unbelievers. And in less than two centuries afterwards the Turkish crescent floated over the first Christian cathedral in Europe, in the first Christian city ever built—the city of Constantine.

G. W. Foote.

Correspondence.

ATHEISM IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—As one who has been extremely interested in the articles on "The French Revolution," by Robert Arch, I am loth to offer any criticism other than apprizement. But there is one point that I must protest against, and that is, that Mr. Arch seems to have caught the general fever of *bourgeois* historians in selecting, in article after article, as many abusive terms as possible for Hebert, the editor of the *Pere Duchene*. Mr. Arch tells us that Hebert played to the "lower tastes of his readers," using the "vilest slang of the gutter," at the expense of "dignity and decency." Hebert, we are told, was a "gutter journalist" not "worthy of respect," and the *Pere Duchene*, Mr. Arch looks upon with the eyes of an utter Philistine, as a "disreputable paper."

Now, has Mr. Arch seen the *Pere Duchene*, or is he depending upon historians? If he has seen it, will he kindly tell us what difference he finds between the *Pere Duchene* and the *Freethinker*? Hebert is fond of ridicule. He finds it the best weapon in his cause, but so does the *Freethinker* sometimes. He is certainly fond of such phrases as (I speak from memory) *Va au le diable!* (Go to the Devil!) *Que le diable!* (What the Devil!) *damnation*, and occasionally a stronger *malediction*, but surely these do not make Hebert "indecent," "disreputable," etc.

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If, however, Mr. Arch is depending on the historians, then I can understand his attitude. But, nevertheless, he has been misled. Hebert was an Atheist, and he made the "unkindest cuts" at religion that I know of during the period of the Revolution. We need not wonder therefore that the pious, respectable *bourgeois* historians should be shocked at Hebert.

H. George Farmer.

Acid Drops.

What wonderful fellows are our newspaper guides! They see the invisible, even while they overlook the obvious. Thus Mr. W. T. Massey, writing in the *Daily Telegraph* and other papers, says that the cheers with which our soldiers greeted the sight of Palestine, after their victory over the Turks, was due to their expression of delight "at reaching a country hallowed by the greatest events in the world's history, the birthplace of Christ, and the cradle of the rights of humanity." We pass over the historical accuracy of the description; we are too greatly impressed by the picture of the British Tommy "overcome" by these profound reflections. That is really touching, and *so* truthful. We do not doubt that Mr. Massey felt this way; it is his business so to do. He is writing for a Christian audience, and is paid to have the appropriate feelings on such occasions. But we must confess that we should never have thought it of the Army. That is why we are overcome—almost to the point of tears.

And we wonder what *were* the "rights of humanity" that were born in Palestine? It was not the ideal of democracy. That comes to us from Greece. It was not the ideal of a settled, recognized, jurisprudence. That is Roman. It was not the equality of the sexes. Palestine would certainly never have given the woman the vote. It was not free discussion, or freedom of thought. Nothing was farther from Palestine than that ideal. What on earth were the rights of humanity that were born in Palestine? What a good thing it is that these newspaper men do not have to explain what they mean—so long as they can gush and sentimentalize in accordance with the prevailing prejudice.

Mr. H. G. Wells has not only found one "God," but he is chaperoning other deities. He has written an introduction to M. Loyson's book, *The Gods in Battle*, which is a reply to Romaine Rolland's volume, *Above the Battle*. Perhaps Mr. Wells only did it to please the publishers.

The Church Army has invaded the Buckingham Palace Road, and is using part of the Royal Mews as a hostelry. The Christian religion originated in a stable, and it looks as if it would finish in another.

"What's in a name?" asked Shakespeare. Yet it causes surprise to find that the vicar of a Bryanston Square church is named Bernard Shaw, and that a Westcliff-on-Sea curate bears the name of Hebert Spencer.

In spite of the shortage of paper, editors find room for much nonsense in their columns. A London newspaper recently headed a report, "Boy Branded by a Fiend." The "fiend" proved to be a woman, who was sentenced to three months' hard labour for cruelty to her eight-year-old nephew. But why do editors play to the gallery in this manner?

A London picture-paper points out that the Archbishop of Canterbury formerly lived in a "modest dwelling house," whilst Bishop of Rochester. It did not add that the salary of the Bishop of Rochester is £4,000, and that of the Archbishop £15,000, yearly.

Pious folk are often wanting in a sense of humour. Referring to the crop of war rumours, Mr. Charles Hawtrey, the actor, wrote to a daily paper, saying that the Dutch had taken Holland. This brought a letter of remonstrance from a country parson, protesting that "the Dutch are the people—the native people—of Holland." Isn't it delicious?

The Rev. Bernard Snell says there is far more fellowships in a public-house than in the average Christian Church. After all, this is not so high a compliment to the public-house as it seems.

The Self-Denial campaign of the Salvation Army realized over £95,000. It is astonishing how easily money can be obtained when the appeal is associated with superstition. Perhaps the best punishment for many who gave would be to make them see exactly how the money is spent.

Judging from the Scotch—or is it Scottish?—newspapers the War seems to be giving religion in the north a bit of a shaking. The clergy are being criticized with a freedom that is quite unusual, and some pretty plain opinions are being expressed both on them and their religion. Of course, this dissent from orthodoxy is of more than ten years' growth, but, up to now, the mask of religious hypocrisy has been worn generally, and the newspapers have been careful of letters reflecting on Christianity. The War seems to have broken the ice, that is all. And one may safely assume that when the newspapers publish so much there is a great deal more behind. From which we draw the moral that the time for Scottish Freethinkers to strike is now. They *can* drive home the moral of the War. There is no moral for Christians to draw.

A story is going the rounds that a country clergyman tendered his services to the National Service Department, and described his capacity as that of "organizer." As his handwriting was bad, this was read as "organgrinder."

The Rev. A. O. Belden, of Westcliff-on-Sea, says only 10 per cent. of the population of that place attend places of worship. Just so! But then the gallant 10 per cent. want to rule the roost.

Sir Harry Johnston, at the end of the present War, would "restore the kingdom of Israel to the Jews." The *Star* says this "would be easier than restoring the Jews to the kingdom of Israel."

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been ill, and has been ordered away to recuperate by his medical advisers. Fresh air and doctors are a secularistic solution of the matter; but, surely, an archbishop ought to rely on prayer alone.

Dr. W. J. O'Sullivan, a sanitary expert, declares that germs taken from mummies four thousand years old, quickly become active again. An editor, commenting on this, asks if germs are immortal. Perhaps the clergy, who pose as authorities on immortality, will oblige with an answer.

"Christianity must copy the soldier, as it has always done," says Dr. W. E. Orchard. Was he thinking of the Church and Salvation Armies, or of the Christian ministers, who are "too proud to fight," but are brave enough to see the real soldiers go the Front?

French priests are urging the claims of a new Joan of Arc, who hears voices and sees visions. The report adds that many thousands of pilgrims have travelled to kneel at the same altar. Presumably, the good, kind priests look after the offertories.

We were pleased to see the following in the *Christian World*:—

> Rev. G. E. Darlaston, M.A., addressing the Women's League of the London Congregational Union on Tuesday, expressed his opinion that some professional evangelists at the Front did more harm than good. They pushed men off their balance, and then claimed them as converts. The emotional strain of some of the meetings held at the Front was very

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great. The mention made of father, mother, and wife was positively painful. He had often felt that in another minute the men would be sobbing. Men looked back on those moments as times when they had lost their balance, and looked upon the minister as one who had taken a mean advantage of them. It was bringing religion into disrepute, and was not, in his opinion, the religion of Christ. The men felt, too, that it provided a very unfortunate contrast to the soldierly ideal, the spirit of "Take your luck" or "Be a sport."

Decidedly the pretence of our Army being eaten up with religion is wearing thin.

Apropos of a clergyman's complaint that there was no sign of prayer during a Zeppelin raid, a writer in the *London Mail* remarks:—

> Perhaps I may be a trifle irreverent, but it struck me as being rather unbecoming for a lot of people to rush out of their houses when a Zeppelin was passing over and to beseech a nervous curate to pray for them. Feeling, however, that I had probably not absorbed the police instructions correctly, I re-read them, but could find no trace of advice advocating prayer as an efficient proof against Zepps. God is not only on the side of the big battalions. He is also on the side of the anti-aircraft gunners and aviators who shoot the straightest. Therefore, parson hunting during a raid may be a dangerous pastime. It is preferable to leave it to other sky pilots.

The clerical statement that the Germans are Atheists is constantly being exposed as a falsehood. The *Evening News* states that "Among Germany's 70,000,000 inhabitants are 25,000,000 Roman Catholics. For years the Catholic Centre has been called "trumps" in German politics. All Chancellors require to dicker for their support in Government measures.

The supply of coal in London and many large towns is very short. We wonder if there is a shortage in the place so often mentioned in sermons.

A Yorkshire Young Men's Christian Association Conference at Leeds has adopted a big scheme of after-war work, including guilds of handicrafts and training in village industries. This organization seems more concerned with commercialism than Christianity.

The Rev. A. Waller, of St. Paul's Church, Westcliff-on-Sea, has written *A Revised Decalogue*, in which some caustic criticism on present-day religion is embedded. Here are some examples: "Thou mayest by priestly permission have any graven image"; "Thou shalt do no murder, except by authority"; "Thou shalt not privately annex anything contrary to public morality rules." We fear Mr. Waller's "decalogue" will share the same fate as the one Christians pretend to obey.

Mr. Coulson Kernahan declares that Oscar Wilde's great ambition was to restore "pure Christianity to the world," and he told Mr. Kernahan that he hoped to write the epic of the Cross, the Iliad of Christianity, which shall live for all time." Truly "pure Christianity" and Oscar Wilde suggest a very curious combination.

"Jerusalem," says the *Daily News*, "has been modernized in many ways" by tourist traffic. Yet the Cooks' excursionists still pay money to see the sacred side-shows as their ignorant predecessors did in the old days.

Twenty-five years ago a man named William Parris was charged with murder in Mississippi (U.S.A.). Sentenced to be hanged, he was saved by the rope breaking, and was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. Now there has just died in Columbia a man named Joseph Beard, who has confessed to being the real murderer. But Beard had become religious, otherwise he might never have confessed his crime. On his death-bed Beard, because, he said, "I want to purge my soul; I want to be certain of heaven," confessed to the murder—and died immediately after. Thus we see the wonderful power of religion. It did not prevent Beard committing the murder; it didn't make him confess to clear an innocent man; but it purged his soul, and made him certain of heaven. Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!

Providence appears to treat places of worship with high-sniffing contempt. Hundreds of churches have been destroyed on the Continent, and now we hear that there are "serious fissures" in St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

"An utter failure and colossal fraud" is a South Norwood curate's opinion of the recent National Mission of Repentance and Hope. It would be a pity to elaborate this gem of criticism.

Dr. Jowett, who has received an invitation to the pastorate of Westminster Chapel, London, is the minister of a New York church, and receives the modest salary of £2,400 yearly. This is quite a small sum compared with the Archbishop of Canterbury's £15,000, or the Bishop of London's £10,000.

Mr. Arthur Henderson says that "the alienation of the masses from organized Christianity is due to our divisions." Just as if the average man cares a straw for the tweedledums or tweedledees of theology.

Mr. Joseph Shaylor, who has been connected with bookselling for over half a century, in an interview in a London newspaper, says that the old evangelistic literature, such as that associated with Moody and Sankey, has fallen into disrepute, and there is to-day a sparser demand for "hot Gospelling" due to larger and more tolerant views.

"There was no diminution in the death-rate," says Dean Inge, "until men began to study drains." What Secularists these Christians are!

Pernicious Parodies.

AFTER THE WAR.

(With apologies to "After the Ball Was Over.")

After the War is over,
After the blood is dry,
After the Pope has blessed us,
After the Bishop's cry:
"See that our Church is busy,
Fleecing the lowly poor."
There'll be another War, boys,
After—the—War!

THE BETTER PART.

(With apologies to "Two Little Girls in Blue, Lads.")

Two sleek young men in black, lads,
Two sleek young men in black,
Shoving us into the trenches,
While they themselves hang back!
Two nice little commissions,
"Captains" in khaki suits;
Two nice, well-fed, little chaplains,
With a private to polish their boots.

Arthur F. Thorn.

Little Johnny, aged nine, asked his parents for a drum; who, in order to instil some religious instinct in the boy, told him he must pray to God for the drum. After the boy had prayed for four nights, the parents thought it time to let the drum appear; and on the fifth night the father quietly placed the drum on the bed whilst Johnny was praying: "God bless father and mother, make Johnny a good little boy, and send Johnny a drum." Johnny, having finished his prayer, looked up, saw the drum on the bed, and exclaimed: "Now, who the hell put that there?"

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To Correspondents.

T. Hayes-James.—Delighted to learn that you have so far acted on our suggestion in a recent "Special" as to secure a new subscriber. We hope other readers will follow your excellent example.

G. Lewis.—Thanks. Cuttings are always useful.

G. Harding.—We do not know of any *good* history of the War, and do not expect that any has been written. No writer would be allowed to say all he knew, and an impartial and trustworthy narrative is simply impossible under present conditions.

T. A. W.—We are obliged for sight of the letter. It will be useful in connection with an article we are publishing in a week or two on the same topic. Pleased to know you admire the *Freethinker* so much.

C. W. Marshall.—Thanks for sight of the appreciative letters from the soldiers to whom you have been sending the *Freethinker*. We have every reason for believing that many have made their first acquaintance with the paper in this way.

E. H. Olds (N.Z.).—Remittance received, and handed to Shop Manager. Thanks for account of affairs in your part of the world.

G. Bedborough.—This is a rather tardy acknowledgment of the receipt of your dainty little booklet, but none the less hearty on that account. The "Sayings" are very much to the point. Pleased to have your congratulations on what you call our "energy and optimism."

R. G. Smith.—Thanks for promise of support. The paper and pamphlets are being sent as desired.

W. C. Dodd.—There *should* be no difficulty in getting the *Freethinker* at any newsagents. We are gratified to have your appreciation of the paper.

G. S.—Your ideas are good, but the verse is hardly up to our standard of publication.

W. Bynion.—We don't exactly see in what way we can help. If there is a particular point on which we could help, we should be pleased to do so; but one can hardly write a reply to so general a statement as the one you cite.

W. Rancott.—We have no recollection of having received the letter to which you refer. We are always willing to insert letters in reply to articles, provided they are courteous, to the point, and brief.

C. W. Marshall.—Pleased to have the picture of the house in which Shelley lived at Marlow. Such mementoes are always interesting.

Mr. Nevil Bourn writes to point out that "tune" should read *rune* in his verses on "At a Graveside" in last week's 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.

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

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.

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. Cohen had a very successful meeting at Swansea on Sunday last. A very much larger hall had been taken than on the occasion of his previous visit, and the gathering quite justified the venture. The lecture was followed with the closest attention, and at its conclusion there was a long run of questions, with a little opposition. There was also a good sale of literature, which is always a good sign. In the evening it was resolved to found a Branch of the N. S. S. at Swansea, and a number of members were enrolled. Mr. Dupree, of 60 Alexandra Road, has consented to act as Secretary, and in his energetic hands the new Branch has every prospect of a successful career.

Under the auspices of the National Secular Society a course of three lectures is being arranged at South Place Institute on the evenings of April 29, May 6, and 13. Mr. Cohen will open the course, and will be followed by Mr. J. T. Lloyd and Mr. Harry Snell. Full particulars as to subjects, etc., will follow in due course.

We are sorry that pressure on our space necessitates our holding over until next week a further instalment of Mr. Mann's excellent articles on "Spiritualism." They will be resumed next week. We have reason to know that these articles are being followed with considerable interest, and we are considering the question of their republication in pamphlet form.

It seems likely that a Board of Trade order will shortly be issued prohibiting the practice of "returns" in the newspaper trade. This will mean that copies of the *Freethinker* can only be secured by ordering them in advance, as newsagents will not risk ordering on the chance of selling them. Of course there is nothing to prevent readers who are interested getting their newsagent to take and display an extra copy or so, and taking the unsold copies themselves. That is often done now, and when it is done the copies displayed are most often sold and new subscribers gained.

In thanking us for sending *Freethinkers*, really supplied by some of our readers, Corporal J. Benton writes from Egypt:—

> Our meetings here in the C.E.M.S. Hut are few and far between now, as our parson here does not relish too much open discussion. His idea of that is to occupy the platform as he does his pulpit; and as he is generally backed up by one or two officers, the opposition is always at a disadvantage. However, only about two per cent. of the troops take him at all seriously. One discussion to take place shortly, by a Nonconformist parson, is "The Failure of the Church." This is only one way of bluffing the troops from the real issue, "The Failure of Christianity" in general. The section of Christian Arabs here, "the Copts," are generally known on account of their filthy habits, and everyone admits the Mohammedans are cleaner in every way. Our library here contains several of Mr. Eden Phillpott's novels, which seem to be especial favourites of the troops.

The Falkirk Branch of the N. S. S. has arranged for a lecture on "Robert Ingersoll," by the Rev. E. T. Russell, at the Co-Operative Hall, Falkirk, on Sunday, April 22, at 3 o'clock. A lecture on Ingersoll by a clergyman, followed by discussion, should be interesting.

The Right to Affirm.

By the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888 affirmation may take the place of an oath in courts of law and in all other places where the taking of an oath is necessary.

Affirmation may be claimed on one of two grounds. (1) On the ground of having no religious belief, (2) on the ground of an oath being contrary to one's religious belief.

A judge or other official may ask on what ground affirmation is claimed, but no further question is warranted, and all such additional questions should be respectfully and firmly declined.

In all cases where any trouble or difficulty occurs it would be well to inform us of the circumstances at once.

The newspaper is the plague, or black death, of the modern world. It is an open sewer, running down each side of the street, and displaying the foulness of every day, day by day, morning and evening. Everything that, having once happened, has ceased to exist; the newspaper sets before you, beating the bones of the buried without pity, without shame, and without understanding. Its pride is that it is the record of facts, but it tells you no fact twice in the same way; for it gorges its insatiable appetite upon rumour. All the hypocrisies of the State, of the Church, of the market-place, cling together for once in brotherly love, and speak with unanimous voice.—*Arthur Symons, "Studies in Prose and Verse."*

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The French Revolution.

IX.

THE SMASH.

(Continued from p. 198.)

FRANCE was now (April, 1794) under a veritable tyranny, in which freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of thought were alike impossible. The Committee of Public Safety, which had come into power as the representative of the democratic movement against the privileges of wealth, kicked down the ladder it had climbed by. Municipal independence, the pillar of democracy, was suppressed, and France was administered by nominees of the Government, called "national agents," in every town and village. The municipality of Paris was filled up in a similar way.

It was now the object of Robespierre to carry out his cherished project of remodelling France after the pattern of Rousseau's State. To all appearance, he was supreme. In truth, however, he never commanded the allegiance of his colleagues in the Government, and was, to the last, pretty much at the mercy of the specialist members of it. Except two members of the Committee of Public Safety, Couthon and St. Just, and one member of the Committee of General Security, David the painter, none of them shared his aspiration for a Deistic "reign of the saints." They supported him simply because no one else possessed the authority with the Convention, the Jacobins' Club, and the country at large, without which they felt that their power would crumble into dust.

His first step was to obtain from the Convention a recognition of Rousseau's "civil religion." At his behest, it was decreed in May that "the French nation recognizes the existence of a Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul," and a system of national festivals was instituted in honour of the new bogey. Robespierre declared war on Freethought. He proclaimed that the truth of any doctrine was a matter of indifference, provided that it was useful to the State; and from the point of view of Robespierre, with his ideal of a disciplinarian and Puritanical Republic, religion was indisputably useful. On June 8, the inaugural festival was held in Paris. The Convention, headed by Robespierre as president, took part in it in a body; speeches were made, hymns were sung, and emblematic figures of Atheism and Anarchy were burnt.

This day, however, marked the beginning of the end. In spite of artistic design and efficient organization, the new religion did not catch on. The fact was, Robespierre's popularity was waning. For the democratic rank and file, he had ceased to be the people's man, the incorruptible tribune, and had become a tyrant, the incarnation of the reigning repression. He was audibly reviled at the festival of the Supreme Being. A strong man, like Danton, could have made short work of him that day.

Two days later, June 10, 1794 (22nd Prairial, year II., as the date is more generally remembered), Robespierre must needs add the last straw to the camel's burden by a new Terrorist law, which he proposed through his mouthpiece, Couthon. The Revolutionary Tribunal was divided into sections; prisoners were deprived of the right of defence; and capital punishment was extended to cover such vague offences as "undermining morality," "corrupting the public conscience," and the like. As the Tribunal was packed with Robespierre's creatures, he hoped by this law to clear out of his way all who, on whatever grounds, should object to fall in with his politico-religious projects.

The rate of executions now rose by leaps and bounds. Men and women went to the guillotine in batches of twenty, thirty, and even fifty a day. Men who had been saved in the September massacres, men for whom Marat had interceded, now fell victims to the calculating callousness of Robespierre and the brutality of the Committee of General Security. The populace, who had at first felt vindictively towards the victims of the "Terror," now turned against it, and looked with sullen, growing resentment at these daily hecatombs.

A breach between Robespierre and his colleagues hastened the end. He had intended to use the new law to decimate the party of the "Mountain" in the Convention, who were the chief obstruction to his new schemes. This the Committees would not allow. He withdrew from their sittings, and with St. Just and Couthon laid his plans anew.

Meanwhile the French victory of Fleurus, which restored Belgium to the Republic, ended the last pretence of "military necessity" which could be offered as an excuse for the "Terror."

The tension broke on July 26 (8 Thermidor), when Robespierre in the Convention attacked some of his "Montagnard" enemies by name, demanded a fresh election of the committees, and the punishment of certain deputies who, as commissioners in the departments, had been involved in ultra-Terrorist or "dechristianizing" measures. The same evening the Jacobins' Club applauded Robespierre's speech, and expelled Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois, his principal opponents in the Government. They hastily laid their plans for action. Robespierre must be destroyed, even at the risk of losing the reins of power themselves. They conferred with the threatened "Montagnards," Tallien, Barras, and others, who, in their turn, sounded the men of the "Marsh" and secured their support. On July 27 (9 Thermidor), St. Just, Robespierre's lieutenant, rose in the Convention, intending to make a conciliatory speech which might allay the storm and postpone the conflict. The "Montagnards," however, would not let him proceed. Their deadly fear was lest Robespierre and his friends should appeal to the "Marsh," pose as the champions of religion and order, and turn the tables on the conspirators. St. Just and Robespierre were shouted down. Robespierre struggled to speak, trying (as his enemies had anticipated) to whip up the Conservative majority against his opponents, but was not allowed to do so. His voice failed; he sat down; and a "Montagnard" deputy proposed and carried a motion for his arrest. The "Marsh," not knowing Robespierre's plans, but glad to take advantage of the split in the Government to assert themselves at last, voted it unanimously. His brother, St. Just, Couthon, and Lebas were arrested with him. The packed municipality, filled with Robespierre's supporters, came to the rescue of their leader, forbade the prisons to receive any prisoners that day, and attempted to raise the people against the Convention. The people, however, were in no humour to rise on behalf of Robespierre. The Hotel de Ville was stormed by the forces mustered by the Convention; Robespierre, his jaw broken by a pistol shot, and his friends were made prisoners again; and the next day they were all sent to the guillotine. The bulk of the municipality followed them a day later.

Nominally what had happened was that the Government, supported by the Convention, had defeated and destroyed three of its members who had sought to overthrow it. Actually the Democratic Party had been forced to call in the reactionaries to save them from decimation by their own leaders. The democratic machine had broken down with a smash, and the

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"Marsh," the Conservative majority in the Convention, found themselves in a position to dictate policy.

They did not at first realize their own power. For the first few weeks after the 9 Thermidor, though the "Terror" ceased at once, the spell of democratic ascendancy seemed unbroken. The Convention voted that the ashes of Marat, still a popular hero, should be transferred to the Pantheon: The religious question was temporarily settled by a measure of disestablishment, in which, for the first time, the principle was recognized that the State has no concern with religious opinions.

However, in the months of August and September, 1794, the "Marsh" awoke to their opportunity. They demanded, and obtained, representation on the Committees of Government. There was no longer the moral force in the Democratic Party to resist the reaction.

A formidable secession from the "Mountain" took place. Many of the erstwhile democrats, such as Tallien, Barras, and Merlin of Thionville, had lost their enthusiasm for the Revolution. This cannot be altogether accounted for by disgust with the "Terror." Many of these men had been Terrorists themselves, and Barras and Freron had been among the very worst. A more sinister reason for their recantation lay in the fact that they, in common with many other men of the middle classes, had made their fortunes in the Revolution. They had bought up property belonging to the Church and the aristocracy, and were now the owners of large estates. Tallien had married a rich Spanish widow, the notorious Senora Cabarrus, whom he had met at Bordeaux when he was commissioner there, and who now inspired from her *salon* the forces of reaction. Of such men was the new reactionary party, the "Thermidorian" Party, composed.

The "Mountain" was reduced to a small Radical rump, consisting of the ex-members of the Terrorist Government, such as Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois, and of a number of men like Romme, joint author of the Revolutionary Calendar, who preserved inflexibly the principles of the Democratic Republic, and fought a losing battle against the overwhelming forces of the "Marsh" and the "Thermidorians."

Such was the position when, in September and October, 1794, the last struggle of the Revolution began.

(To be continued.) Robert Arch.

Stories Concerning Authority.

By "Multatuli" (Eduard Douwes Dekker).

I.

There was once a traveller who set out upon a journey. In his charge he had a great store of gold and silver. Fearing that he might be waylaid and robbed, he had armed himself and his company. Apparently he had little to fear, because his company numbered more than all the robbers of that country put together. He was so well armed and so strong in numbers that a whole army could not have taken his wealth from him.

In an evil moment for them, certain robbers set upon him, and would have repented their rashness to the end of their days if most of them had not been killed on the spot.

One of these robbers, whom the fate of his brother-thieves had made wary, sought counsel of a holy hermit who was wise in all things, for he had lived for ages in the sole company of two bones of a dead man and a jar of water.

"What must I do, O man of holiness," he asked, "to get for myself the wealth of this traveller?"

"Nothing is easier," replied the pious hermit. "You must take the noose you see lying there, and throw it over his head; then you will have no more trouble with him. Moreover, he will command his servants to kneel before you and to deliver up to you all you desire."

And it happened as the holy man had said. But, alas! the traveller and his company found themselves in sore straits.

This noose is called "Faith," and it has preserved its virtue to this day.

II.

"Please tell me, father, why it is that the sun does not tumble down?" And the father, who felt foolish because he could not say why the sun did not tumble down, punished his child for asking an awkward question.

Fearing his father's anger, the child asked no more questions, neither why the sun did not tumble down nor many other things he would have liked so much to know.

The poor child never grew up to be a man, although he lived for six thousand years—and even longer. *And he has remained stupid and ignorant to this day.*

III.

"The first king," said Voltaire, "was a lucky soldier." Yet I don't know that this is the case. There are many, or even more, chances that the first king was someone who had dealings with certain holy hermits that used to furnish people with a peculiar slip knot, known as the *noose of faith.*

However that may be, I can vouch for the truth of the following story:—

Krates was very strong. With a mere jerk of the arm he could level the strongest oaken fence. He could kill thirteen enemies at a blow. When he coughed, the compression of the air caused fires to break out, and at the slightest of his movements the moon trembled.

Because of these great talents, Krates was made king, and he died after he had been king for some time.

But his son, Krates the Younger, was a rickety creature. Yet his ricketiness did not prevent him from wishing to be king in the place of his father, who had been so strong.

He was seated upon a wooden chair—he called it a throne—and he was saying to himself: "I am king."

"Why are you king?" asked the people, who were still simple, and knew nothing of the law of heredity.

"Because my mother cohabited in the same hut with Old Krates, who is dead."

He said "palace," but it was really a hut.

The people knew nothing of this sort of logic, and when Krates II. commanded: "Come here!" everyone went away. And when he said: "Go away!" they came to him. In short, authority went speedily to the Devil, and Krates II. had not wit enough to take advantage of his people's malice by commanding the opposite of what he wanted them to do.

In an opposition newspaper of the time we read: "Why, O Krates, art thou bandy-legged and imbecile? Why sittest thou in the seat of him who dwelt in the same hut with the woman who bore thee? Get thou up, and depart, and say no more to us: 'Get ye gone!' or 'Come ye here!' as if thou wast the old Krates. Where are the oak fences thrown down with the fillip of a mighty arm? The moon trembles not even if thou dreamest of splitting the universe. Thou couldest not kill a louse, and no fires break out when thou sneezest. .....Get thou up, and give place to another who can do these things that are useful!"

Thus spoke the opposition. Krates II. would no doubt have been obliged to give up his chair which he called a

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throne if an old nurse had not addressed the people in this wise:—

"Listen to me, my friends, for I was nurse to little Krates when he was smaller than he is to-day. Now, when he came into the world his father dropped oil upon his forehead, and a little of it fell upon the nipple of my breast. *Therefore* it is unnecessary for him to knock down oaken fences with a fillip of his hand, nor has he any need to make the moon tremble or to cause fires to break out when he coughs. I can assure you that ....."

But the eloquent nurse had no need to finish her sentence. The conclusion was so obvious that the whole people—the editorial staff of the opposition more noisily than the others—cried out with one voice:—

Behold the anointed of the Lord!

And Krates continued to sit in the chair which he called a throne.

And he still sits there to this day.

—From *Love-Letters* (1861).

(*Translated by*) Geo. Underwood.

Strong Meekness.

The pastor was speaking about the meekness of Jesus Christ. Like all the other highly entertaining virtues of the Lord, as rendered by the pulpit, this meekness was considerably different to the ordinary quality. Not that it was more complex or more illuminating. Not that it lacked human character or human simplicity. No; the meekness of Jesus Christ had been misinterpreted. It was not understood. We were too prone to vision our Lord as effeminate. For this the pulpit was responsible. Jesus Christ was no weakling. He was no emasculated example of masculinity. He was a man, with a man's strength. His meekness was strong meekness. Had not he used a whip to clear the temple of profanity and defilement? Was he a weak man who, amidst cowering followers, and beset by angry waves, stood up in a little cockle-shell of a boat, and bid the waves to cease their fret, and command the storm to stillness? Was he a weak, meek, man who endured the tortures of that eclipsing episode of Calvary? And so on. But the pastor did not tell us it was easy to be strongly meek when we knew, beforehand, that we were victorious.

The preacher proceeded to interpret strong meekness. Cowardliness it was to suffer others to bear adversity alone. When the weak are oppressed the Christlike man would rise in wrath against the tyranny that grinds them into the mire. The meek man will not stay his hand when evil flings its animosity against his friends; nor will he sit down and allow the Devil in human form to molest them. Against the robber, the murderer, the malefactor, will the meek man fight; and his antagonism will be all the more indomitable because of his meekness. But when he, himself, is personally opposed by these various devilish things, he will faithfully turn his eyes heavenward, looking to God, and, murmuring some verbal soft soap, will deliver himself into the tenderly solicitous hands of his divine Father. In the performance of this, perhaps, sorrow-stricken duty will lie the proof of the strength of his meekness. His own life is in God's keeping; the welfare of his fellows, to the best of his ability, in his.

Such was the pulp administered to us the other Sunday; and such was the minister's lying method of escaping from a nasty morass.

Confronted by the War, and its relationship to Christianity, the pastor, apparently, was mentally distressed; and in his illumination of the only true and real meaning of meekness he conveniently forgot Truth.

Behind his endeavour to elucidate the mysteries of meekness stood the moloch of War, its mouth wide open in one monstrous grin, its eyes full of scorn, its attitude one of contempt. Germany was the aggressive devil, the culprit, the modern national malefactor, against which even Christ, whose life-teaching was mildness and meekness, would have turned his ire, because he knew his friends were in peril. To have complacently accepted the dominion of Prussianism would have been sin. This War was righteous just in so far as it was the uprising of our national meekness against tyranny; and no one could deny that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Britain his sympathy. But if Christ had been Britain, what would he have done? Endured another Calvary with the same object?

Practically speaking, meekness became strong meekness when it was necessary to discover some way of escape from the mass of contradictions with which the European catastrophe deluged Christianity. It was essential to provide certain qualifications to the sermonic commandments of the Son of God. Disobedience to the dictates of Deity had to be made circumstantially righteous. Absolute denial of the laws of God, as explicitly published for humanity in the Sermon on the Mount, had to be made perfectly justifiable. And so it came about that we, as a nation, in our present war-paint, although we were breaking all the divine commandments, were but following the example of Jesus Christ, and being strongly meek. We were fighting against evil for others. We were doing just what the Lord would have done when human circumstances knocked holes in his high-falutin' philosophy.

The pastor forgot that his knowledge of the true causes of the War was as filmy as mine; and until we thoroughly understood the beginnings thereof we were being merely ignorantly dogmatic when we asserted that wrong was right because it appeared, under superficial circumstances, righteous. He forgot that the commandments of God were not formulated upon passing conflictions, but upon permanent truths; and that the former could not, therefore, be made to fit into the divine philosophy of life. Consequently, what directly and quite flagrantly denied the truth of the commandments of Jesus Christ was wrong all the time. Under no circumstances could it be right. If war did not harmonize faithfully with these simple precepts, then war was wrong, despite what sagacious people might say to the contrary; and it became the duty of the followers of the lowly Nazarene to say so, and to endure whatever penalties this Christian nation would surely impose upon them.

To introduce qualifications to a commandment is no more than hypocrisy. Conveniently to overlook the responsibilities attached to the word of command from the Heavenly Field Marshall is treachery. Disobedience is cowardice. Expediency is a broken crutch to principle. The serviceableness of the law of God is either a fact or a fable; it is a fact if, in emergency, it is useful; it is a fable if, in emergency, it has to be cast aside as useless. There is no Jesus Christ on a battle-field. Strong meekness is a lie manufactured in order to clothe the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in khaki.

Robert Moreland.

Christianity the Symbolism of Factuality.

When Mr. Lloyd tells us that he "accepts the scientific view that the universe is infinite in extent and of eternal duration," although "unable to believe in an Infinite and

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Eternal Energy from which all things proceed," he is making a most interesting confession of faith. For does he not here, to use his own words, "part company with known facts and speculate upon unverifiable assumptions?" It is philosophy with theology, and not science, which postulates such beliefs, although Spencer called his the "one absolute certainty." Science is concerned with phenomena only, and no phenomenon or sum total of phenomena can possibly be proved to be either infinite or eternal. The supreme question is, not how far Spencer believed in the Infinite or Eternal Energy as apart from and of prior existence to the universe, but whether such an energy exists at all. We can only know of it by its effects. What it is in itself, whether Personal (or as I would prefer to think of it as Super-Personal) or Impersonal, whether it transcends or is immanent, or is partly transcendental, partly immanent in the phenomenal universe (the only universe of which we have any direct knowledge) is a matter of speculation.

Mr. Lloyd and his friends may incline to one belief or view; I and my friends have as much right to incline to the other belief or view. For all ultimate beliefs are acts of faith, and cannot be conclusively proved by demonstration. It is, therefore, altogether gratuitous to regard those whose act of faith leads them to believe in God as on a lower intellectual level than that of those who disbelieve. It is to me surpassing strange that while Mr. Lloyd is prepared to dogmatize concerning the infinity in extent and the eternity in duration of the universe (or can he demonstrate this?), he should, at the same time, cavil at my belief (which was Spencer's) in an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed. The one sort of belief is equivalent to the other, for both are beliefs.

Mr. Lloyd says that "to a student of the Four Gospels nothing can be more certain than that Jesus regarded God as a person apart from and above the Universe, and whose will the Universe fulfilled." I do not deny this, and yet I think it is very questionable indeed whether Jesus (as we know Him in the Gospels) thought of the Father as *merely* transcendent. Much of His recorded teaching (*e.g.*, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father") seems to suggest that He also believed in the immanence of God; nor did He confine that belief to His own person. I refuse to be tied down to a particular interpretation of the creed, however time-honoured this may be. For the underlying theory of the Christian Church is that we are dependent upon the Living Spirit for the interpretation of the facts of life, including past history, and not upon what various people, whether living or dead, may have thought the Christian Creed meant. To me Christianity is the symbolism of factuality, but the factuality is far more important than the symbolism.

Further, it seems to me that Mr. Lloyd is as unscientific in denying that there is evidence of loving purpose in the universe—so far as we know it—as we should be if we denied that there is much which conflicts or seems to conflict with love. To state that the world is "chock-full of evils and wrongs, of injustice and oppression, etc.," is to say an obvious and trite truism. It is true, that is, relatively to our standards of right and wrong, truth, and justice, etc. But if it be meant in any absolute or ultimate sense, how does he know? Surely this is a piece of rash dogmatism as gross as any which Mr. Lloyd would censure among religionists. For here, if I may return the retort courteous, in Mr. Lloyd's own words: "the curious thing is that whilst affecting Agnosticism" concerning the origin and destiny of the vast world process, Mr. Lloyd "immediately blossoms out into a full-fledged Gnostic" who knows what is and what is not consistent with the nature of the force underlying all phenomena!

For any view that the intelligent human mind can form of the ultimate significance of the Universe must be in the nature of a venture of faith, and the vast majority of the greatest minds have put the religious rather than the sceptical interpretation upon the data which are at our disposal. Even at the present time of world-tragedy, we find so vigorous and reflecting a mind as that of H. G. Wells becoming far more sure and definite in this faith.

Mr. Lloyd and those who think with him always appear to confuse two totally different things—Traditional and Essential Christianity. The former, I believe, is a waning belief; but there are many indications (as seen, for instance, in the *R.P.A. Annual* for 1917, in Colonel Younghusband's *Mutual Influence*, in Wells's most recent writings, etc.) that the latter is a waxing force. When Mr. Lloyd speaks of what I have called the Father-heart at work in human nature as "a purely natural process," this does not necessarily exclude the working of the superhuman. For Spencer's Eternal and Infinite Energy is admittedly superhuman. His complaint that the Christian Church has not yet seen its prophecy of ultimate triumph fulfilled is curious, to say the least, as coming from one whose whole intellectual attitude should make him conscious of the enormously slow and gradual evolution of Human Society. The Christian Church is not yet 2,000 years old, and yet here is a modern scientific spirit complaining because the highest ideal of human fellowship which it, amid terrible follies, weaknesses, and aberrations, has succeeded in holding up to the world, has not yet been realized. To me, the very fact that we are in a position to sit in judgment upon all such follies and crimes of which the Church in particular and humanity in general have been, and still are, guilty is satisfactory proof that the Christian Ideal and Hope will eventually be reached. There is far more evidence of the Father-heart, Brother-heart (call it what you will) in humanity to-day than there was, say, 10,000 years ago. It does not follow that because "the mills of God grind slowly" that they are not grinding at all, or that the finest wheat-flour will not be the ultimate deposit. Man having come so far on his journey is, I am convinced, destined to go the whole way. Rationalism, in helping to rid the jungle of much that hinders, will not succeed (to vary the metaphor) in torpedoing Humanity's Hope. And this Hope and Ideal is that with which we are concerned.

Francis E. Powell.

Obituary.

The brief announcement of the death of John Robertson, of 13 Dover Street, W., after an operation for appendicitis, aged 77, marks the passing away of yet another of my old friends and comrades in the Secularist Movement. For upwards of forty years I knew John Robertson (not to be confounded with John M. Robertson) as a silent but very valuable worker. His activity was practically confined to committee and administrative affairs, which did not bring him into public prominence. In the N. S. S., the Hall of Science, and later in the Bradlaugh Fellowship, he rendered service that was highly appreciated. He was always ready and generous in assisting the poorer brethren in time of need, and I never applied to him in vain on behalf of any case that I could recommend. His death is the cause of deep grief to the diminishing number of friends who knew him, and who always regarded him with affection.

Geo. Standring.

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Views and Opinions.

War As It Is.

The powers that be have issued innumerable warnings that we are on the verge of a food famine. The destruction of shipping, and the diversion of labour from the work of agriculture to that of manufacturing material for war has involved of necessity a shortage of food, and may end in acute want. And there are prophecies that the food supply may be the ultimate factor in the settlement of the War. If Germany can force starvation on the Allies before the Allies can force starvation on Germany, then terms acceptable to the Central Powers may be arranged. If the reverse, then the Allies may be able to force upon Germany and her Allies whatever terms are thought advisable. To such a pass has this business of "glorious war" come. The course of events have stripped war of its last semblance of greatness, and shown it to be the barbarous, brutal, even cowardly thing it really is. Victory may be determined by the starvation of old men and infants, women and children. For, make no mistake, if starvation be the decisive and deciding factor, it is these who will suffer first and most. So long as food can be obtained, it will be supplied to the fighting men first. The fitness of the fighting line must be maintained at all costs. And it requires little insight to perceive that in this attempted all-round food blockade it is by the starvation of the old and the young, the weak and the sick, that an issue is sought. So much for the chivalry of modern war, stripped of its false glamour and meretricious glitter.

* * *

"Our Father."

In the Christian armoury there is, however, one weapon that seems to fit the occasion. It is contained in the so-called Lord's Prayer—which is, by the way, no more Christian than are most other things in that mosaic of Pagan religious ideas and reversions to primitive animism which the world knows as Christianity. "Our Father, which art in heaven.....Give us this day our daily bread." That prayer seems to fit the situation. If we have a father in heaven, what more natural than that we should ask him for our daily bread? If, as the Bishop of Ripon has assured us, "Our cause is identical with God's cause," if the Bishop of London is right when he says that "this is the greatest fight ever made for the Christian religion," what more natural than to expect God to help? Man is "doing his bit." He is working away in the fields and in allotments. And just at the critical time "God" extends the duration of wintry weather so as to minimize the result of human efforts. Surely that is a poor way of helping his Allies? It is not the way one would expect a heavenly father to respond to "give us this day our daily bread." No earthly father would see his children starve if he could prevent it. Nay, it is his business to prevent it. The law says so, and punishes by fine and imprisonment all who neglect this duty. What are we going to do about God? Not being domiciled within the British Empire, we cannot cite him to answer in a court of law. We cannot fine him, but we could cease paying him tribute. If God won't trouble about us, why should we trouble about God? A neutral deity is of no use in this War. And a deity who ignores us during the War deserves to be ignored by us when peace arrives. And why should we not start *now?* If we can disband thousands of small businesses that at least produced some obvious result, why not turn our backs upon a deity who does not manage even the weather in a satisfatory manner?

* * *

The Difficulties of Deity.

Of course, one can appreciate the difficulties of deity. For it is not alone the Allies who are his children. Germans, Austrians, Bulgarians, and one must assume, the Turks are his children also. And they also pray "Give us this day our daily bread." Their prayer, one must believe, is as genuine and as heartfelt as ours, and it is answered in the same way. After all, they are *his* children. German and British, Austrian and Russian, created he them. And to take sides by giving bread to the Allies and refusing it to the Central Powers would be an act of gross partiality. Not only would it show partiality, but it would be risky. It might mean the loss of some seventy millions of worshippers at a time when they are dropping off with alarming rapidity. It is, perhaps, safer to imitate the Pope—unless it is the Pope who is imitating him—and refrain from interfering. Of course, a really intelligent parent would take his quarrelsome children by the scruff of their necks, or the seat of the their pants, and knock their heads together in the hope of teaching them better. But God's ways are not as our ways—for which we ought to be grateful. For did man act as God acts we should not now be celebrating America's entrance to the War. Still, this policy of somnolence has also its dangers. When piety cries for potatoes, and belief asks for bread, there is not much satisfaction in offering—Lord Devonport. And when the Government curtly declines to sanction a day of prayer for victory, but emphasizes the need for ships and shells, it may dawn upon even the intelligence of

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many pietists that this talk of "Our Father, which art in heaven" is part of the world's mental lumber which deserves to be swept away with the close of the War.

* * *

An Unworkable Theory.

Many Christians used to argue—many still so argue—that whether the Christian theory be true or not, at least it works. The War has for thousands exposed the absurdity of that plea. For the Christian theory simply does not square with the facts. Up to yesterday, people in this country were blaming President Wilson because he persisted in maintaining neutrality up to the last possible moment. They insisted that the inhumanity of Germany had been great enough to demand the active interference of all neutrals. At last President Wilson gave the expected word, and a special service is to be held at St. Paul's to thank God for America's intervention. But God still remains dumb. It was not God that brought America in, but German ruthlessness and American interests. The other day two hospital ships were sunk—one by torpedo attack, the other by running across a mine. These ships were not engaged in fighting. They were bringing home wounded men—men who had "done their bit" in "God's cause" And Providence, which could so easily have interfered, did nothing. They sank as certainly as though there were no God looking on. The world is clamouring for food, and the God who could once create a miraculous draught of fishes to satisfy a few fishermen can do nothing to help us. Providence could do nothing to prevent the outrages of the War; it can do nothing to stop their perpetuation. In an age of ignorance, God is active; in an age of science, he is impotent. The Ministry of War does not ask for prayers, but for men and munitions. The Minister of Agriculture asks for more labour; the Chancellor of the Exchequer for money. God is not wanted. He does nothing. The Atheist has always asserted this; and now few of his avowed followers expect him to do anything. The theory of God is unworkable and untrue.

* * *

The Burden of Belief.

But, after all, the War brings nothing to bear on this question that is essentially new. Carnage and folly and brutality are all as old as humanity. All exist in their degree in times of peace as well as in times of war. It is only that more suffer during war that makes duller minds aware of the facts. And whether they exist during war or during peace, they are equally an arraignment of the God-theory. If there is a God, he is quite careless of human well-being or human suffering. The deaths of a hundred thousand men mean no more to him than the deaths of a hundred thousand ants. A couple of million of men locked in a death struggle on the battle-field is only a replica of the struggle that has been going on in the animal world throughout all time. *If* there be a God, he made, he designed, all this. *He* fashioned the lust for slaughter, the teeth for tearing, the talons for destruction; and man, with his multiplied weapons of murder, has but imitated his example. The War has only brought the question to an issue for less imaginative folk. To the Christian plea the Atheist need only put the question, "With a God like that, how comes a world like this?" You simply cannot marry the facts to the theory. It is an outrage on decency to attempt it. Common sense forbids the banns. A world *without* God, and in which humanity is gradually learning the way to better things, is an inspiration to renewed effort after the right. A world such as this, *with* God, is enough to drive insane all with intelligence enough to appreciate the situation.

Chapman Cohen.

The Roots of the Christian Tree.

IV.

Whenever we say that Paul makes a certain statement, all we mean to convey is that it occurs in some document which bears Paul's name, whether actually written by him or not. The genuineness or spuriousness of the Pauline Epistles is a problem that does not at present concern us, our only point being that the claim found in Galatians i. 11, 12, whether made by an historical Paul, or by someone writing in his name for a school known as Pauline, is absolutely false. The Pauline Gospel, in all its essential features, had been in existence for centuries before the Christian era began. Those influential religions of personal redemption by mystic union with a dying and resurrected Saviour-God, of which Professor Bacon speaks in his *Making of the New Testament*, were Oriental cults, some of which had flourished in the East for countless ages before the marvellous conquests of Alexander rendered their diffusion in the Western world practicable. Osiris, Adonis, Attis, and Mithra were ancient Saviour-Gods, after the order of whom the Christian Saviour-God came to be fashioned. Baptism was a well-known rite of initiation into the Mysteries, even in the West, before Christianity appeared on the scene. It mystically brought the initiated into vital touch with the slain and risen Lord; and the Christian sacrament of baptism was instituted on the lines of its Pagan prototype. The same thing is even more prominently true of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the truth of which proposition we shall now proceed to establish.

The following is Harnack's account of what the Eucharist meant to the primitive Church:—

> It was a mysterious, divine gift of knowledge and of life; it was a thanksgiving, a sacrifice, a representation here and now of the death of Christ, a love-feast of the brotherhood, a support of the hungry and distressed. No single observance could well be more than that, and it preserved this character for long, even after it had passed wholly into the region of the mysterious (*Expansion of Christianity*, vol. ii., p. 53).

According to the teaching of the orthodox Church in all ages this sacrament was instituted by Christ himself on the eve of his crucifixion. So far as the Four Gospels are concerned, however, only the Synoptists record such an institutionary ceremony, and so meagre is this record, that one is naturally led to doubt the historicity of the alleged event. So vague is the language employed, that we cannot legitimately infer from it that the Gospel Jesus intended that that simple parting meal of bread and wine should become a permanency. The only hint that such a permanency was contemplated occurs in Luke xxii. 19 ("This do in remembrance of me"), a passage which Westcott and Hort regard as no part of the original text. The curious thing is that the Fourth Gospel contains no allusion whatever to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, although it does represent the Master as teaching (vi. 53) that "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves." This is fully developed mysticism, and it shows that the writer must have been familiar with Pagan mythology.

Another illuminating fact is that the author or redactor of 1 Cor. xi. 23-29 represents the institution of the Lord's Supper as having been specially revealed to the Apostle Paul by the Lord Jesus himself, as if the occurrence of such an institution had been wholly unknown until the apostolate was Divinely conferred upon him. It is a fair inference from this claim that the institution never took place at all, and that the Synoptic accounts of it were interpolated from that passage in Corinthians. The truth

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seems to be that the Christian Eucharist is the counterpart of several Jewish and Pagan sacred meals which had been in existence for a long time. Examining the Pauline statements concerning this sacrament, we discover two things, namely, that Christians of the latter half of the first century habitually observed it, and also that there was a Pagan sacrament practically identical with it, which the Corinthian converts were tempted to celebrate as well as their own. Of those Gentile feasts Paul could not speak with common politeness, though, on his own showing, the celebration of the Lord's Supper was frequently disgraced by disgusting scenes of intemperance in both food and drink. Yet this is how he addresses his readers on the subject:—

> Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he (1 Cor. x. 21)?

However, we must do the author of that passage the ustice of calling attention to the fact that "devils" is a deplorable mistranslation of the Greek word "daimoniown," which means not "devils," but "divinitis." Socrates boasted that he was under the sway of a "daimon," by which he understood God's spirit, or God's voice; and he assures us that whenever he listened to and obeyed his "daimon," "dæmon," or "demon," he felt very pleased with himself. It does one good to find that the *New Standard Dictionary* reminds us of the fact that "demon" in English denotes an evil spirit, devil, simply because "the wrong translation in the New Testament of *daimon*, as devil, has given currency to this meaning." And yet, after all, perhaps the translators are not so much to blame, because, in the estimation of the early Christians, the very Gods of the Heathen were but so many devils, who, stealing the secrets of the true God, were always more than delighted to forestall him in the execution of his holy purposes. As Mr. J. M. Robertson observes: "it is quite clear that the Supper was a Mithraic institution, and that Paul recognized its existence outside his sect"; but that recognition of its prior existence among the Pagans did not prevent him from ascribing its origin to the intervention of Gods which were but evil spirits. Of course, it was their dense ignorance of the history of religions, and their invincible prejudice, which induced the Church Fathers to accept the Pauline view as accurate and authoritative. To Justin Martyr, Mithraism was practically unknown, except on hearsay of people whose acquaintance with it was of the most superficial character, and it is no wonder that he accused the votaries of that religion of having borrowed its essential features from the Christians. Tertullian was vastly superior, in every respect, to Justin, but even he held the view that it was the Devil who had given the Eucharist to the Heathen in anticipation, and as a more or less exact copy of what God would later present to his own people in Christ.

Of the antiquity of sacramental meals there can be no doubt whatever. To the Jew, in ordinary circumstances, the drinking of blood was an intolerable abomination, but he was not at all averse to the mystical partaking of it. What was the blood of the covenant that became so common a phrase on the lips of Christians? The covenant was between God and his people who had been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and so it was looked upon as a blood-covenant, or a covenant sealed by blood. This imagery arose, doubtless, from the habit indulged in, under all the great religions of the East, of partaking of a sacrificial banquet at which the God was mystically eaten, or sat as being at once both host and guest at his own table. The sacrifice offered on the altar was a mystic representation of the slain Deity, who, by his death and resurrection, became the spiritual food and drink of his devotees. This custom obtained among primitive Jews and surrounding nations; and everywhere the conviction was that the blood symbolized the very life of the slain sacrifice, because the shedding of it invariably brought about death. Therefore blood was conceived to be the most nourishing food of gods and men. Even the shades of the departed were too feeble to enter into conversation with Ulysses until he gave them blood to drink. Now, in sacrificial meals wine generally stood for blood, and, consequently, we read in most Sacred Writings of the sacramental aspects of bread and wine, the bread representing the torn body, and the wine the shed blood of the Saviour-God. Such was the case in the cults of Osiris, Adonis, Attis, and Mithra, and such became the characteristic of the Christian Eucharist. The Gospel Jesus is made to say of the broken bread: "This is my body which is for you," and of the poured-out wine: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood"; and the partakers were instructed to cherish the fond belief that by thus mystically eating and drinking their Redeemer they would ultimately grow into his likeness.

Now, what ground is their for believing that the Christian Eucharist is of Divine origin, while similar institutions among the Heathen owed their appointment and continuance to the forces of evil ever at work in the universe? And yet Paul is represented as being responsible for the following amazing statement:—

> I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. 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? Seeing that we who are many are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of the one loaf. Behold Israel after the flesh; have not they which eat the sacrifices communion with the altar? What say I then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have communion with devils (1 Cor. x. 15-20).

As a matter of fact, the Pagans had as solid a right to believe that their Gods were real beings as the Christians had to cherish the same faith in their own. To the former *daimoniown* were quite as really Divine Beings as God and Christ were and are to the latter, and the communion table was the Lord's table to both alike.

J. T. Lloyd.

Swinburne: Man and Poet.

The Boyhood of Algernon Charles Swinburne. By his cousin, Mrs. Disney Leith. Chatto & Windus, 1917.

Life of Algernon Charles Swinburne. By Edmund Gosse. Macmillan, 1917.

No two books of the season are likely to attract such attention as the above-mentioned volumes, for well-written biographies of Algernon Swinburne were much needed. Only the first few pages of Mrs. Disney Leith's book have to do with the actual boyhood of the great poet, but the rest of the pages are of outstanding importance. Mr. Gosse's monograph is a full-dress biography in the grand manner, which is refreshing in these days of book-making and reprinted journalism.

Swinburne's own impression of the sprightly Mrs. Procter who, when near ninety, "walked like her own granddaughter," is something like that left upon the reader by these accounts of the poet's life. For Swinburne attracts one as a child, and one likes him from the time he first goes to school hugging a volume of Shakespeare under his arm. Lord St. Aldwyn, who was at Eton College with him, remembered his big red head

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and pasty complexion, but other witnesses are kinder in their recollection.

From Eton College, Swinburne went to Balliol College, Oxford, where he drew the attention of Benjamin Jowett, who had a keen eye for intellect. Oxford, that "home of lost causes," had little attraction for the fiery young poet, who was already a red Republican. He tried his prentice hand at verse, but failed to win the Newdigate with a poem entitled "The Discovery of the North-West Passage." As an undergraduate he was a failure, and he left the University without a degree, but with an excellent knowledge of Latin, Greek, French, and Italian. So fervent was his Republicanism that he hung a portrait of Orsini, who attempted to assassinate Napoleon the Little, in his sitting-room. This alarmed Swinburne's parents, who would not allow the poet to go to Paris until he had promised to do nothing to undermine the authority of the French monarchy. Swinburne's political views were well-known, and he was invited to stand for Parliament by the Reform League, at that time a body of much influence, but, on the advice of Mazzini, he wisely declined to give up poetry for politics.

Of Swinburne's personality, Mr. Gosse writes admirably. He notes the "dead pallor" of the poet's face and his "balloon of red hair," which had a faded appearance, although Swinburne was but in his thirty-third year when his biographer met him. Mr. Gosse says that Swinburne had no ear for music, save those of words; but he emphasizes the poet's "rich and flute-like voice." There is much that is interesting in Swinburne's table-talk, but on this point Mr. Gosse exercises too much restraint, with the result that the poet appears too much of a bookworm, and his poems the only incidents of his life.

Few men loved little children and was loved by them so much as Algernon Swinburne. His poems on childhood are among the most exquisite in the language; but his actual experiences were as delightful. Mrs. Disney Leith tells us that few things pleased him more than his encounter with two ragged, highway urchins, each about the height of his knee, who demanded a ha'penny and received twopence, and trotted after him. "Well, what do you want now?" "Want to kiss you." And the poet adds, in the letter describing the incident, "I needn't say whether or not I squatted down and opened my arms, and first one and then the other put her bits of arms up to my neck and kissed me so affectionately that I felt once more how much too good little children are to us."

Swinburne fluttered the dovecotes of respectability with his first series of *Poems and Ballads*, although some of the poems had already appeared in the sober *Spectator*, and the austere John Ruskin had given the book his blessing. "In power and imagination and understanding," Ruskin said, "he simply sweeps me away before him, as a torrent does a pebble." Indeed, the volume aroused as much excitement as Byron's *Don Juan* had in a previous generation. Robert Buchanan voiced the respectable view in a pamphlet, entitled *The Fleshly School of Literature*, and complained that *Poems and Ballads* were unfit reading for young ladies. Swinburne retorted with crushing effect: "I do not write for schoolgirls, I leave that to the Buchanans." The accusation of fleshliness was ill-founded, but it served to advertise the book, which was a masterpiece among masterpieces. Swinburne's vogue became extraordinary. Some idea of the poet's influence may be gathered from Canon Scott Holland, who says young men shouted the poems, sang them, flung them about to the skies and winds. Then the Canon quotes:—

> Dream that the lips once breathless
> Can quicken if they would;
> Say that the soul is deathless;
> Dream that the gods are good.
>
> Say March may wed September,
> And time divorce regret;
> But not that you remember,
> And not that I forget.

Not only University men were affected by Swinburne's verse, for G. W. Foote has told us how the poet's lyrics roused him like a trumpet-blast. One memorable day the future Freethought leader, then a young man, recited Swinburne's *Mater Triumphalis* on the hills outside Edinburgh, while his life-long friend, Joseph Wheeler, lay on the grass at his feet and applauded. Nor is this to be wondered at, for Swinburne has surpassed all other poets in the ardour of his devotion to Liberty and Freethought.

The last thirty years of his life he lived at Putney with his "best friend," Watts-Dunton, and so quietly did the years run, that Mr. Gosse has crowded the history of that period into almost as few pages. Owing to this compression, there are few good stories of the poet's life. One of the best-known is an altercation with a greedy cabman, who had asked for an excessive fare in bad language. Swinburne told him to "come down from his perch and hear how a poet could swear."

Only one love-story is recorded in Mr. Gosse's pages. Swinburne at the age of twenty-five proposed to a girl who had given him roses. He declared his passion suddenly and too impetuously, and she laughed at him. Afterwards, Swinburne, always shy and reserved, seemed only to care for literary companionship. An interesting story deals with the first meeting between Swinburne and Guy de Maupassant, in which the distinguished French novelist was rowing in the brilliant sunshine of a bay in the Riviera, when suddenly there emerged from the water beside the boat the head of Swinburne, who, while he was one of the greatest of swimmers, was the greatest of living poets. It was astonishing to Maupassant to make the acquaintance of Swinburne thus—in the middle of a bay.

When Swinburne died in 1909, there was stilled for ever a voice that had sung vigorously, melodiously, and with wonderful freshness for half a century. His genius, indeed, dazzled us so much, that his own reputation has suffered to the extent of his being regarded rather as a singer than as a seer also. But for his outspoken views about priestcraft and monarchy, he must inevitably have succeeded Tennyson as Poet Laureate. He was the last of the great world-poets who dominated the imagination of all races.

Mimnermus.

Science and Spiritualism.

VI.

(Continued from p. 214.)

A deep longing for some direct proof of existence after death has made hundreds of people accept the grossest impostures of "Spiritualism," impostures which contradict the most massive experiences of the race, and which had nothing to support them save this emotional credulity acting where direct knowledge was wholly absent.—*G. H. Lewes, "Problems of Life and Mind"* (1879), p. 168.

As to the so-called psychic forces, materializations, etc., it will be useless to busy ourselves with them here. They have attracted the attention of eminent scholars, such as Crookes, Lodge, Richet, and others, but they have yet to be demonstrated, and until this is done, it is better to try to interpret the phenomena observed by known causes. I had occasion to examine without prejudice, and with the assistance of M. Dastre, a subject with a European reputation, but our investigations, continued throughout several seances, disclosed to us nothing demonstrative.—*Gustave Le Bon, "The Evolution of Forces"* (1908), p. 352.

It should be borne in mind, as Mr. Podmore points out: "It is important to note that none of Home's manifesta-

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tions seem to have been peculiar to himself. At the outset of his career, indeed, he appears to have won no special distinction as a medium. Raps were heard at his seances; tables and chairs were moved about; the room was shaken; bells, accordions, and guitars were played under the table or even at a distance from the circle, with no hand near them; spirit voices would speak through the medium; spirit hands were felt under the tablecloth, and occasionally seen above it; spirit lights made themselves visible, and the medium himself would be levitated. But all these performances were the common property of the guild. The Fox girls, Gordon, Cooley, E. P. Fowler, Abbey Warner, and even Willis, the Harvard divinity student, were Home's rivals, and apparently, in the estimation of his contemporaries, at least his equals in all these feats. It is noteworthy that Home appears to have attracted comparatively little attention in the American Press before his journey to England." [1]

We have always been taught to believe that spiritual intelligence far transcends in knowledge and power the limited intelligence of poor, earthy, material man. All knowledge to them is an open book; nothing is hidden from them either in the illimitable ages of past time or in the equally illimitable ages of the distant future; for do they not, so Spiritualists claim, sometimes warn their earthly friends of coming danger? If the spirits are indeed so marvellously gifted, how can we explain their actions when they condescend to appear at a spiritualistic seance? With the shifting of tables and chairs like furniture removers, playing the accordion like an itinerant Italian or the guitar like a nigger minstrel, plucking dresses and coats with spiritual hands, raising the medium in the air like a professional strong man, and all the other stupid and senseless tricks performed at a Spiritualist seance, it is evident that these spirits, since leaving their human habitations, instead of gaining the enormous intellectual power claimed for them, have degenerated into childish imbecility.

However, there is no need for any intervention of spirits to account for these hooligan antics. We know perfectly well how they were manipulated; and although Home was never publicly exposed, we know, from the exposure of others, how the tricks were done.

Take, for instance, the playing of the accordion and the guitar, which was a common feature of Home's seances. Mr. Hereward Carrington, who has made a life study of the subject, and is a member of the Society for Psychical Research, and also of the American Society for Scientific Research, explains the trick as follows: The guitar is prepared beforehand with a hole in the neck for the insertion of the lazy-tongs, as they are called in America, a lattice-work contrivance of steel, which, when extended, reach out several feet, and will close up to a few inches. "Inside the guitar, which is specially constructed, is a small music-box, which may be wound up and set in motion by merely releasing a catch spring. When the seance is in full swing, the medium gains possession of the guitar, inserts the rod in the hole in the neck of the instrument, sets the machinery going, and waves the guitar over the sitters' heads, when they will have presented to them the strange phenomenon of a guitar floating in the air and performing a tune upon itself! It does not sound exactly as though the music were produced on the strings; but it is near enough for the illusion to pass, in the circumstances. At any rate, the music has never been challenged, to my knowledge." [2] The obvious reply of the medium to such a challenge would be that spirit music could not be expected to sound the same as an instrument played by human hands.

That this was the method of producing music practised by Home is confirmed by a perusal of his autobiographical work, *Incidents of My Life*, where we learn the titles of the pieces played, namely, "God Save the Queen," "Home, Sweet Home," and "The Last Rose of Summer" [1]—the very tunes found in small music-boxes.

The medium Monck also used a music-box at his seances. Says Mr. Carrington: "He would place a music-box on the table, and cover it with a cigar-box, or other box, and the sitters were at liberty to keep their hands upon this throughout the sitting. Nevertheless the music-box played at command, though the box and table could be examined, and the medium's hands were held. This effect was produced by the aid of a *second* music-box, playing the same airs as the first, and attached to the leg of the medium, just above the bend of the knee, within the trouser. When not in use the box rested beneath the knee, but when required for action it was brought around to the front of the leg, resting above the knee. The box was so arranged that pressure on a stud at the top caused it to play, the music immediately ceasing when such pressure was removed. Of course, the box on the top of the table is silent throughout, the music being under the perfect control of the medium." [2] Holding the medium's hands would make no difference, for he only had to press the stud on the top of the music-box against the under-side of the table to start the mechanism to play, and when the pressure was removed it would stop.

Sir William Crookes, the famous chemist, in his book, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, gives an account of how he, along with his brother, Dr. Huggins, and Sergeant Cox, tested Home's power of producing music from an accordion without touching the keys, and comes to the conclusion that Home succeeded under the test. But the man who suffered himself, as we have seen, to be hoodwinked and deluded by such common adventuresses as Annie Fay and Florrie Cook, was not likely to detect the imposture of the astute and tricky Home.

To make the test, Mr. Crookes, as he then was, made a round topless and bottomless cage with wooden hoops and insulated copper wire. "The height of this cage," says Mr. Crookes, "was such that it would just slip under my dining-table, but be too close to the top to allow of the hand being introduced into the interior, or to admit of a foot being pushed underneath it." Mr. Home was to get music from an accordion, newly purchased by Mr. Crookes, while holding it by one hand in this cage under the table.

Mr. J. M. Robertson, under the title "A Spiritualistic Farce," subjected this test to a drastic criticism. He says:—

> Observe, while Mr. Crookes carefully arranges a cage which shall just fit under his table and leave no room for a hand, Mr. Home is actually allowed to keep the edge of the cage a little beyond the side of the table and put his hand in freely, holding the accordion by the bottom, so that the key end hung downward. The illustrative woodcut given by Mr. Crookes shows this. The table, then, played no part whatever as a test, and the adjustment of the cage's height was a pure blind or a pure irrelevance. If Mr. Home was going to employ a new force under scientific conditions, there was no need for the table at all. He might much more convincingly have done it in the open. The investigators

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 231.

[2] Carrington, *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 197.

[1] Home, *Incidents in My Life* (1863), pp. 145-186. Also vol. ii. (Second Series; 1872), p. 121.

[2] Carrington, *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 199.

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saw that he had placed his other hand on the table, and they held his feet. All these checks could have been better employed if they sat in a free space with the accordion in the middle.[1]

Of course, under these conditions, the accordion moved and played; but Mr. Crookes states that when, after a time, Home removed his hand from the cage, the accordion still continued to play. After a very careful analysis of Mr. Crookes' statement of the proceedings, which is too long to quote here, Mr. Robertson further points out: "In all this narrative there is not a grain of scientific proof that the sounds heard really came *from the accordion under notice*. It is a well-established scientific fact that it is often extremely difficult to fix with accuracy the locality of the source of sounds. This has been brought home by ocular demonstration to thousands of people at the entertainments of Mr. Stuart Cumberland, who got persons from his audience to submit to be blindfolded on his platform, while he clicked coins in various positions near them. When I saw the performance, none of the blindfolded persons ever came near guessing where the sounds had been made; and the miscalculations were generally astonishing. A sound visibly produced at a blindfolded man's knee would be supposed by him to come from behind his head, or from some way off. Now, in the case of Mr. Crookes' accordion experiment, the whole explanation may perfectly well turn upon this. There may be, for all I know, plenty of ways of playing tricks with accordions; but I have here simply to point out that Mr. Crookes, a so-called scientific man, did not take a single precaution against this notorious form of hallucination, or against the many possible tricks by which sounds like those of an accordion could be played near at hand while attention was concentrated on the one that was visible.....It is needless to ascertain what was the particular device by which Mr. Home got another accordion played near at hand, or produced notes like those of an accordion (the investigators were evidently not anxious to ascertain the quality or timbre of the particular notes heard) from some machine about his person. He may have done the whole thing by one of those little instruments which I believe are sometimes called 'mouth accordions.' The fact that his instrument was 'generally an accordion, for convenience of portability,' as if there was any want of portability about a violin or a cornet, need hardly be dwelt upon."

We are dealing at some length with Home because, as Mr. Podmore says: "In Home and in his doings all the problems of Spiritualism are posed in their acutest form; with the marvels wrought by or through him the main defences of Spiritualism must stand or fall."[2]

(To be continued.) W. Mann.

The Two Mono-Gods.

A regular reader of the *Freethinker* has written to ask if I would oblige him with a fuller description of the distinction between the two kinds of Mono-theisms to which I briefly alluded to in my article on "Religion and Brutality." As, however, other readers of this journal may be similarly interested in the subject, I take the liberty of replying to it through the medium of its columns.

Philosophic Mono-theism is the product of that irresistible impulse of the human intellect to speculate or guess about imagined existences behind the veil of phenomena. In other words, it is the product of metaphysical speculation in its vain search for ultimate realities. Priestly Mono-theism, on the other hand, is the off-spring of human superstition, sacerdotal ambition, and arrogant pride.

The distinction between them is very analogous to that existing between mind and body. The metaphysical variety is a kind of spiritual entity or "soul"—a disembodied abstraction without temple, church, altar, fane, or any kind of sacred abode; without priesthood, Bible, or any form of ritual worship. It has, likewise, no dogmatic creed. Its tenets are not dogmas but mere postulates to be knocked down and replaced by the next metaphysical conjurer. Its Deity is a *nameless* abstraction of man—without body, and more or less without feelings and emotions. Only intellect is left, but not the intellect which *acquires* knowledge through experience and reason. But a kind of divine receptacle of self-existing cognition. In short, it is an abstraction of *knowledge*, as "whiteness" is of the quality "white" which things possess in relation to the eye. There is no such a thing as whiteness apart from white things. But the mind can think of the quality as if it were self-existent; so it can do of cognition or knowledge and call it God. It is probably found embodied in a pure form only in Greek philosophy.

Now, contrast with this bodiless abstraction of the metaphysical mind the corporeal product of the priesthood. The Theism of the latter is fully embodied in a material cult with all the self-interest, appetite, and voracity which the possession of a body entails. This spectacular manifestation is not ghostly in "texture," but is a very tangible object with substantial limbs and organs—temples and churches, sacred shrines and books, priesthoods, dogmatic creeds, and expiatory rites. This bodily incarnation of the Deity in a sacerdotal cult has been guarded by its priesthood with all the jealous care of one fully realizing the fact that when this "body" is slain its good perforce dies with it. It is, therefore, perpetuated from age to age by a deeply rooted and widely spread organization of material self-interests.

How two conceptions so diametrically opposite should become included under the same term is an instance of the treacherous imperfection of speech. The two ideas became identified in exactly the same way as all Pagan practices, rites, and festivals became Christian—by adoption and absorption.

The early Christian apologists first denounced and reviled all Pagan speculation, but later espoused its tenets by identifying them with some of its own dogmas. In this manner the speculations of Platonism and of its derivatives were, one by one, incorporated and assimilated with Christian dogma. We have a noted example of this practice in the fourth Gospel, which is simply an ingenious adaptation of Logos speculation thrown into the form of a story of a concrete life. Just as the Roman Saturnalia became the Christian Christmas, so the Mono-theism of Greek philosophy became identified and fused with that of the Jewish and Christian priesthoods—that is, with promoted and exalted Jahveh. Ever since, this Deity has played a double role. He is a metaphysical Mono-God in "learned" theological treatises and metaphysical disquisitions, but simply a tribal-God, whose tribe is the Church, in the current religion of Christendom.

Keridon.

Man is by birth so poor a creature that he is good only when he dreams. He needs illusions to make him do what he ought to do for the love of good. This slave has need of fear and of lies to perform his duty. You get the mass of men to make sacrifices only by giving them assurances that they will be paid back. The self-denial of the Christian is only a shrewd calculation, an investment for the sake of the kingdom of God.—*Renan.*

[1] The *National Reformer*, September 20, 1891.

[2] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 223.

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Acid Drops.

"Speak, that I may know you," said a wise old philosopher, and no one better illustrates the wisdom of the saying than our Bishop of London. He was interviewed recently by Mr. Raymond Blaythwayt, and as that gentleman thinks there is "no finer representative of Anglicanism than Dr. Ingram," either the reflection hits the Anglican Church hard, or interviewer and interviewed were well matched. The mental calibre, and perhaps the truthfulness, of Bishop Ingram are well shown by his informing Mr. Blaythwayt that when he first addressed a crowd of East End men, he was asked by them to talk on "Cain's wife." But, said the Bishop, "I soon settled Cain's wife, and we buried the poor old lady in Bethnal Green that afternoon, and I do not believe they've dug her up since." And to this piece of history Mr. Blaythwayt adds that the Bishop's addresses to Atheists in Victoria Park "were for years the most popular and effective things in the whole religious life of that part of the world."

To begin with, the Bishop of London never gave any addresses to Atheists. His lectures were delivered, either from a Christian Evidence platform to a crowd of Christians, or to other Christians in the hall of Oxford House. And their effectiveness may be gauged by the fact that Freethought propaganda was never more flourishing in Victoria Park than during the period of Bishop Ingram's activity. The only time that the Bishop came to direct grips with Atheists was on the few occasions on which he summoned courage enough to offer opposition to Mr. Cohen at the conclusion of the latter's lectures. And on that we will only say that his appearance was much enjoyed—by Atheists. Finally, Bishop Ingram's capacity for meeting Atheists in discussion is sufficiently disclosed by his impression that the cardinal point in dispute is "Cain's wife"—a subject that we have never heard any Atheist waste five minutes' serious discussion over. The Bishop has built up a perfect legend concerning the fearful onslaughts he made on Atheism in East London, and he has told the story so often that he appears to have convinced himself of its truth. But he has always been careful enough never to tell the story to an audience conversant with the facts.

The religious mind moves very slowly. The *Tablet* describes Martin Luther as a "religious revolutionist." So he was, four hundred years ago!

The *Christian Science Journal* contains four pages of names of Christian Science practitioners in Great Britain, all of whom are described as "members of the Mother Church." The patients have our entire sympathy.

Commenting on an article on cemetery reform, the *New Church Magazine* says "the author has nothing to say about what takes place after the funeral. This is what really matters." Was the writer thinking of the insurance money?

Providence, who counts the hairs of our heads and takes special care of sparrows, appears somewhat indifferent to the fate of children, three of whom were burnt to death at Spennymoor, their mother being away only ten minutes.

A daily paper refers to the greater number of boys being born as a "timely intervention of Providence." Surely, "timely" is not the right word, and the intervention is tardy, unless the War is to rage for another twenty years.

The *Tablet*, one of the leading Catholic periodicals, has some interesting remarks on Mexico: "The new constitution of Mexico appears to be established on a frankly anti-Christian basis. No monk or nun or priest is allowed to teach in any primary school. The religious are disposed of in the following paragraph: 'The State cannot recognize any compact, agreement, or contract, which will tend to lower, lose, or sacrifice the liberty of man, either through work, education, or religious vow. Therefore, the law will not tolerate monastic orders, nor permit the establishment of such by any denomination, for any object whatever.'" All churches, colleges, and seminaries are to become the property of the State, as well as future churches. Marriage is treated as a civil compact, and the clergy are forbidden to join political associations. No wonder the Catholics do not approve of present-day Mexico.

Religious fanaticism is not dead, and recently a fine exhibition of it occurred at Beckenham. A War-shrine erected in All Saints' Church grounds was denounced by Protestant bigots, and as a result of the language used the War-shrine was totally destroyed at night-time. How these Christians do love one another!

Rev. G. C. Martin, speaking before the Glasgow Christian Endeavour Union said: "the Christian Endeavour Movement was the one thing that was linking all the nations together at the present moment." Hear, hear! Look how they are linked together! It is a Christian endeavour—to kill as many as possible in the shortest time.

Rev. Professor Morton, of Glasgow, says that those who advocate Sunday labour on the land forget how easy it would be for God to frustrate their efforts "By a single touch of His hand on the atmosphere all their labour would be in vain." Now we get the secret of the vile weather we have been having. God has put his hand on the atmosphere. And whenever God interferes there is invariably trouble.

We are very pleased to see that the National Union of Teachers is inclined to resist the introduction of clergymen into the schools as substitutes for teachers. At the Annual Conference, on April 12, a resolution was passed promising support to any teacher who refuses to work in a school in which a clergyman of military age and fitness is substituted for a teacher doing military duty. So far, good, although the resolution is not an heroic one. It throws the responsibility upon the individual teacher, although the very reason for the existence of a trades union is to ensure co-operative action. And we confess that we should have liked to have seen a very strong protest against the introduction of clergymen into the schools on any pretence. There are very few teachers who do not fully recognize the evil of such a procedure. The presence of the clergy in the schools is a menace to all who value effective education and place any importance upon the status of teachers.

In view of the fact that the whole trend of modern legislation for the last fifty years has been to get the clergy out of the schools, it is a little remarkable that one of the first efforts of the "Business Government" to improve our educational system is to get them back again. It is obvious that in the village schools especially, the arrival of the vicar as an "emergency teacher" will make the position of the head teacher very difficult. In the large towns we assume that Anglican clergy, Nonconformist ministers, Roman Catholic priests, Jewish rabbis, and Swedenborgian preachers will have equal rights of entry to the schools, and as none of them know anything of the requirements of the Code, the machinery of modern education, or the teaching methods of up-to-date schools, they are likely to be about as useful as the piano-tuners who have been sent to cultivate the land.—*Star*.

The British Army's exploits in Palestine have been made the occasion of an outpouring of sentiment by editors who cater for the religious public, and some lament the changes in the Holy Land made during recent years by the introduction of the railway. This reminds us of the story of the enthusiastic American lady-tourist who stood on the railway platform at Jerusalem and remarked, "To think that Jesus went on business from this very station."

Punch has the following ironic remarks: "I swear by Almighty God that I will speak the truth, no nonsense, and won't be foolish," was the form of oath taken by a witness at a recent case in the Bloomsbury County Court. It was

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explained to him that this was only suitable for persons taking office under the Crown.

It is evident from a statement made in the *Daily Telegraph* of April 11 that when the Rev. A. J. Waldron gave up his post as Vicar of Brixton he lost nothing of consequence in a monetary sense. His successor reports the year's income—we believe it is a little better than it was—as £117 18s., out of which he was compelled to spend £116 for repair of vicarage house. He hopes, he says, to recover some of this from Mr. Waldron.

An advertisement, running to about two columns, appeared in a recent issue of the *Times*, headed "Will He Really Respond?" The advertisement consists of a reprint of a tract intended for circulation in the Army, and consists of a string of pious anecdotes of almost unbelievable stupidity. But the gem consists of a testimonial from Field-Marshall Lord Grenfell to the effect that the tract is "fully adapted for the officers and men of the Army." No more comprehensive insult to the British Army was ever offered than this. And Lord Grenfell owes the Army an apology. A body of men to whom such tracts are acceptable would offer a marked case of cerebral degeneration. If one were upholding the thesis that belief in religion implies softening of the brain, the tract and its endorsement would go far towards proving it.

Dean Wace, of Canterbury, says: "A War like this is undoubtedly a judgment, it springs from the sins of men." And the *Church Gazette* describes Dean Wace as "the premier priest of the Church of England." It does not say much for the mentality of the rank and file.

Thomas Grubb was charged at Cheltenham with having broken into a house and stolen a stewing jar. After being some five weeks in prison, he informed the magistrate that he had found the need of a Saviour. We do not doubt that in the least. Many people in prison for five weeks would feel just that way. Continuing, Thomas Grubb said that, with God's help, he intended to lead a better life, and it was only by looking to God that he dared hope. Evidently a most pious gentleman, and one who had been, so said the vicar of St. Paul's, very helpful in the Church. As, however, the police proved that this robbery was only one of a series that had been going on for years, Thomas Grubb received a sentence of two months' hard labour. And the vicar is minus his helper.

In Finsbury and Islington more than thirty War shrines have been erected. We have nothing to say against a suitable memorial to men who have lost their lives in the War, and much to say for it, but these War shrines are just one more illustration of the way in which the clergy are seeking to exploit the War in the interests of sectarianism.

Rev. C. L. Drawbridge, Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, writes to the *Church Times* that some of their lecturers are "converted Atheists." We have heard of these converted Atheists before, and we should be interested in knowing who they are. Usually they are only known as Atheists *after* their conversion. Christians might retort they had the grace to hide it before. All the same, it enhances their value, even though they lack a local habitation and a name.

The Rev. Dr. Murphy has been enlightening a Belfast audience on the question of "Has Christianity Failed?" His conclusion is that Christianity has failed in Germany, but nowhere else. It has not failed in Britain, or Italy, or France, or Belgium. Well, if it had only failed in Germany, that would have been a failure on a sufficiently large scale. But in what sense has it failed in Germany, and nowhere else? Is it because Germany has trusted to get its own way by force? And is that quite a new thing in the history of nations? Were armies and navies unknown outside Germany? or have not all nations reckoned their greatness in terms of their ability to exercise military pressure whenever the occasion should arise for its expression? Dr. Murphy says that Germany has repudiated the teaching, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," and says, "Blessed are the valiant, for they shall make the earth their throne." Presumably, Britain, with six million soldiers under arms and the largest fleet in the world, is still trusting to meekness to inherit the earth! Of all cant, the cant of the pulpit is the worst. Honesty there seems a sheer impossiblity.

We wonder what Dr. Murphy would make of the Government's recent refusal to appoint a day of national prayer for a speedy victory? They are asking for more men, but decline to waste time praying for victory without the men. Of course, Christianity has not failed. It produces as many hypocrites now as it ever did.

Says Dean Inge: "As for the survival of the physical organism by which we are known to others as individuals, when we think of our bodily and mental make-up, with all its disharmonies, its inherited and acquired defects, which have fretted and tormented us all our days, do we want it resuscitated in another state of existence?" Apparently Dean Inge does not. But if this does not survive, what does? And without it how can it be me or you? All that is required to see the absurdity of the belief in survival is to reason out its corolleries and consequences.

Dean Inge thinks we have heard too much about praying for victory. He says: "It is more in accord with the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount to commend our cause to God's hands in a few earnest words and then attend to munitions and recruiting." We fancy that Dean Inge must have a different version of the Sermon on the Mount to the one we possess. We have not the opinion of the New Testament Jesus that Dean Inge has; but, for the life of us, we cannot picture him engaged in making munitions or serving behind a machine-gun.

There is no relief for the Bishop of London. The treasurer of the London Diocesan Financial Board has reported anent the Bishop's offer to surrender his income if certain conditions were fulfilled that the Board cannot accept the proposal without an Act of Parliament. So the poor Bishop must still struggle along under his burden of £10,000 a year. One would think there must be some way of getting rid of the money if one really wished to.

There were nearly 1,000 fewer confirmations in the Church of England last year, and about half a million less received in the shape of voluntary offerings. The last, we can well believe, was a cause of great regret.

Father Bernard Vaughan describes Protestantism as "dead as scrapped iron," but he adds, "the Catholic Church is as vigorous and as enterprising as ever." Yet nearly 50,000 parsons get a living out of the "dead" Protestantism in this country alone.

Germany celebrates the fourth centenary of the day when Martin Luther nailed his famous theses to the church door in Wittenberg. Surely an extraordinary proceeding on the part of a nation of "Atheists."

In a pastoral letter signed by three Essex Nonconformist ministers, readers are told that "men of all shades of opinion believe that God is allowing the War to continue until we beeome a God-fearing people." In that case, the War will never end; a prospect which ought to appeal to ministers of religion exempted from military service.

What a curious world the clergy do live in! All things are judged from the ecclesiastical standpoint. In the *Church Gazette* for March there is an article on the Kikuyu controversy, around which, the editor adds, "centre all the important issues of the future." And this after nearly three years of a world-war. When will the clergy realize that they are, as a class, out of harmony with modern life.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 29, South Place Institute, South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—May 6, South Place Institute, South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.

W. Fitzpatrick.—Thanks for cuttings.

T. Wood.—It is depressing to reflect on the prevalence of the type of mind to which such pamphlets as those you enclose are acceptable. Thanks for cuttings.

H. T. D.—We certainly should contest the proposition that religion offers direct encouragement to dishonesty.

E. Stewart Ross.—We are pleased to have the memento of one of our lost soldiers of the Army of Freethought. Thanks also for cutting, but the subject was dealt with a week or so back. Your appreciation of the *Freethinker* is valued.

S. L.—Sorry we cannot use the MSS. We are constantly compelled to return articles because of their length. We prefer them not to exceed two or two and a half columns.

T. W. Haughton.—When possible, we act as you suggest with regard to persons criticized in these columns.

Frances Ivor.—We are not pleased to find that our estimate of the behaviour of the press was correct, neither are we surprised. We simply know British newspapers. And there is not a more complete imposture in the country than our "Free Press." It was not a free press in peace time; it is still worse under war conditions.

Gramatiko.—The correction was quite justified. Thanks.

E. Anderson.—Next week.

C. W. Marshall.—Thanks; but we almost blushed.

Pax.—Pleased you found last week's "Views and Opinions" so much to your taste. But you wield a pretty pen yourself, and your judgment is the more to be valued on that account.

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.

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

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

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.

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 details of the course of lectures at South Place Institute have now been arranged, and will be found on the last page of this issue. The first lecture will be on April 29 by Mr. Cohen on "Religion Before and After the War." The other two evenings will be filled by Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Harry Snell. We hope that London Freethinkers will do their best to make these meetings as widely known as possible. We must largely rely upon their efforts—under present conditions—for the success of the meetings. Some conveniently sized advertisements of the three meetings have been printed, and those willing to assist in their distribution would oblige by writing to Miss Vance at the N.S.S. Offices, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.

We publish this week two pamphlets which, we think, will be found very useful for propagandist purposes. The first is a new and revised edition of Mr. Foote's *Christianity and Progress*, to this has been added a chapter on "Mohammedanism and the Sword." Together the two make a most effective piece of writing, and those who wish to read our late leader at his best will be able to do so in this pamphlet. Many another writer, fonder of parading his reading than was G. W. Foote, would have made a couple of volumes out of *Christianity and Progress*. But it was not his custom to place all his wares in the front window, and only those conversant with the subject can properly appreciate all that is contained in a page or even a paragraph. There is, indeed, a philosophy of the rise of Christianity in the opening paragraphs, and a complete exposure of Christianity's claim to stand as a force for progress in all that follows. *Mohammedanism and the Sword* now appears in pamphlet form for the first time.

The second pamphlet is a reissue of Mr. Mann's excellent articles on *Christianity and Morality*. Those who read these articles as they appeared will, we are sure, be pleased to have them in a more handy form. The pamphlet will supply Freethinkers with exactly the kind of information needed in their talks with Christians, and few Christians will be able to read it without having their inherited notions on the subject seriously disturbed. Not the least valuable part of the pamphlet is the authorities cited for every statement made. As a guide to reading this will be found of value to many. Each pamphlet is in a neat cover, price twopence, or by post twopence halfpenny.

We hope that our readers will pay special attention to what was said last week on the subject of "returns." It appears to be certain that a decree—we think that is the correct word in these days of democratic dictatorship—will shortly be issued, forbidding the issue of papers on sale or return. This means a diminution of income at a time when every loss in that direction is a serious item. The only way, therefore, for those interested in the *Freethinker* to get it displayed will be for them to either get their newsagent to run the risk of ordering an extra copy or so for display, or themselves guaranteeing the newsagent against loss by taking the extra copy if unsold. And, in any case, we hope that all our readers will make it a point of ordering their copy weekly, and so make sure of getting it.

Birmingham did well in honouring, on Saturday, April 14 the centenary of the birth of George Jacob Holyoake. A very appreciative letter was read from Earl Grey, in which he described Holyoake as the "architect of a great voluntary co-operative commonwealth," and declared that he had "rendered a greater service to our country than all the legislators at Westminster." Doubtless Earl Grey meant well by this expression, but the compliment does not strike us as excessive. Unless Holyoake had done more than our Westminster legislators, his services to the country would not have been nearly so valuable as they were.

Naturally, our truth-speaking press carefully refrained from mentioning that this great worker in the Co-operative Movement was an Atheist. It would never have done to have told the truth in this matter. And it is highly significant that the two men who did so much for working-class education in this country—G. J. Holyoake and Robert Owen, from whom the former derived his inspiration—should both have been Atheists. And, curiously enough, it was religious antagonism that did its best to strangle the Owen Movement, as it has tried to strangle so many social movements since.

The conditions of railway travelling are such this year that it has been found advisable to once more hold the National Secular Society's Whit-Sunday Conference in London. A large Conference can hardly be expected in the circumstances, but we hope that such Branches of the N.S.S. as can send delegates will make a special effort to do so. Those that cannot may be represented through some London member who will be attending the Conference. It is important to note that all resolutions for the Conference Agenda should be sent to the N.S.S. Secretary as early as possible.

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At the last meeting of the Executive it was resolved to make a suggestion to the Branches that no additions be made to the list of Vice-Presidents this year. If the present is a period of reconstruction for the Churches, it must be no less so for the N. S. S. And the settling of the Bowman case—we are still awaiting judgment from the House of Lords—can scarcely leave the N. S. S. unaffected, whichever way the judgment goes. A thorough overhauling of the Constitution and the Executive machinery of the N. S. S. may become necessary.

The freedom of the press is a subject that should concern everyone, and we are, therefore, not surprised to find that there is considerable indignation at the War Office prohibition on sending the *Nation* abroad. An embargo on the publication of news that could be of use to the enemy we can all understand and appreciate. An embargo upon a newspaper's opinion of the Government is quite another matter. And for this to be done by the War Office makes the suppression the more unpleasant. It really raises the question of whether the country is governed by the War Office, or the War Office controlled by the nation. And we are at War to prevent the dominance of a military class—in Germany. When Parliament reassembles we have no doubt the question will be raised. We have still the House of Lords. The House of Commons is almost past redemption.

Our Business Manager tells us he would be pleased if those whose subscriptions to the *Freethinker* are due, or overdue, would remit as early as possible. As the information is not of much use to us, personally, we hereby give it as much publicity as is possible.

The French Revolution.

X.

The Aftermath.

(*Continued from p. 235.*)

The fall of Robespierre had enabled the Conservative element in the National Convention to recover political power after fourteen months of eclipse and humiliation. Having tolerated the Reign of Terror, and semi-Socialist measures such as the law of "maximum," as long as military necessity left them no safe alternative, they were determined now to withdraw all their concessions, declare war on the Democratic Party, and establish the supremacy of wealth on a firm footing.

The working-class of Paris, who had rejoiced with everyone else over the fall of Robespierre, soon had reason to think the change of masters a questionable one. If Robespierre and the Committees under the "Terror" had been cruel, the Tallien gang now in power were cynically corrupt. The former had threatened a percentage of the people with the guillotine; the latter condemned the whole populace to slow starvation, for the new Government not wishing to continue the policy of taxing the rich, they had expedient to an unlimited issue of paper money, with the result that prices rose to famine pitch. The abolition of the law of "maximum" removed any check on this tendency.

Against the new tyranny the democrats had to contend with weakened and demoralized forces. The main seat of their power, the "sections" or ward-meetings of Paris, which had enabled them to overthrow the throne and later the Girondists, still existed in name, but their powers had been cut down by the short-sighted policy of the late Terrorist Government. The Cordeliers' Club had been suppressed when the Hebertists were guillotined. The municipality had first been reduced to a packed body of Robespierre's adherents, and now that these had been executed with their leader, had practically ceased to exist. There remained the Jacobins' Club. After the fall of Robespierre, this society became the headquarters of all who still clung to the cause of the Democratic Republic, and the centre of opposition to the "Thermidorian" reaction.

The wealthy, now in power, did not hesitate to organize physical force against the Jacobins. Freron, one of the leading lights of the "Thermidorians," took the lead in this. One of the most odious characters in the Revolution, this man had formerly been an ultra-Democrat and "Montagnard," and had distinguished himself, as a commissioner of the Convention at Toulon in company with Barras, by shooting the captured Royalists in batches, as Collot d'Herbois had done at Lyons. Now, having feathered his nest, Freron transferred his ruffianly activities to the other side, and began to organize the wealthy young men of Paris, armed with loaded sticks, to break up meetings of the Democrats. The "jeunesse doree," as they were called, were reinforced by numbers of Girondists and Royalists, who, released from the prisons, openly paraded their opinions and sought vengeance on the defeated party.

The Democrats now reaped the fruit of their past excesses and follies, particularly of their folly in destroying Danton, their great leader. Led by bankrupt politicians, like the Terrorists, Billaud-Varennes and Collot d'Herbois, they added one tactical blunder to another. The Convention had decreed the arrest and prosecution of Carrier, the perpetrator of the "noyades" at Nantes. The Jacobins must needs defend him and plan his rescue. After a disturbance in Paris, the Convention seized the occasion to suspend the sittings of the Club; and Freron's young men having smashed the premises and bludgeoned the members, the Jacobin organization ceased to exist. Carrier was tried and guillotined.

The Convention now recalled to their seats the seventy-five Girondists who, in October, 1793, had been imprisoned for protesting against the expulsion of their leaders. The reaction now redoubled, not merely against the Terrorists, but against the whole Democratic movement. The busts of Marat were destroyed, and his body turned out of the Pantheon (February, 1795). Soon afterwards the surviving leaders of the Girondists, including Isnard, who had uttered that threat about destroying Paris which had precipitated the fall of his party, were invited back to the Convention. This amounted to a definite repudiation of the policy of May 31, 1793. One or two of the Girondists had become open Royalists during their banishment from public life, and all of them took the lead in accelerating the anti democratic movement. It is to be noted that those who were recalled were the most rancorous and violent of the old Girondist party, who had in former days continually sought to destroy Danton, Marat, and the democratic leaders generally. The milder Girondists, by an irony of fate, had all perished in the Reign of Terror.

The reactionaries now (March, 1795), attacked the ex-members of the Terrorist Government, Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois, together with Barere and another, and they were called to account before the Convention. Their former colleagues, such as Carnot, defended them to no purpose. On April 1 the working-class of Paris, under the impulse of hunger, invaded the Convention, demanding "bread, the Constitution of 1793, and the liberation of the patriots." The putting in force of the Democratic Constitution was now, in fact, the daily demand of the party. They should, of course, have asked for it a year sooner, before the smash of "Thermidor" had given the reactionaries their chance. The middle classes and Freron's young men now came

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to the rescue of the Convention. Militarism, for the first but not the last time, was summoned to the help of wealth in the person of General Pichegru, who had conquered Holland the preceding autumn. The disturbance was put down, and the ex-Terrorists condemned to transportation to Guiana.

The workers rose again, for the last time in the Revolution, on May 20, 1795. Exasperated by the enormous rise in prices and the insolence of the *jeunesse doree* (who openly jeered at the starvation of the populace, holding up loaves of bread and saying: "This is the deputies' bread, not yours!") the common people marched once again on the Convention armed with pikes and fire-arms, and still demanding "bread and the Constitution of 1793." A deputy named Feraud was shot dead by mistake for the hateful Freron. This time the majority of the Convention fled in panic. The Radical rump, under Romme, remained in the hall, and proceeded to vote everything the people demanded, the armed insurgents beating their drums in elation at every fresh vote. Then, once more, Freron's bands entered and restored order; the mob were turned out at the point of the bayonet; the majority resumed their seats, and declared what had been done null and void. During the following days the Parisian populace remained under arms threatening the Convention; but their organization was broken; the armed middle-classes marched on the working-class quarters and disarmed them; and the revolt was at an end. Romme and five of his colleagues were condemned to the guillotine, Romme and another stabbing themselves dead in court. About sixty other members of the "Mountain" were imprisoned. The Democratic Party was crushed.

In the south of France, meanwhile, the Royalists and other reactionaries were taking the law into their own hands, and avenging wholesale all that they had suffered under the Reign of Terror. A new Reign of Terror, in fact, was instituted against the Republicans. Bands calling themselves "Companies of Jesus," and "Companies of the Sun," went about killing every Democrat they could hunt down. There were prison massacres as horrible as those of September, 1792, but committed by the Royalists this time, and with no pretence of trial or discrimination. Three hundred of the Democratic Party were burnt to death in a shed at Lyons. Commissioners of the Convention, notably Isnard, the returned Girondist, encouraged the well-to-do to hound down and exterminate the defeated Revolutionists. Needless to say, historians who dwell severely enough on the excesses of the "Red Terror" of 1793-4, gloze over and palliate the yet more frightful excesses of the "White Terror" of 1795.

The working-classes of France had given their support to the Revolution, and fought resolutely and desperately for "liberty and equality," under the impression that these words meant the abolition of privilege, and of the subjection of one man to another's will. They now found that the wealthy, for whom, in the first instance, they had risen, meant by "liberty and equality" no more than liberty for themselves to do as they liked with their property, and that elusive sham which we know as "equality before the law." After the crushing of the last Paris insurrection, the Convention dropped the last pretence of wishing to put in force the Democratic Constitution of 1793. A committee of Girondists and men of the "Marsh" was appointed to frame a new Constitution. On their recommendation, universal suffrage was abolished, and the legislative power vested in two Chambers or Councils, elected, by indirect voting, by those only who paid direct taxes. Hardly a voice, now that the "Mountain" was destroyed, was lifted against the abolition of universal suffrage. One of those who did protest was Thomas Paine. This famous man, imprisoned by the Commitiee of Public Safety during the "Terror," had recovered his liberty after the fall of Robespierre; but, unlike many victims of the "Terror," he did not allow his experiences to prejudice him against democracy. The most popular argument against continuing universal suffrage was, of course, that it had been responsible for the "Terror"—an argument that came very badly from those who, like the majority of the Convention, had supported the "Terror" in its worst forms, either from mere cowardice, or from a sincere belief in its necessity to the national defence. A more interesting argument, as it anticipates somewhat the economic reasoning of Mr. W. H. Mallock in modern times, was that put forward by one member of the Convention, who said that the manual workers were an idle and unthrifty class, dependent for their living on the men with money and brains, and that, therefore, the latter alone ought to have any voice in the control of the State!

(To be concluded.) Robert Arch.

The Monarch of Cereals.

IV.

(*Continued from p. 229.*)

In the cultivation of the cereal plants no return for toil and care of the crops is forthcoming until the year has rolled round. Among all agricultural peoples the harvest was a season of rejoicing, particularly when a bountiful crop rewarded the labours of the country side. In England and other lands the harvest home was a period of revelry, and many were the quaint customs that accompanied the festival right down to recent times. But with the coming of modern machinery and the opening up of new countries for corn culture, the picturesque observances of the past are everywhere disappearing. One ancient feature, however, has been retained. It has long been the habit of the Irish peasant to journey to Britain to work in the harvest fields, and the corn lands of France and Germany were annually visited before the War by thousands of Italians, and the various races of agrarian Austria. Italy also sends shiploads of her people to the grain fields of the Argentine at the time of harvest, and these wanderers return to their native land each season at the conclusion of their task. This migration of labour has grown from more to more in America. June is the maiden month for the wheat harvest in the States, and many of the workers move northwards when the southern crop is garnered and the cereal has ripened in the cooler latitudes. All sorts and conditions of men co-operate in the harvesting of the vast grain areas of the middle West. Dondlinger informs us that a large number of foreigners, notably Scandinavians, are to be numbered among these toilers and that—

> he has found the city banker again seeking in the harvest fields during a brief vacation the health and pleasures experienced in younger years; the refined college youth earning the means with which to finish his course in the East; the Western pioneer making a desperate effort to keep the wolf from the door of the shanty that sheltered his family, and to save the homestead by paying the interest on the mortgage which drought and frontier misfortunes had placed upon it; the dreamy-faced wanderer who merely drifts with his environment; and the coarse, hard-featured criminal and ex-convict.

The leading factors in the increased yield per acre experienced in modern years are improved methods of drilling the seed, fertilization, drainage, irrigation,

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selection of seed, crop rotation, and superior ploughing and cultivation. From this it follows that extensive farming under which wheat is simply sown and harvested renders smaller returns per acre than intensive cultivation, where every known requirement of the developing cereal receives unremitting attention from seed time to maturity. This distinction is clearly displayed in Australian wheat statistics. Outside Tasmania, the area under wheat in the Australian colonies, increased in most instances considerably during the period 1873-1898. Yet the yield decreased, in some cases, more than one-third:—

> During the ninth decade in New South Wales the increase in acreage was slight and the decrease in yield insignificant; but in the next eight years the acreage increased nearly four-fold, while the yield fell off about one-third.

New countries, naturally, lend themselves to extensive agriculture, and France, a long cultivated State, presents the other side of the picture. Good farming in Gaul is providing a more generous return, despite the fact that poorer and poorer soil is being brought under the plough. The average yield on French farms in 1840 was 14·6. bushels per acre; in 1850 it had risen to 15·6. A steady increase in wheat yield is noted in France over a period of nearly seventy years. In Britain, from 1871 to 1898, the wheat area fell over one-third, while the yield increased one-sixth. During these years the wheat fields of France increased one-eleventh, but the crop increased less than one-ninth. The progress of scientific farming in France has been as great as in England, and the reason of the apparent anomaly is suggestive:—

> In increasing her acreage France had to utilize lands of lower yield, thus reducing the average yield of all, while the United Kingdom raised the average by just the opposite process, namely, by reducing her acreage in ceasing to sow to wheat those lands of such a low yield as to be unprofitable.

The decline of wheat culture in Britain was due to the fact that corn was imported from the virgin soils of America and elsewhere at a price so small that the home grower could not raise wheat at a profit although our yield is so high.

Considerable uncertainty seems to exist concerning the causes determining the yield of the American wheat crops. The yield varies greatly in the different States. From 1866 to 1886 the average crop was 12·2 bushels per acre, while in the succeeding twenty years it was 13·7 only. Taking the States as a whole the yield is poor compared with that of Britain. The average of England in 1914 reached 32·34 bushels, while that of Scotland in the same year was a splendid crop of 42·31 bushels. According to Columella, the ancient Romans reaped from 19 to 27 bushels of grain per acre, and a very serious decline is shown by the fact that in Christian England from 1200 to 1500 the crop raised averaged a wretched yield of from four to eight bushels only. In Philadelphia, as late as 1791, wheat appears to have averaged below eight bushels per acre. The yield in the same region has more than doubled since that date. The richest American crops are, probably, those of the Pacific north-west. Soil and climate are eminently favourable to the cereal in that area, and bumper crops of sixty or seventy bushels have been grown in exceptional seasons.

Fifty years ago Spain raised so much wheat that she was a large exporter of the cereal to England and elsewhere. She is now an importing country, many million bushels of foreign wheat are at present needed for her people. Most of the wheat-producing nations have, however, increased their crops, but, probably, not one of them, not even Russia, has maintained the ratio demanded by increase of population. In 1872 Russia was Britain's main source of supply, sending us more than four times as much wheat as she sent us in 1900. Germany and France now need, practically, all their native wheat for home consumption, although, in 1872, they respectively exported to England 910,000 and 660,000 quarters (reckoning a quarter as eight imperial bushels or 480 pounds). Canada, Argentina, and the States are now the chief countries upon which we depend for our grain. In 1872, Argentina exported no wheat to us, but, in 1900, she shipped to England 4,322,000 quarters, while the United States, which, in 1872, exported 2,030,000 quarters only to Britain, sent in 1900 13,561,000 quarters to our shores.

The cultivation of one kind of plant season after season on the same soil exhausts the earth, while weakening the crops and rendering them less resistent to disease. Rotation of crops is, therefore, adopted to overcome these disadvantages, and the modern farmer arranges his sowings in such a way that roots or leguminous plants succeed his corn crops. Various methods are followed in different countries, but they are nothing more than local modifications of the method of alternating roots, peas, beans, clovers, etc., with cereal crops as it is practised in the common four-course rotation—roots, barley, clover, wheat. Under this system the clover is ploughed up in the fall of the year, the nitrogen stored up in the clover roots being retained in the soil for the sustenance of the succeeding cereal crop. In ancient Egypt crops were rotated, and the Romans adopted this scheme. Fallowing the land was also a custom of the Roman agriculturist, a practice still extensively followed. When arable land ceases to yield a fair return it is ploughed and permitted to rest in order to recuperate. The three-field system, so general for centuries in England, was, probably, of Roman origin. This method consisted in raising wheat the first year, barley or oats in the second, while the land lay in fallow for the third. In the eighteenth century, with the introduction of clover and lucerne into England, this wasteful fallow system was avoided by growing these green crops in the season previously sacrificed to fallow.

Pioneer farming in America proved extremely indifferent to the inevitable exhaustion of the soil. The general method was to produce crop after crop until the virgin earth had yielded up its virginity and become incapable of raising fruitful harvests, and then to abandon this exploited soil in favour of pastures new. Vast areas were impoverished in consequence, and science has been compelled to intervene to teach the improvident agriculturist the true system of economy. It has been proved experimentally that plots of land on which wheat is rotated with maize or potatoes return twice the number of bushels as the "best continuous wheat crop," while

> Land which produced three crops of wheat and one cultivated crop in a period of four years, gave almost as much wheat and more profitable returns than did the land which produced four crops of wheat in succession.

In the more advanced American States agriculture has now reached a high stage of efficiency, and the prodigal methods of the past are slowly disappearing in all parts of the Republic.

Irrigation is now playing a useful part in corn culture, and its future is brimful of promise. Before the dawn of history its importance was appreciated, and in the evolution of agriculture in the two hemispheres, the English-speaking peoples have utilized irrigation on a very extensive scale. For thousands of years artificial

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watering has been practised in Egypt, India, China, and Persia. The old Greeks and Romans employed it, and the latter introduced it into Gaul and Spain. In the Middle Ages the Moors irrigated the Iberian Peninsula and made it the garden of Europe, while in ancient America the Peruvians turned irrigation to useful account. In modern Italy wheat is extensively irrigated, and the system is now in operation in Australia, where immense areas originally covered with scrub are now luxuriant wheat fields, orchards, and orangeries. A fine example of British enterprize is the great Nile dam at Assuan, by means of which millions of acres of wheat are artificially watered. This magnificent dam, designed by Sir W. Willcocks, was completed in 1902:—

> It is the largest irrigation dam in existence, and the reservoir has a storage capacity of over thirty billion cubic feet. The largest increase in irrigated area in recent years has been made in British India, where about 30,000,000 acres have been reclaimed or made secure for cultivation.....It is estimated that 80,000,000 acres more can be reclaimed in India.....India has the largest reservoir in the world. It covers an area of 21 square miles, and it was constructed for irrigating in Rajputana. It is known as the great tank of Dhebar.

The importance of irrigation will be vividly realized when we remember that even in our temperate climate it was ascertained by Gilbert and Lawes at Rothamsted that an acre of wheat in five months and eighteen days evaporated through its leaves not less than 335¼ tons of moisture.

(*To be continued.*) T. F. Palmer.

Correspondence.

RELIGION IN THE ARMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—My communications to the Editor of my favourite paper have been very few—for which, no doubt, he sincerely thanks me. However, as I have been overseas for some time now, serving my country so far as I was allowed, I thought a few words from an Army Freethinker might prove acceptable.

As to my reason for joining the Army, I reply that, although a lover of peace and a great opponent to war, I considered my country was fighting a just cause, and, to a certain extent, in defence of some of my ideals; and therefore I felt it my duty to assist my country. Even looking on the War as two evils, I feel sure I am assisting the lesser. Anyhow, my conscience told me I ought to do something to help, and I did.

It is chiefly my career as a Freethinker in the Army I wish to write about. So to start at the beginning. As a civilian, I was a law clerk, and at the call for men I volunteered, but for a long time was unsuccessful. I was told I was of no use to the military. As the call for men became more and more insistent, I tried again and again, and was eventually accepted as an Army clerk. I passed the test, signed all the papers, and everything went well until I came before the Recruiting Officer to be *sworn* in. He listened to my request for Affirmation without understanding. On my going into details and explaining the matter, and informing him I was entitled to affirm, and stating my ground, viz., "That I had no religious belief," the poor man seemed overcome. He expressed regret that one so young as I did not understand the Bible, which told how the world began, etc. To this I gently replied I had not come for a discussion on the merits or demerits of the Bible, but might mention for his information and enlightenment it was through understanding the Bible that I had become irreligious. Owing to his ignorance on the subject, I had to instruct him how an Affirmation should be taken; and ultimately, with sighs for the welfare of my soul, etc., he got the job over. I must say, to his credit, he afterwards shook hands, and admitted he did not think my lack of religion would interfere with my becoming an efficient soldier.

My next passage of arms occurred when I fell ill in a camp in England, and reported "Sick." The "sick sergeant" asked for particulars of service, etc., and everything went well until he asked, "Religion?" To this my answer was, "None." "What?" he said, "what do you mean?" I replied, "I mean what I say." "Ridiculous," he replied; "you *must* have a religion in the Army." "I am afraid I shall have to be discharged," I answered, "as I have no religion either in the Army or out of it." "Oh, all right," he replied; "I'll put you down C. of E." I immediately told him that he would do no such thing, and requested to be taken before my C.O.; whereupon he unwillingly did as I insisted.

I have had the same trouble several times both at home and abroad; but by remaining firm, I have always got my way. I have been surprised, when mixing with my comrades, to find a fair number of them little less than Atheists, although they hid their views officially. I spoke to some of these earnestly on the subject, with the result that several promised to bring their lack of religion up on the next opportunity. I showed them it was this "silent consent" among Atheists which makes it so hard for them to get their rights. Why they should be afraid I don't know, as they are amply covered both by Act of Parliament and by Army Council Instructions.

In my opinion, a soldier has more opportunity to parade his Freethought than a civilian. For instance, a civilian is liable to social ostracism, and even loss of livelihood. There is no chance of a soldier losing his job through lack of religion, else, I am thinking, the Army would soon be considerably reduced. Therefore, I have often argued with these silent Freethinkers, and have received promises of action. I, personally, know soldiers who receive their *Freethinker* regularly, and yet permit themselves to be religiously classified as "C. of E." This should stop, and I think a note from you in the paper, together with a few words of advice, would do a lot towards bringing them out.

As a soldier, I think I am entitled to express an opinion as to religion in the Army generally. On paper, the British Army is very religious (and this may excuse the singing of "Onward, Christian Soldiers," etc.), almost every man being classified under one denomination or other. But from my own observation and experience, religion, even among the Christians themselves, is a back number. The greater the number of Christians, the greater the hypocrisy. In my opinion, all except the most bigoted are doubting Thomases as to their Creator's love.

I sincerely hope that all freethinking bodies, both in England and abroad, will not lag in their efforts to keep Freethought well alive; then, when the "boys" come home, I shall be surprised if the Churches do not get a bigger rebuff than they have ever experienced.

I could go on folios and folios; but I am afraid you will be getting exhausted, so I will close.

Wishing the *Freethinker* and all concerned therewith every success, and hoping soon to be once more in a position to hear some of those lectures I so much miss.

Khartoum, Soudan. Arthur Chapman.

ATHEISM IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Mr. H. George Farmer criticizes my estimate of Hebert. I am grateful for his criticism, and may say at once that I shall be very glad if he can prove me wrong; for, being an Atheist myself, I do not like running down an Atheist, even when, as it seems to me, the facts compel me.

On one point, and one alone, Mr. Farmer "has" me. I have not seen an entire copy of the *Pere Duchesne*. It is not easy to see a copy of a periodical 123 years defunct, and I have had no time or opportunity to go to Paris and delve in the museums. If Mr. Farmer can put me in the way of inspecting a copy, either in the original or in the pages of an historian, I shall be obliged for his courtesy. As it is, I depend for my first-hand acquaintance with the *Pere Duchesne* on a few paragraphs culled from it by M. Aulard in his *Political History* of the Revolution. I must refer Mr. Farmer to this work, in the original French, and will only add that

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if the *Freethinker* habitually employed the English equivalents of some of the phrases customary with Hebert, it would be prosecuted by the police as an obscene publication.

Apart from these quotations, I am, of course, dependent on historians; but I claim at least to have been discriminating in using them. I have said nothing as to the story of Hebert's having been dismissed from a situation for dishonesty before the Revolution, since I have preferred to suspend judgment on it, though I have seen no refutation of it in Aulard, Kropotkin, or any other pro-Revolutionary historian whom I have read. I have also refrained from making the usual capital out of the charge brought by Hebert against Marie-Antoinette at her trial, since he seems to have had evidence to support it.

But the main count against Hebert is, in my opinion, that at the crisis of the Revolution, when the Democracy of France had to choose between the right and the wrong road, he threw his influence violently into the wrong scale. I have pointed out that in November, 1793, the Government of France was fast becoming a savage tyranny, which punished not only acts, but even opinions, with death. Every enlightened man ought to have sought, as Danton did, to arrest this tendency. Hebert, on the contrary, sought to quicken it. An "easy-going man.....too little in sympathy with the people to understand and to express the popular aspirations" (Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution*, p. 501) Hebert went so far as to speak of an "itinerant guillotine" (p. 512); "to terrorise the enemies of the Revolution and to have the Government seized by his party seemed to him far more important than to solve the questions of food, the land, and organized labour" (p. 534); and his main anxiety seems to have been to get sixty-one Girondists guillotined whom the Government chose to spare (pp. 544-5). I am afraid that not even the most brilliant advocacy of Atheism would make such a man other than a "white elephant" to any cause he espoused.

That is the case against Hebert. I wait for Mr. H. George Farmer, counsel for the defence.

Robert Arch.

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Views and Opinions.

The War and Freedom of the Press.

Freethinkers have taken too great a part in the fight for freedom of publication in Great Britain not to feel keenly interested in the discussion over the War Office ban on the exportation of the *Nation*. The freedom of the press is a subject which concerns everyone, and we do not, therefore, lay ourselves open to the charge of interfering in political questions in recurring to the matter. As an exhibition of policy it was ridiculous, and as a sample of authority, autocratic in the last degree. It was too much for even the present House of Commons, although that body really forfeited its right to complain when it surrendered its powers in the beginning and during the early months of the War. If the sacrifice of all the liberties that have been sacrificed is necessary to the conduct of the War, there is in that fact one fresh proof that a nation at war descends in the scale of civilization, and all the talk of a nation finding itself through war is pure humbug. It is possible for a nation to enter a war from motives of the highest character, although the cases are rare; but once engaged in war, the descent is unpleasantly easy and fatally rapid.

* * *

Reaping the Harvest.

But a Freethinker may be excused a certain malicious satisfaction on reading the complaints made by some papers, and by *some* people, against this limitation of the press. Some of these lament that they are only allowed to publish such news as is agreeable to the authorities; that things are suppressed not because they are untrue, but because their publication would be inconvenient. And they further add that a press shackled in this way cannot but mislead the very people it is expected to enlighten. All this may be true enough; but is it anything new in the history of this country? Quite the contrary; it is the settled policy of the British press in relation to certain forms of opinion. It is particularly so in relation to Freethought. What certain papers are suffering from "for the duration of the War," Freethought has suffered from during the whole of its existence. To suit its own purposes, the British press has established a close boycott on all anti-Christian news. It has deliberately and systematically helped to build up an opinion which it—for the most part—knew to be false, by the policy of excluding all information that would tell against it. If it had worked to create a stronger and more informed public opinion, it would now have a better public opinion to which to appeal. It is reaping as it has sown. It has treated the public as something to be guarded against the truth, and it does not lie with the British press to protest too loudly when the Government treats it as it has treated others.

* * *

The Press and Religion.

We say that in the main the press of this country in relation to religion—we are not here concerned with any other issue—has deliberately fostered the growth of beliefs which it knows to be false, and it has done this by methods of suppression and falsification. For all the general public may gather from the public press, a deliberately organized attack on the Christian religion does not exist. So far as the press is concerned, the public would be unaware of the fact that a large proportion of our public men in literature, in art, in science, and in politics have ceased to be Christian in any genuine sense of the term. With rare exceptions, no reports of Freethought meetings are published, no reviews of avowedly Freethought works are permitted to appear, and when a Freethinker's work in social or political life compels an obituary notice, the fact that he was an anti-Christian is carefully suppressed. The consequence is, that, save for those who are brought into direct contact with Freethought propaganda, the public is either unaware of its existence, or is taught to regard it as the mistaken hobby of a harmless handful of cranks. They are kept in leading strings by the priests, largely by the interested connivance of the public press.

* * *

Fostering a Delusion.

This silence of the press on the one side is accentuated by its readiness to boom Christianity on all occasions. Let a clergyman announce his qualified disbelief in a literal hell or heaven, or in the virgin birth, or in the resurrection of Jesus, and he is written about, interviewed, and proclaimed as a "daring thinker"! Why, these are not things for disbelief in which a man should be acclaimed; they are things for believing in which a man ought to be heartily ashamed. That numbers can still solemnly discuss, week after week, such colossal absurdities as the reservation of the Sacrament, makes one wonder by what right these people call themselves civilized. Such doctrines do not belong to civilization at all. Their proper habitat is the wigwam of the primitive medicine man. And for the continuance of this frame of mind the press of the country is largely responsible. The public is kept in ignorance—deliberately kept in ignorance—of the facts. It is fed with false news, or with one-sided views. It sees, or fancies it sees, the old beliefs still endorsed by leading men and women; it is not aware that they have been

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seriously attacked, or are open to serious question. In the greatest reform of all, the creation of an informed public opinion, the British press plays but a sorry part.

* * *

A Conspiracy of Silence.

We say this, not because we have a disbelief in the power of the press, but because we have a profound belief in its power for good or evil. Our complaint is that the press lends itself to a conspiracy of silence, and to a policy of suppression such as it now complains at the Government exercising during the course of the War. One consequence of this policy is not far to seek. It not only encourages a condition of complacency on the part of ignorant believers, it induces silence and hypocrisy with thousands of non-believers. Unaware of the number of people who are of the same opinion as themselves, they are overawed by the apparent strength of the forces against them, and, as it is said, keep their opinions to themselves. As though an opinion which one keeps hidden is worth having. Opinions, like money, are made to spend. It is the only way in which they can be made to return a dividend. Even the press itself falls eventually a victim to its own policy. Editors and writers, not themselves Christians, refrain from attacking Christianity because they are afraid of the consequences. If an epidemic of mental honesty were to sweep over the country, these classes would be astonished at their own strength, and at the discovery that the strength of their opponent was largely derived from their own timidity.

* * *

The Way Out.

From this state of things there is only one way of escape, and it rests largely with Freethinkers to avail themselves of it. The public is always inclined to take a party at its own valuation, and Freethinkers have for too long, in deference to this or that reason, practised the policy of keeping their opinions, as Freethinkers, in the background. They have made many movements in the social world, only to find them in the long run captured and claimed by Christians. We suggest it is time that this policy should cease. There is no earthly reason why the possessor of a set of beliefs which represent a survival into civilized times of savage ideas should be treated with special deference. If Freethinkers make it a rule to express their opinions freely and without disguise, and quite as a matter of course, we have little doubt but that large numbers of Christians will take this difference of opinion for granted. Personally, we have always adopted that policy, and we have never experienced any unpleasantness worth bothering about as a consequence. And there was never a better time than the present for putting that simple policy into operation. The War has given organized Christianity a shaking greater than most of its followers realize, and it will be well for Freethinkers to take advantage of the upheaval. At any rate, we advise all to try the experiment, and observe the result. And the press—well, the press will behave with greater courage and honesty just so soon as it discovers there is a large public to appreciate those qualities.

Chapman Cohen.

The Roots of the Christian Tree.

V.

It is customary in many religious circles to characterize the period previous to the appearance of Christianity as pre-eminently dark. When Christ was born it was still night, with only a few stars shining dimly, but his advent was the breaking of the dawn. The late Dean Farrar wrote a long novel, entitled *Darkness and Dawn*, in which that view of history found eloquent expression; but it is a fundamentally erroneous and misleading conception. If there are theologians who verily believe that when Christ came the world was dark, they certainly can find no honest escape from the conclusion, arrived at by every ecclesiastical historian of ordinary fairness, that it grew steadily darker for eleven miserable centuries subsequent to his entrance upon the scene. As every enlightened and unprejudiced student of history is aware, however, the light of knowledge and virtue had been shining brightly for countless ages before our era commenced; and the younger and more advanced generation of divines is beginning to recognize this fact. The late Dr. George Matheson, the blind poet-preacher of Scotland, published a book in which, whilst claiming absolute supremacy for Christianity, he frankly confessed that he discovered elements of truth in most of the other religions of the world. Since his day it has come to pass that practically every scholarly theologian boldly speaks of Christianity as one of the great syncretic religions which for centuries systematically borrowed their ideas and customs from one another, and which were at the same time rivals for the suffrage of mankind. These scholars openly avow the indebtedness of their religion for literally all its dogmas and rites to older and rival cults. God, Saviour-God, sin, redemption, heaven, and hell, are all candidly acknowledged to be borrowed and adopted dogmas. That is to say, the supernatural in Christianity was taken over entirely from various older religions.

Now, the amazing fact is that some of those who thus unhesitatingly recognize the indebtedness of Christianity to other religions for its supernatural features, have yet the hardihood to maintain that it possesses a moral code unequalled in all history, and on that account perfectly unique. The so-called Liberal Christians are followers of Christ who regard the teaching attributed to him in the Gospels as constituting the sum and substance of the religion that bears his name. Even on the assumption that they are right, the question instantly arises, To what extent, or in what sense, can this teaching be accurately characterized as unique, or wherein does its originality consist? Whatever estimate may be formed of its quality, what sort of a title has it to the distinction which originality bestows? We venture to affirm that every saying ascribed to the Gospel Jesus can be paralleled several times over from either Jewish or Pagan literature, and the majority of them from both. Many of them are quoted almost *verbatim* from the Old Testament; others from the Talmud; and others from various works by famous Rabbis. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," says the Gospel Jesus; but a Psalmist had expressed the same sentiment long before, saying, "The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Ps. xxxvii. 11). Says the Gospel Jesus: "Swear not at all.....But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one" (Matt. v. 34-37). That saying has two distinct sources. In Ecclesiasticus xxiii. 9, we read: "Accustom not thy mouth to an oath, and be not accustomed to the naming of the Holy One," while in the Talmud we find these words: "Let your nay be nay. Let your yea be yea." We might go through the whole of the sayings, paralleling them in this manner, a task which M. Hippolyte Rodrigues exhaustively accomplished in his *Les Origines du Sermon de la Montagne*, thereby destroying for ever any claim to originality made for the teaching of the Gospel Jesus. Indeed, the impression created by a careful study of the alleged records of it is that it was never uttered as it stands by an historical teacher, but was, rather, patiently culled from all available sources, more or less altered in

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form, added to or subtracted from, according to requirement, and then ascribed to an imaginary Immanuel or God-Man, by a succession of the early framers of the Christian cult.

That is one cogent argument against the claim to any uniqueness or originality for the Christian moral code; but there is a much stronger argument still, which we wish now to elaborate. Let it be clearly understood that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a distinctively Christian moral code. What passes under that name does not contain a single ethical principle or precept which was not already ancient when Christ is supposed to have lived. With this fact as thoroughly established as it can be, it is most extraordinary to find that some people are still able to affirm that pre-Christian days were days without a sun. Had Christianity lived up to its exalted pretensions, that assertion ought to and would have been fully justified. In the circumstances that have hitherto prevailed, it is the very oppositive of true. Curiously enough, Professor Sayce, the distinguished Egyptologist, though an orthodox divine, frankly admits, in his *Monumental Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*, that the world was anything but dark four and five thousand years ago. Even so far back as that, he informs us, on the evidence of Egyptian hieroglyphics and Babylonian cuneform writings, discovered and almost wholly deciphered during the last fifty years, that already mighty civilizations of high literary and moral culture had come and gone. He says that "the Proverbs of Ptah-hotep, though written more than five thousand years ago, represent the close of a period in the history of Egyptian literature." Then he observes:—

> They had been preceded by earlier books, many of which survived to a later day. One of them has come down to ourselves in a mutilated form. It is a moral treatise, the work of a certain Qaqemna, who lived in the remote age of the Third Dynasty. But even then there were already schools and libraries in Egypt stored with papyrus books written in a running hand (pp. 30, 31).

He asserts that "the Babylonia of the (traditional) age of Abraham was a more highly educated country than the England of George III." With Dr. Sayce's silly prejudice against the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament we are completely out of sympathy, but we entirely agree with his remark that "as compared with the cultured inhabitants of the Babylonian Empire, the Israelitish tribes for whom Moses legislated were in a backward state." Such a testimony coming from an orthodox Anglican divine is all the more significant.

We now turn to a witness of an entirely different character, namely, the late Mr. Winwood Reade. In his celebrated work, *The Martyrdom of Man*, this man of genius, treating of the influence of the Church in ancient Egypt, by which he means the reign of the priests, he says:—

> Their power was immense; but it was exercised with justice and discretion; they issued admirable laws, and taught the people to obey them by the example of their own humble, self-denying lives. Under the tutilage of these pious and enlightened men, the Egyptians became a prosperous, and also a highly moral people. The monumental paintings reveal their whole life, but we read in them no brutal or licentious scenes.....The Egyptians granted honours to those who fought gallantly against them. The penalty for the murder of a slave was death; this law exists without parallel in the dark slavery annals both of ancient and of modern times.....It is a sure criterion of the civilization of ancient Egypt that the soldiers did not carry arms except on duty, and that the private citizens did not carry them at all. Women were treated with much regard. They were allowed to join their husbands in the sacrifices to the Gods; the bodies of man and wife were united in the tomb. When a party was given, the guests were received by the host and hostess seated side by side in a large arm-chair. In the paintings their mutual affection is portrayed. Their fond manners, their gestures of endearment, the caresses which they lavish on their children, form sweet and touching scenes of domestic life (pp. 16, 17).

Another witness to the same effect is Dr. Wallis Budge, an eminent Egyptologist, who assures us that, some two thousand years before Christ, Egypt had formulated a code of morals second to none of the numerous codes which have appeared since. The same is true of Buddhist India, the whole of which land was dotted with hospitals for the treatment of all human and animal diseases, and in which peace and good will reigned supreme fully two hundred years prior to the opening of our era. Dark periods were interspersed with the bright ones it is true; but never was there such dense intellectual and moral darkness in the ancient Pagan world as that which overshadowed Christendom in the centuries between the fourth and the twelfth; and was there ever a darker period than the one through which we are now passing, after nineteen centuries of the so-called Christian morality?

Our present point, however, is that Christian morality even in its very best features, possesses no uniqueness, no originality whatever, but is an eclectic product whether good, bad, or indifferent.

J. T. Lloyd.

Swinburne: Man and Poet.

II.

> Master who crowned our immelodious days
> With flowers of perfect speech.—*William Watson.*

> Swinburne was the greatest of our lyrical poets—of the world's, I should say, considering what a language he had to wield.—*George Meredith.*

From the first Swinburne's genius was unmistakable. In *Atalanta in Calydon* the strain of clear, soaring song proclaimed a real poet. *Poems and Ballads* was a masterpiece among masterpieces. There are pieces which, for distinction of melody, even their author has never surpassed. *Itylus*, *Laus Veneris*, *A Match*, the *Hymn to Proserpine*, and, above all, *Hesperia*, that lovely lyric where the gloriously moulded lines recall the magnificent rolling of the full-flushed waves.

Later came *Songs Before Sunrise*, which roused men like a trumpet-blast. Throughout this volume resounded the cry of liberty, the utter abhorrence of tyranny of every kind and in every shape. To compare *Songs Before Sunrise* with *Poems and Ballads* is to see how far the poet had advanced in the interval. In melody, it is true, progress was hardly possible, but, music apart, the change is indubitable.

The advance is from the pining of youth to the passion of man. The verse sings and glows with love of freedom. It echoes the thunder of the surges and the clarions of the storm. No poet since Shelley sings more loftily, or with more fiery passion, or with finer thought, than Swinburne when he is arraigning Priestcraft at the bar of Humanity. His most heretical poems will be found in *Songs Before Sunrise*. The *Hymn to Man* is frankly, even triumphantly, Atheistic. In the prelude he writes:—

> Because man's soul is man's god still,
> What wind soever waft his will
> Save his own soul's light overhead,
> None leads him, and none ever shall.

In another passage he treats the priests with fearful derision. He represents them calling on their Deity, and

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he says, "Cry aloud, for the people blaspheme," and he concludes:—

> Thou art smitten, thou God; thou art smitten: thy death is upon thee, O Lord;
> And the love-song of Earth as thou diest resounds through the wind of her wings—
> Glory to man in the highest, for man is the master of things.

In his lines apostrophizing Christ on the Cross, he says with Voltairean bitterness:—

> Thy blood the priests make poison of,
> And in gold shekels coin thy love.

The poet's scorn draws no distinction between the priests and their Deity. The lines addressed to Jesus are the quintessence of satire:—

> Thou bad'st let children come to thee:
> What children now but curses come?
> What manhood in that god can be
> Who sees their worship and is dumb?
> No soul that lived, loved, wrought, and died,
> Is this their carrion crucified?

Swinburne regarded prayer as folly, and he vents his scorn in music:—

> Behold there is no grief like this;
> The barren blossom of thy prayer,
> Thou shalt find out how sweet it is
> O fools, and blind, what seek ye there,
> High up in the air?
>
> Ye must have gods, the frieuds of men,
> Merciful gods, compassionate,
> And these shall answer you again,
> Will ye beat always at the gate,
> Ye fools of fate?

In the *Hymn to Proserpine*, he sings:—

> O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted gods!
> Though all men abase them before you in spirit, and all knees bend;
> I kneel not, neither adore you, but standing, look to the end.

In another poem, *Song in Time of Order*, he sings:—

> We have done with the kisses that sting,
> The thief's mouth red from the feast,
> The blood on the hands of the king,
> And the lie at the lips of the priest.

As a singer, Swinburne deserves the tribute of George Meredith, that he was the greatest of our lyrical poets. From the simplest measures, he ranges through the most elaborate. He can charm you with a lyric, such as *The Ballad of Dreamland;* and he can thrill and inspire with the great war-song in *Erectheus*, where the turmoil of battle is rendered in unforgettable language. Above all other English poets he is the singer of the sea. His love of ocean is not merely sensuous. That delight he has rendered wonderfully in his *Tristram;* but his finest sea-pieces are born of imaginative sympathy and insight. None has so vividly rendered the magic of the dawn breaking over the fields of the deep, or the terrors of the trumpets of the night, and the lightnings of the tempest. Among the cruellest abstractions of the cosmos he exults; he drinks the ether of space as men drink wine. He was also a rare critic, and an accomplished scholar. Observe his masterly essays on Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, and his beautiful renderings of Victor Hugo, Baudelaire, and Villon. Swinburne could write a lovely Northern song, with the perfume of the heather clinging to it; and he could lower his high cadences to the ear of little children without loss of the omnipresent beauty of his incomparable style.

One quality of Swinburne's writing leaps to the eye of the dullest reader. It is his enthusiasm for right causes. The warmth of his praise is an endless delight. Such tributes as he has paid to the great apostles and champions of Freedom have a generosity and enthusiasm unequalled even in poetry. How he has sung the praises of Cromwell and Milton, of Shelley and Landor, of Whitman and Victor Hugo, is well known. More enduring than the marble of the Genoese monument are those lovely lyrics of which Mazzini and the cause to which he dedicated his life were the inspiration. The love of Liberty has been a common possession of our greatest poets, and hardly one of them has failed to give splendid expression to the feeling. But Swinburne has surpassed them all in the ardour of his devotion, and in the rapture of his praise:—

> The very thought in us how much we love thee
> Makes the throat sob with love, and blinds the eyes.

It comes to this in the end. The greatest poet of our generation was an avowed Freethinker and unabashed Republican. It is not strange, for poets have long since ceased to gain inspiration from Christianity. Byron was a thorough sceptic; Shelley was a convinced Atheist; Keats was a perfect Pagan; and Edward Fitzgerald as epicurean as Omar. Tennyson was heterodox, and Matthew Arnold was Secularistic. James Thomson was a militant Freethinker, and George Meredith and William Morris were both sceptics. Thomas Hardy, the most distinguished of living writers, is a Freethinker. Christianity no longer attracts men of genius, and therein lies its doom. The genius of modern times is enkindled at the altar of Humanity, which was standing before any other was built, and will endure when every other has crumbled into dust.

Mimnermus.

Science and Spiritualism.

VII.

(Continued from p. 246).

> There seem to be a considerable class of persons who believe that natural laws are insufficient to account for their personal experiences and those of others, and who temporarily or permanently incline to a spiritualistic hypothesis in preference to any other.....It is a weak though comprehensible nature that becomes bewildered in the presence of a few experiences that seem homeless among the generous provisions of modern science, and runs off panic-stricken to find shelter in a system that satisfies a narrow personal craving at the sacrifice of broadly established principles, nurtured and grown strong in the hardy and beneficent atmosphere of science.—*Professor Jastrow*, "*Fact and Fable in Psychology*" (1901), pp. 16-17.
>
> To surround anything, however monstrous or ridiculous, with an air of mystery, is to invest it with a charm and power of attraction which to the crowd is irresistible. False priests, false prophets, false doctors, false patriots, false prodigies of every kind, veiling their proceedings in mystery, have always addressed themselves at an immense advantage to the popular credulity, and have been, perhaps, more indebted to that resource in gaining and keeping for a time the upper hand of truth and common sense, than to any half-dozen items in the whole catalogue of imposture.—*Charles Dickens*, "*Barnaby Rudge*," ch. xxvii.

In 1871 Mr. Crookes (later Sir William) announced that he had succeeded in demonstrating the existence of a hitherto unknown force, and had measured the effects produced. Again through the medium of Daniel Dunglas Home. An apparatus was constructed that would register alterations in the weight of a body, and is described as "a mahogany board 36 inches long by 9½ inches wide and 1 inch thick. At each end a strip of mahogany 1½ inches wide was screwed on, forming feet. One end of the board rested on a firm table, whilst the other end was supported by a spring balance hanging from a substantial tripod stand. The balance was fitted with a self-registering index, in such a manner that it would record the maximum weight indicated by the pointer. The apparatus was adjusted so that the mahogany board was horizontal, its foot resting flat on the support. In this position its weight was 3 lbs., as marked by the pointer of the balance.

"Before Mr. Home entered the room the apparatu

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had been arranged in position, and he had not even the objects of some parts explained before sitting down."[1]

Besides Mr. Crookes, four other persons were present, including Dr. (later Sir William) Huggins and Serjeant Cox, who afterwards attested the accuracy of his report.

After some preliminary operations with an accordion, attention was turned to the apparatus, Mr. Home placing his fingers lightly upon the extreme end of the board furthest from the balance, Dr. Huggins and Mr. Crookes sitting on each side and watching. The index of the balance moved several times, the greatest downward pull registered being 6 lbs.; the index, of course, showing a *total* weight of 9 lbs., as 3 lbs., the weight of the board, was already registered. The investigators declare that at no time were Home's fingers advanced more than 1½ inches over the end of the board—that is, the width of the strip forming the feet, by which the end rested on the table.

The few scientific men who criticized the experiment contented themselves with pointing out possible defects in the apparatus employed. Professor Balfour Stewart and Mr. E. B. Tylor suggested that the investigators might be under the influence of mesmeric illusions produced by Home on the minds of sensitive spectators. This was explaining one marvel by another quite as marvellous. But, as Mr. Podmore points out, there was no need for such a drastic solution. To begin with, we are told that all present guarded Home's feet and hands; but, as he further observes:—

> It is pertinent to point out that a duty for which the whole company were collectively responsible may well at times have been intermitted. Moreover, Dr. Huggins and Mr. Crookes had to take notes. Again, the experiment described was not the first of the kind; it occurred in the middle of a long series. It is, indeed, stated that Home was not familiar with the apparatus employed. But as similar apparatus had been employed probably at previous trials by Mr. Crookes himself, certainly by earlier investigators—amongst them Dr. Hare, with whose published writings on Spiritualism we cannot assume that Home was unacquainted—the statement carries little weight. Further, a point of capital importance, there had apparently been many previous trials with various modifications of the apparatus and many failures; in Mr. Crookes' own words, "the experiments I have tried have been very numerous, but owing to our imperfect knowledge of the conditions which favour or oppose the manifestations of this force, to the apparently capricious manner in which it is exerted, and to the fact that Mr. Home himself is subject to unaccountable ebbs and flows of the force it has seldom happened that a result obtained on one occasion could be subsequently confirmed and tested with apparatus specially contrived for the purpose.
>
> The real significance of this statement is that Home—a practised conjurer, as we are entitled to assume—was in a position to dictate the conditions of the experiment. By the simple device of doing nothing when the conditions were unfavourable, he could ensure that the light (gas in the present instance) was such and so placed, the apparatus so contrived, and the sitters so disposed, as to suit his purpose, and that in the actual experiment the attention of the investigators would necessarily be concentrated on the wrong points. Under such conditions, as ordinary experience shows, and as experiments described in the last chapter have abundantly demonstrated, five untrained observers are no match for one clever conjurer.
>
> The word "untrained" in this connection may seem to require justification. Of Sir William Crookes' high distinction in many branches of physical science there is no need to speak here. But his previous training did not necessarily render him better qualified to deal with problems differing widely from those presented in the laboratory. To put it bluntly, if Home was a conjurer, Mr. Crookes was probably in no better position for detecting the sleight-of-hand than any other man his equal in intelligence and native acuteness of sense. Possibly in a worse position, for it may be argued that his previous training would prepare the way for Home's efforts to concentrate attention on the mechanical apparatus, and thus divert it from the seemingly irrelevant movements by which it may be conjectured the conjurer's end was attained.[1]

As to the actual means employed by Home to move the index of the balance down, Mr. Podmore has no doubt that Home accomplished the trick by passing the loop of a fine black thread over the hook of the balance, the other end being attached to his clothes—probably at the knee. Mr. Podmore points out that the amount of light in the room during the experiment is not stated, but that at a similar experiment given a few weeks later, "the light, by Home's order, was so diminished that at the first trial 'there was scarcely light enough to see the board and the index move.'"[2] Under these conditions a black thread would be quite invisible.

Mr. Podmore also thinks that Home used fine black thread to support the floating lath in the air, and to prevent small objects from sliding off a tilted table. Mr. Davey, who surpassed the mediums in their tricks, and beat them at their own game, employed a hair or thread to move bits of coloured chalk under a glass tumbler, when the eyes of all present were concentrated upon the spot; and would even by similar means cause a tumbler to glide across the table. As we shall see later on, it was with a black thread that the notorious Eusapia Paladino, the medium who tricked so many famous scientists, including Sir Oliver Lodge, operated on the letter balance.

In cases where exceedingly small particles have to be weighed, the balance is enclosed in a vacuum, this is to do away with the pressure of the air. The balance is placed in a glass vessel and the air pumped out by an air-pump. As a chemist, Sir William Crookes was well acquainted with this apparatus, and if he wanted a real test of this spiritual force, why did he not ask Home to move the balance when it was enclosed in a vacuum? Perhaps he did, and this was one of the many failures of which he says: "it has seldom happened that a result obtained on one occasion could be subsequently confirmed and tested with apparatus specially contrived for the purpose."

To deal with all the phenomena produced by Home at his seances would take too long, but the reader may be referred to Podmore's *Modern Spiritualism* for further details. The one that has, perhaps, made the greatest impression, owing to the high social position of the witnesses, is the account given by the Master of Lindsay (afterwards Earl of Crawford) of how Home, in the presence of himself, Viscount Adare, and Captain Wynne, floated out of the window of one room and in at the window of another room seven feet away, eighty-five feet from the ground.

Now, first of all, there was no light in the room; but the Master of Lindsay says that the moon was shining full into the room. The value of this statement may be gauged by the fact, pointed out by Mr. Podmore, that on the date given the moon was only *two days old*—so there was not much illumination from that, even on a cloudless night; and we have no information on that point. Further, the Master of Lindsay was seated with his back to the window; so he could not possibly see Home float in. And, lastly, no one saw Home float out of the window of the other room, as they were seated at a table, and could not possibly see what went on in the other room. What happened was this:

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 237.

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 239-240.

[2] *Ibid*, vol. ii., p. 241.

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According to Lord Lindsay, Home went into a trance, and walked out into the hall. The Master of Lindsay then heard a voice whisper, "He will go out of one window and in at another," which he communicated to his companions. They heard the window of the next room opened. Then the Master of Lindsay, sitting with his back to the window, saw the shadow of Home on the wall in front of him, and found Home was in the room.[1] Probably it was not Home at all who entered the next room and made the noise of opening the window. No doubt Home, under cover of darkness, had regained admission to the room, perhaps by another door, and was concealed by the window curtains, and at the appropriate moment made his appearance. This trick had been prepared and worked up beforehand. As Podmore points out: "A few days before, in the presence of two of the same witnesses, Home had opened the same window, stepped on the ledge outside, and remained standing there, to the great alarm of Lord Lindsay, looking down at the street some eighty feet below. The medium had thus, as it were, furnished a rough sketch of the picture which he aimed at producing."[2] Lord Lindsay himself was subject to hallucinations. At an earlier period of the same evening he had "seen an apparition of a man sitting in a chair"; and as for the titles and social distinctions of the witnesses, they carry no weight in investigations of this nature. One Maskelyne at a seance would penetrate more mysteries than the attendance of the whole House of Lords.

Then there was the feat of handling red-hot coals out of the fire. This, like the floating in the air and elongations of the body, says Podmore, "was only vouchsafed to a few privileged and, if the word may be allowed in this connection, 'trained' witnesses." It failed on two occasions at Glasgow because the conditions were "too positive," or the witnesses had too little faith.[3]

We are in a position to see now how it was that Home never suffered exposure like all the other mediums. He would never perform in the presence of sceptics, and when he could not get rid of them, he did nothing. Charles Bradlaugh was one of the committee appointed by the Dialectical Society to inquire into the phenomena attributed to Spiritualism in 1873. Bradlaugh records: "I am bound to say that Mr. Home met me in the frankest manner possible. He told me I was one of the few people he wanted very much to see.....I met him in the same frank spirit; and as he offered every opportunity for investigation, we took it"—with the expected result; "we had not the scintilla of anything. I sat with Mr. Home night after night till Mr. Home was tired."[4]

Charles Bradlaugh was a powerful and determined man, and Home dared not try any tricks on him. Moreover, Bradlaugh would not allow his critical faculties to be disarmed by Mr. Home's frank and open manner, which imposed on so many others.

W. Mann.

(To be continued.)

Dry-Rot in the Churches.

For many years past, even before the War, the congregations in the churches and chapels of England and Wales have been steadily declining in numbers. Ten years ago I pointed out in a contemporary that the vast majority of the people had ceased to support the parsons, and, as the years pass, the secessions have increased more and more rapidly. The War has been the last straw. Instead of adding to the adherents of the sects, as some expected, it has helped to destroy a creed which teaches the pernicious belief that the world is governed by an all-wise, loving God.

Here are some figures which both Christians and Atheists may read with interest. They are compiled from returns made by the various denominations:—

		Losses in 1916.	
	Membership.	Members.	Scholars.
Church of England	2,359,599	85,515	58,903
Catholic	1,885,655	(?)	(?)
Wesleyan Methodist	464,055	5,040	29,246
Congregationalist	453,138	1,645	10,823
Baptist	388,252	1,931	13,253
Primitive Methodist	198,805	1,744	10,690
Calvinist Methodist	185,278	[1]	4,234
United Methodist	141,336	7,591	6,333
Presbyterian	87,424	742	3,691
Salvation Army	110,438	(?)	(?)
Other Denominations	67,029	977	(?)

The adult population of England and Wales was thirty-seven millions, so it will be seen that the number attending religious places was only 17·14 per cent. of the people, and the losses during the year amount to 1·61 per cent. of the membership a year ago. The Catholics claim to have increased, but they have no cause to rejoice over their accession of strength. The priests know perfectly well the reason, namely, that a large number of Catholics have come from France and Belgium owing to the War, and have, naturally, joined up with their fellow-"sheep." It is to be expected, of course, that the priests would misrepresent the facts.

Atheists have no misunderstanding about the decrease. The dying of Christianity will, doubtless, be long drawn out, like all religions in the past. The Egyptian cosmogony is believed to have lasted four thousand years. The Christian has only existed half that term, and it is now disintegrating. Lies have charmed lives when they are useful to a class, and priestcraft is a trade particularly difficult to scotch. All the same, we may be assured that the days of the faith are numbered, and, in its place, men will have healthy minds with which to rely upon themselves, instead of upon a figment of the imagination. Gods, Saints, Saviours, Devils, and such supernatural beings will, in due course, follow the wizards, witches, elves, gnomes, and other queer fancies, into the limbo of childish errors, and Science will be supreme in caring for the well-being of Humanity.

E. Anderson.

Acid Drops.

We are a Christian people, and the War is "God's cause." Both statements rest on excellent authority but doubtful evidence. Perhaps, of the two, the first is the more doubtful. We are a Christian people only in the sense that the majority profess the Christian faith, and, therefore, our being a Christian people must be taken with certain reservations. But all the belligerents—with the exception of France, who leaves God out of it altogether—say they are fighting God's cause; so that on this point there is a fairly general agreement. This being so, it is not surprising that America's joining with the Allies should have served as the occasion for a special service at St. Paul's Cathedral, with the King and Queen, the American Ambassador and his wife, and other notabilities in attendance. God was thanked for his share in the War, the Allies were praised for theirs, and both Britain and the United States praised to the skies—the former as being "well skilled in self-sacrifice," the latter as making "its act of self-dedication to God"; the whole, perhaps, to be taken as a commentary upon the Christian text, "If any smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also."

[1] See the two accounts given in Podmore's *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 255-256.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 257. [3] *Ibid*, vol. ii., p. 263.

[4] *Life of Bradlaugh*, by his Daughter, vol. i., p. 344.

[1] Slight increase.

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All the same, one wonders what God had to do with the business? Did he really move the heart of President Wilson, or was it the German campaign of submarine "frightfulness"? Would he have moved the President's heart if Germany had kept to the rules of the game? And if he really does move people's hearts, why did he not move the heart of the Kaiser in August, 1914, so as to secure peace? And what is the matter with the organs of the rulers of Bulgaria, and Greece, and Turkey? As we did not thank God for moving the hearts of Italy, and Roumania, and Japan, and China, etc., are we to conclude that he had nothing to do with their action? Anyway, America is in; so thank God for America—and the submarines.

Bishop Brent, who preached the sermon, referred to the "Altar upon which we lay our lives and *fortunes*" (italics ours). And all the worshippers who had invested in War Loan at five per cent., and who will take their share of the three hundred millions annually that will have to be paid after the War, and all those who had made huge profits on food, and on leather, and on coals, and on ships, and on munitions, responded with a very loud "Amen." They lay their fortunes on the altar, and if the Government would only issue a loan at ten per cent., they would deposit them with still greater thankfulness to God.

The way in which the lion and the lamb will lie together "after the War" is foreshadowed in an advertisement issued by National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage, calling upon every one to write to their member of Parliament opposing the giving of votes to women. It objects to the measure now before Parliament—among other grounds—because "the best of our manhood is abroad." All we can say is that if the "best of our manhood" declines to treat woman as an intelligent human being, we hope that it will elect to remain abroad. But the statement that the men abroad are all on the side of the National League of British Back Numbers is too ridiculous to need serious disproof.

A Scotch paper publishes the following revised version of one of the Beatitudes—"Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called up."

The translation of the Bible into Mandarin Chinese will be completed by June. Three hundred million of Chinese will thus be able to read the Christian Scriptures in the vernacular. They have already had Christian opium, guns, rum, cotton goods, etc. They will find that Christians do really believe "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." And they will note that all Christian Europe is practising it.

In an article on "Woman Worship," in the *Daily News*, Miss Rebecca West says, Women are merely expected "to sit still and be as female as they can, taking as their ideal, not the untiring Saint Teresa, but the Sacred Cow of the Universe." The latter is a brilliant addition to theological terminology.

Jack Cooke, the evangelistic boy-preacher, has died in a Chicago hospital, and the religious papers add, "he was to have joined the Royal Flying Corps." Some pious folk will believe that Jack has flown to heaven.

The tears of Beckenham church-folk are falling fast. The parish magazine, after appearing for forty years, has ceased publication owing to the paper shortage.

The few clergymen who are at the back of the fighting lines appear to retain their gospel-shop habits. A chaplain on the West Front has sent home £13 collected from the troops.

Glancing at an article by Canon C. H. Robinson, we noticed the expression "a happy Atheist," and we thought that at last the clergy were getting generous to their opponents. But it was only a phrase taken from Mr. Wells' novel, *Mr. Britling*. Meanwhile, the clergy prefer their Atheists to be gloomy and garrulous.

A Sunday paper has offered a prize for the oldest mother, and, so far, the oldest applicant has been one aged 51. The editor might have remembered the Biblical heroine, Sarah, who had a son at 90 years of age, her husband, Abraham, being then 99.

Mr. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, laid his proposals for educational reform before the House of Commons on April 20, and all that can be said for them is that they are "promising"—we hope they will not be merely so. But we shall see when the main proposals become embodied in an actual Bill. Meanwhile, it may be noted that nothing was said on the religious question, and to ignore it will not do. It may be politic to attempt it, but it is not heroic, and it is foredoomed to failure. Mr. Fisher would do well to follow the example of our French Ally, and secularize the schools. After all, Secular Education is all that the State is concerned with, and for an Education Minister to saddle himself with religious instruction is to pave the way for comparative failure.

As a commentary upon the cant about democracy that is so prominent with politicians just now, we may note that Mr. Fisher does not propose to abolish fees for secondary schools. This is because, he says, it would involve an expenditure of £1,000,000 a year. Frightful! We are spending seven millions a day on war, but cannot think of spending another million on secondary education, *even when the War is over*. So much for the genuineness of the interest in democracy, of waging a War for the freedom of democracy, etc. For what justification is there—save a caste repugnance to allow children of the "lower classes" free access to secondary education—for abolishing fees in elementary and retaining them in secondary schools? Mr. Fisher proposes increasing the number of scholarships. But scholarships will not do, for various reasons. Education, in both elementary and secondary schools, should be free if it is to be really democratic. Mr. Fisher would do well to defy class influence, and go the whole hog.

Superstition dies hard, and much of it is prevalent in Christian England to-day. At the Newington Public Library, London, S.E., there is an exhibition of soldiers' and sailors' mascots, and other strange survivals, among which may be mentioned crosses and religious medals worn by fighting men, infants' cauls carried by sailors as a protection from drowning, besides hag-stones to warn off witches. A notable exhibit is a sheep's heart pierced with pins and nails, and used by a woman who practised witchcraft as late as 1908. Small wonder that the Christian superstition still flourishes in such a soil.

Dr. Saleeby says: "I have heard more bad music at temperance meetings than I knew the world could contain." What would the doctor have said had he attended Salvation Army and revivalist meetings?

Dr. Jowett, we are told by the *British Weekly*, "has preached a great sermon in New York"; but its greatness seems to consist in its blind optimism. Optimism is a splendid thing when rationally cherished; but an optimism founded upon a pious sentiment only cannot conduce to human progress. It proves rather a clog upon the wheels of the progressive car. Dr. Jowett is reported to have said, for example, that "the men in the trenches were thinking more about God than ever before." According to the testimony of chaplains and others, repeated again and again, that statement is conspicuously false. We are assured by those who are on the spot that the men in the trenches are thinking most about the end of the War, and the return to their homes; that there are no signs whatever of a revival of interest in religion among them; and that their chief cheer comes, not from attendance at religious services, but from entertainments, and particularly the singing of comic songs.

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Now, if Dr. Jowett's information upon matters so close at hand is so inaccurate, how can we trust him when he treats of events of long ago? He said that after the destruction of Jerusalem the light shone brighter than it had ever done through the darkness; but which light was it, and where did it so shine? Was not Titus, the destroyer of Jerusalem, succeeded by Domitian, who exiled Epictetus and other philosophers from Rome; who, as Gibbon says, "on a slight pretence," condemned and executed his nephew, Clemens, and banished Domitilla, his wife, to a desolate island on the coast of Campania; who passed sentence of death or of confiscation upon a great number of persons, the vague charge against whom was that of Atheism and Jewish manners; and whose memory was publicly execrated and condemned by the Senate? There was a decided improvement under Nerva, Tragan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, it is true; but those were Pagan Emperors, and Dr. Jowett's true light could certainly not have shone brighter during their reigns.

Once more. Dr. Jowett told his congregation that the light shone brighter than ever after the mediæval reformation and the French Revolution; but if he means by the former the Protestant Reformation, we are bound to characterize the statement as flagrantly false. In reality, the Protestant Reformation was a movement away from the light of the Gospel and towards that of emancipated human reason, though not so intended by its promoters or their successors; and the same can be said of the French Revolution, out of which has issued the largely sceptical and atheistic France of to-day, which God is said to be now punishing for her disloyalty to himself by means of the present War. Undoubtedly, the trend of modern history has been increasingly away from the light of Jesus Christ, as Dr. Horton, in particular, was in the habit of sorrowfully pointing out before the War.

In an obituary notice of the late Lord Allerton, a Sunday paper called him "a self-made man." This reminds us of Voltaire's jest concerning a man not remarkable for his good qualities, and of whom the same remark was made: "This removes a reproach from the Almighty."

To minimize the consumption of food there will be fewer Sunday-school treats this year. This will cause a slump in religion among young people.

The *Daily Telegraph* states that the whole congregation at a service in the parish church at Beaconsfield consisted of four clergymen. At two other services the only person present was a clergyman's wife.

The non-military "General" Booth announces "Two Days with God" at the Congress Hall. The Kaiser will be green with jealousy.

A new book bears the strange title, *Before Adam*. Sounds as if there was "nothing doing."

Among the candidates for confirmation at a service at Tenterdon, Kent, were four women who were grandmothers. Maybe the other girls had the consolation of reflecting that the aged ones were in their second childhood.

The effect of Zeppelin raids, the bombarding of undefended towns, the sinking of unarmed passenger vessels, and, worst of all, of hospital ships, has been to rouse the indignation of decent-minded men and women everywhere against Germany. All these barbarous acts did Germany no good, and —In the wider sense—did the Allies no harm. But the Government has now seen fit to resort to a policy of reprisals, and the university town of Freiburg has been bombed, resulting in the deaths of women and children. Whether this will have the desired effect we greatly doubt. The people who suffer are not the authors of the outrages, and we are quite sure that it is not a job which our airmen will gladly undertake. It is far more likely to be used by the German Government to stiffen opposition to the Allies, and although Germany led the way in this, she will not fail to retort that we are no better than she is in the matter.

We protested against this policy of reprisals when it was first suggested, and we see no reason to alter our opinion now. To be logical, it means that we must out-brutalize the Germans. Our chastisement must be more effective than their outrage. If they kill one prisoner, we must ill-treat more. If they murder a dozen women and children, we must murder a score. So step by step the nations descend the scale of civilization in this War which so many tell us is animated by the loftiest of ideals. Already Germany has compelled us to follow her in the use of gas and other devices that have made War more than usually horrible, and now we are following her example in this last respect. For that is what reprisals mean. We set our standard by the lowest instead of by the highest. And the men of God with the talk of "God's cause" on their lips, and the cant of Christian love, are dumb.

The Bishop of Ely deserves a word of acknowledgement in having—one amongst so many thousand of priests—protested against the policy of reprisals.

At Hemsworth, the local branch of the Yorkshire Miner's Association, have raised objection to certain clergymen working in the mines, thus taking the place of men with families who have entered the Army. As a consequence, the parsons have returned to labour in the Lord's vineyard.

The Vicar of Northfield has recently refused to allow the following motto to be inscribed on a tombstone in "his" churchyard: "To live in the hearts of those we leave behind us is not to die."

A correspondent in a Catholic weekly points out that relics of the old faith in England may be found in public-house signs, such as "Angel" taverns, and "Salutation" inns, and one which is unique, "The Virgin," outside Worcester city. This association of things spirituous and spiritual is decidedly interesting.

"Lost to the sense of Christian morality, she (Germany) has plunged Europe into a maelstrom of suffering." Yet every German soldier has the motto "God with us" on his uniform.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley really deserves that more notice should be taken of him by the Churches. In *John Bull* he notes that "another chaplain has fallen on the field"—not a wonderful thing when one remembers how many others have also fallen. This time it is a Roman Catholic priest, and Mr. Bottomley cries "All honour to his memory, and to the great church of which he was a priest." Honour to his memory, if you please, but why to the Church? What has that to do with it? In the face of such bids for favour, it is pathetic to see how coolly the Churches have treated this illustrious consent. Mr. Bottomley's conversion may have been noted in heaven, but no one appears to know about it on earth. And yet one hesitates to say that it was of no earthly use.

Is the Christian God a German spy? He has struck the Royal Aircraft Factory at Aldershot with lightning, and injured four men. Perhaps the Almighty is contaminated with the blood of the "All-Highest," like the rest of the European Royal Families, and so family considerations influence his actions.

The humourist who called churches "gospel shops" was wiser than he knew, for places of worship do not appear to be more favoured by Providence than any other houses. For example, St. Andrew's Church, Bromley, Kent, is to be closed until after the War—just as if it were a stewed-eel bar.

Protests against wholesale sparrow slaughter have appeared in the papers, but no reference has been made to the special care of Providence for those birds.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 29, South Place Institute, South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—May 6, South Place Institute, South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.

"Keridon" draws our attention to a misprint in his last week's article. The word "good" should have been "God." The sentence then reads: ".....its God perforce dies with it."

H. Bunting.—The address of the Rationalist Peace Association is 38 Cursitor Street, London, E.C.

E. B.—Arrived too late for use this week. We have printed the War Office notice enclosed on two previous occasions, but it will serve a useful purpose in printing it again.

A. Radley.—We have no idea who is behind "The National League for Opposing Woman Suffrage." Thanks for cutting.

S. Lenard.—We have never found bigotry give way to tolerance because it met with no opposition. The better plan is to face it. You may have trouble either way, but it is surely better to have the trouble through defending your own opinion than have it while professing the opinions of other people.

O. E. K.—The information required is being sent you. We should be pleased to arrange meetings in your locality if anyone could be found to look after local arrangements.

Ayrshire.—Please send on your proposals. If practicable, shall be pleased to do as you suggest.

J. Thackray.—Thanks for verses, which we much regret we are unable to use.

R. Ogden.—We have handed your remittance to Miss Vance, who will deal with it. We are not surprised you enjoyed reading about Voltaire. So soon as circumstances permit, we intend publishing a rather lengthy selection from his writings about religion. Our best wishes to your two boys in the Army. The parody you enclose has already appeared in the *Freethinker*.

A. G. Hann.—Next week.

G. N.—Certainly "some people" may have called George Jacob Holyoake an Agnostic. All we need say in reply is that, although charged with "Blasphemy," Holyoake himself described his trial as a trial for "Atheism."

H. W. Edwards.—Thanks. We hope to make use of your communication at an early date.

Robert Moreland.—Article safely to hand, all the way from the Front. You are not alone in thinking "it's a jolly good victory that the paper has survived during the War." But the War is not over yet, unfortunately.

J. A. Reid.—Should be very pleased to send a copy of the *Freethinker* to every newspaper editor, schoolmaster, etc.—if we could afford it.

H. G. Farmer.—We received article, for which, thanks. Also letter, which will appear next week. We agree with you that Mr. Arch's articles on the Revolution deserve republication in pamphlet form.

Owing to unexpected demands upon our time, we are obliged to hold over until next week a number of letters, as well as several paragraphs that would otherwise have appeared.

Sugar Plums.

The course of Sunday evening lectures at South Place Institute will be opened to-day, April 29, by Mr. Cohen. His subject is "Religion Before and After the War," and should provide ground for profitable discussion. Mr. Cohen will be followed by Mr. J. T. Lloyd and Mr. Harry Snell, the titles of whose lectures are announced on the last page of this issue. The chair will be taken each evening at 7 o'clock.

Admission to these lectures is free, but there will be a collection towards the expenses, and we hope our friends will bear in mind that these meetings are not arranged without incurring outlay. We trust also that London Freethinkers are doing their best towards making the meetings known among their friends. There are small slips announcing the lectures which may be had either at the *Freethinker* office, or of Miss Vance, the N.S.S. General Secretary. Next week we hope to be able to announce that the course has commenced well. In that case better will be bound to follow.

We bring to a close this week the excellent series of articles on the French Revolution, by Mr. Robert Arch. They have, we know, been followed with much interest by a large number of readers; and we are pleased, for many reasons, that this has been so. For, when all is said, the French Revolution of 1789 remains one of the greatest events of modern times. The recent Russian Revolution was of importance, and current events have induced many to recognize this. Still, in its world-wide influence it can hardly attain the importance that properly attaches to the upheaval of 1789. It provided the world with ideals that have never lost their potency. It gave modern Europe, for the first time in its history, the inspiration of a human society resting upon Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. And the measure of its influence for good is the hatred with which vested interests everywhere regarded it.

Will all branches and members of the N.S.S. please note that all resolutions for the Conference agenda should be in the Secretary's hands with as little delay as possible? Reconstruction and reorganization is in the air in all directions, and some useful suggestions ought to come in if only to serve as a guide to the Executive.

Owing to the dropping of "Always" in our reply to H. T. D. in last week's issue, we were made to say not quite what we meant. Religion does not *always* offer direct encouragement to dishonesty, but it does usually encourage a frame of mind that eventuates in dishonesty. And this dishonesty is the more dangerous because it does not generally come within the cognizance of the law.

The Newcastle Branch of the N.S.S. has arranged a series of fortnightly meetings in the Collingwood Hall, Clayton Street, on Sunday afternoons at 3 o'clock. To-day (April 29) the speaker is Mr. Bryce, who will take for his subject "Individual Effort." Newcastle Freethinkers please note.

Mr. Lloyd has written a reply to the Vicar of Bromyard's article in our issue of April 15, which we should have published this week, but are obliged to hold it over owing to its not having reached us in time. Nowadays one posts letters when one can, and the post-office delivers when it will. And there is small comfort in swearing at an official who is not present to get the benefit of one's exertions.

Many of our readers will be pleased to learn that we received a brief note the other day from Mr. R. H. Rosetti. He writes that he is keeping well, and at the time of writing was engaged in pioneer navvying, and that he and his "pals" were being favoured with the attention of German snipers and occasional machine-gun fire. We hope that the snipers and others will continue to miss our friend "for the duration of the War."

We are pleased to see that the Rationalist Press Association has raised a warning voice against an anticipated attempt of the Papacy to be represented at any forthcoming Peace Congress to be, not alone represented there, but also to use its representation as a means to regaining some of its lost credit and power. The warning has been addressed to the Freethinkers of all the Allied nations, and is strongly supported by the Italian *Associazione Nazionale del Libero Pensiero*. It has already been anticipated by the organized Freethought parties in France and Switzerland, and by the authorized protests of the Spanish and Portuguese Freethinkers. We have no doubt the Freethinkers in the United States of America will endorse the attitude of their comrades and Allies in Europe against any proposal to rehabilitate the Pope in his old capacity as the wielder of temporal power.

The new Manchester Branch was definitely formed at a meeting held at the Manchester Hotel, Oldham Street, on Monday, April 16, when Mr. H. Black, 446 Great Cheetham Street, East, Higher Broughton, was appointed Honorary Secretary. Will all intending members who have not yet handed in their names please communicate with him

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at once? Mr. S. Pulman was elected President, Mr. J. H. Langford, Treasurer, and a working committee appointed for the next twelve months.

It is quite evident that educational reformers will need to be on the alert to prevent the movement for educational reform degenerating into a merely technical education designed to capture German trade "after the War." If for that reason alone, we cordially commend to the notice of our readers *British Education After the War*, by Mr. F. J. Gould (Watts & Co.; 1s. 6d. net). Mr. Gould speaks as a practical teacher and an enthusiast in the cause of education, a combination that makes for both balance and breadth. The six chapters into which Mr. Gould divides his book provide, apart from a general sketch of education, a scheme of instruction from the earliest years through the elementary schools, on to the secondary schools and universities. The aim of the book is education for service, and the chief point to which criticism may be directed is, we fancy, the keeping of the ideal of the British Empire too clearly before the mind of the developing boy or girl. It is true that Mr. Gould does not quite lose sight of what he calls "the march towards unity on the largest scale"; but for our own part, we are afraid that to emphasize this "nationalist reconstruction"—to use another of Mr. Gould's phrases—will tend to dwarf the larger aim. And, quite frankly, we have no greater love for the Imperialism of Great Britain than for that of Germany. Naturally, we prefer the former to the latter; but it is useless disguising or ignoring the fact that it is largely to their conflict that the world owes the present tragedy of war. Apart from this, Mr. Gould's contribution to the work of educational reconstruction deserves the highest praise and the most careful study. There is a lively preface to the book by Dr. Hayward, who gives Mr. Gould high praise as an educationalist, and properly emphasizes his services and sacrifices in that cause.

The French Revolution.

XI.

Conclusion.

(Concluded from p. 251.)

In the preceding articles I do not pretend to have given a full history of the French Revolution. Readers "in the know" will perceive that many interesting persons and things have been left without mention, or passed over with a scanty reference. I shall have achieved my object if I have induced some readers of the *Freethinker*, who may, perhaps, have taken previously little interest in the Revolution, to turn to the real historians and read this great story for themselves.

The English classic on the subject is, undoubtedly, Carlyle. Unfortunately, Carlyle was credulous and uncritical, and on political and religious issues was about as muddle-headed as any writer with a reputation can contrive to be. He had a bilious hatred of democracy, which he called "anarchy," and his religious views, in spite of his rejection of Christianity, retained such a thick coating of mystical Puritanism as to make him incapable of treating an Atheist with even common fairness. About the best English work on the Revolution is by an American, Mr. H. Morse Stephens, who, unhappily, only completed two volumes of his history, and left his readers stranded in the middle of the Reign of Terror. The works of Mr. Hilaire Belloc, especially his lives of Danton and Robespierre, are worth reading, as also is Mr. Belfort Bax's *Marat: the People's Friend*—a careful rehabilitation of the most maligned of all the Revolutionists, and a book to which I hereby record my deep indebtedness.

A work well worth perusal by those who do not mind long digressions on the economic side is Prince Kropotkin's *The Great French Revolution*. Kropotkin writes as an Anarchist, and, as such, has little good to say of any political leader in any party, and this bias must be allowed for.

Naturally, it is to French writers that one must look for the best work on the Revolution. Mignet's *History* is to be recommended to those who appreciate brevity and fairness. Lamartine's *Histoire des Girondins* is a sentimental romance more than a history. The most important modern work is the monumental *Histoire Politique* of M. Aulard, Professor at the Sorbonne, which is available in an English translation.

These are but a small fraction of the enormous literature on the French Revolution; but a study, even of this fraction, is especially desirable for English readers, in view of the systematic way in which English writers, especially novelists, have poisoned the atmosphere with prejudice in this connection. Nearly all English writers seem to start with furious Royalist prejudices, and to have only the most superficial acquaintance with the facts. The palm for sheer tosh must be awarded to the Baroness Orczy, whose *Scarlet Pimpernel* series of novels appears to enjoy a popularity which speaks badly for the intelligence of her readers. The only good novel on the subject I have ever read is Anatole France's *Les Dieux ont Soif*, which is almost beyond praise, and neither "extenuates" nor "sets down in malice" anything about the Revolution.

So much for the literary side. Let us now return to the point at which we began, viz., the permanent significance of this great upheaval.

The Revolution is significant, less for the results it achieved than for the principles it proclaimed and the movements it inaugurated. Those principles are conveniently summarized as "liberty, equality, and fraternity," which means, in explicit terms, *the maximum possible freedom of every human being from domination by other human beings*. In economics, this is expressed as the abolition of the exploitation of the worker; in politics, as the acceptance of consent rather than force as the basis of government—the corollary of this being universal adult suffrage; in religion, as the repudiation of all interference with liberty of thought and expression, the abolition of all sectarian privileges—such as "establishment"—and the right of every child to be brought up free from speculative bias, until he or she is of an age to judge rationally on such matters.

Needless to say, the Revolution, though all these principles were voiced in the course of its development, achieved little of them; indeed, as I pointed out at the beginning of these articles, the main thing to remember about it is that it is not finished. Economically, the solid result of the French Revolution was the abolition of feudal rights and restrictions, and the creation of a preponderant class of peasant proprietors in France. This achievement is much belauded by certain writers in this country, such as Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton, who seem to think that the only thing necessary to establish economic beatitude is to make most people peasant proprietors. As to this, Prince Kropotkin points out, that the application of the principle in France was very partial; that in large districts, such as La Vendee, where the peasants were "loyal" (in the Royalist sense), the principle was not applied at all; that where it was applied, the better-off peasants got the lion's share; and that, in any case, the fact that a large number of peasants had managed to become freeholders could be no consolation whatever to the urban workman, who found himself at the end of the Revolution helpless in the hands of his new masters, the *parvenu* middle class. Politically, as we have seen, universal suffrage was swept away in the "Thermidorian" reaction, and was not recovered until 1848. Here,

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however, at any rate, the ground lost has been recovered, though slowly and with much vicissitude; and though the third French Republic does not enjoy so democratic a Constitution as that of 1793, the conquest of universal suffrage seems to be permanent. In the religious sphere, the principle of the separation of Church and State, first recognized after the fall of Robespierre, was overthrown by Napoleon, and has had to wait until the twentieth century for its reassertion. As it is the fashion in some quarters to regard Napoleon as the champion and continuer of the Revolution, it is as well to put it on record here that his re-establishment of Catholicism in the "Concordat" was undertaken avowedly with a Conservative object. Napoleon is recorded to have said: "You cannot have property without inequality, and you cannot have inequality without religion"; in other words, Catholicism must be used to bull-dose the working-classes into submission to their masters, the *parvenu* middle-class, who had called in Napoleon to protect their property. Napoleon also said, *apropos* of Atheism: 'Ne me parlez pas des hommes sans Dieu; j'ai connu les hommes sans Dieu en 1793; on ne gouverne pas ces hommes-la, on les fusille." He was referring to the democratic "dechristianizers," his old comrades in arms at Toulon, whom he had basely betrayed, and now wanted to put under the Pope and the priests again. When Napoleon was crowned Emperor in 1804, the Republican General Augereau said, alluding to the magnificence of the ceremony: "Nothing was wanting —*nothing but the million or so of men who had died to put an end to all that.*"

But, as I have already said, the French Revolution is not an event only in French history, but in world-history. The Radical movement in England and Scotland took its rise, no doubt, from the conditions resulting from the Industrial Revolution, which created a cleavage between the interests of the artizan and labourer on the one hand, and those of the capitalist and landlord on the other; but it owed much intellectually to the wind that blew from the Channel. The ideas expressed academically by Godwin, popularly by Cobbett, or poetically by Shelley, were the ideas that had agitated the "sections" of Paris, and the people's clubs of France. From the early Radicals they passed into the Chartist Movement, from the Chartists into the Republicanism of the seventies, and so into modern Socialist and Labour politics.

The superficial reactionary is apt to hold up the French Revolution as an example of the inevitable failure of all attempts at the practical realization of ideal aims. How often, in one's youth, has one heard one's elders say: "Look at the French Revolutionists! They began all very finely, with 'liberty, equality, and fraternity,' but they ended by chopping off each other's heads!"

Now, it should be obvious that this kind of sneer (the kernel of which is the inevitable contrast between any ideal aim and its application in a conditioned world) can be levelled against any historical movement whatever. One can easily say of Christianity: "It began all very finely with 'the kingdom of God,' and it ended in their burning one another alive." Christianity has had just fifteen times as long to work itself out as the Revolution has had, and it has caused more suffering and unnecessary bitterness, and led to less amelioration in man's lot, than the Revolution. Christianity was able, after two or three centuries of propaganda, to impose its doctrines on the world. From that day, for more than twelve centuries, its principles were unchallenged in most of southern and western Europe. In those twelve centuries, commonly called the "Dark Ages" and the "Middle Ages," the aspiration of Lord John Manners was fulfilled in anticipation: "art and science, laws and learning," died, and Europe was left, not, indeed, with an "old nobility," but with a new caste of barbarian ruffians, balanced by a turbulent priesthood, for whose maintenance the tillers of the soil were compelled to set aside so many days' labour every week. And then the admirers of this state of things have the impudence to charge modern reformers with seeking to establish the "Servile State"!

Christianity, then, may fairly be judged and condemned by its results. The Revolution, however, has never had a chance to show what it can do, having been engaged for 127 years in an uphill struggle against the forces of monarchical absolutism, clerical dogmatism, wealthy class interest, and sheer human stupidity. People talk of the Reign of Terror as though that were the typical achievement of the Revolution; but they ignore the fact that, but for the infamous war waged by the backward monarchies of Europe, aided and abetted by William Pitt and the English landed and moneyed classes, against the French people "rightly struggling to be free," there would have been no Reign of Terror.

It is true, of course, that the Democratic Party in France went astray; they lacked, in the broadest sense of the word, *experience;* not only personal experience in political matters, but the necessary data of social science to cope with the *causes* of the servitude and injustice against which they fought. The sciences of political economy and sociology, in the course of the nineteenth century, have placed at the disposal of democracy a wealth of knowledge which was not available at the French Revolution; and the application of science to industry has rendered possible a vista of security and leisure for all, which was only dimly grasped by a few then. But whatever tools and weapons we use, it is still the old principle which we have to further by their means: the principle that no restriction of man's liberty of thought, word, and deed, is to be suffered, which does not justify itself by guaranteeing to him a greater measure of liberty than that which it takes away. "Ni Dieu ni maitre," no supernatural dogmas, no reverence for ancient institutions, no vested interests, no "sanctity of the family," must be allowed to stand in the way of the one end of society, the liberation of the individual human being to think his own thoughts and live his own life; and all machinery, political and economic, must be made a means to that end.

Robert Arch.

The Monarch of Cereals.

V.

(Continued from p. 253.)

If adequately watered, vast territories in the States may be placed under permanent tillage. When Dickens wrote *Martin Chuzzlewit* the great Mississippi valley was a wilderness. But as the population streamed westwards immense areas of this naturally fertile river region were brought under the plough. Man, then, passed beyond the well-watered Mississippi and lower Missouri lands towards the eastern slopes of the Rockies. This invasion of the normally arid West coincided with a succession of seasons in which the rainfall was more copious than usual. The accepted view was that with the advance of civilization the rainfall in these regions had permanently increased. This theory suffered a severe shock through the weather conditions of subsequent years when the average rainfall (10 to 20 inches) decreased nearly one half. Owing to the intense heat

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and drought, millions of acres of corn crops shrivelled into skeleton stalks. Scores of thousands of settlers were reduced from prosperity to abject poverty and misery. Prayers, and by no means perfunctory prayers, were offered for the sweet showers of heaven. Dynamite was exploded to bring down the supplicated moisture. But the gods proved deaf to man's entreaties. And, we are told :—

> The blunt fact remained, and still remains, that many millions of acres were dead, vacant, and profitless, simply because of their aridity. This land has little value now, for in many places a whole section does not yield enough to keep a fleet-footed sheep from starving.

All that is required for this and other areas is irrigation. Lands adjoining the Colorado, Columbia, and Missouri streams would support millions of people while adding considerably to the world's wheat crop were they watered. Several millions of acres are already irrigated, and ample water exists in the environing rivers to irrigate many millions more. Irrigation also fertilizes the soil. The sediment deposited by the Nile in its annual flood adequately maintains the richness of the Egyptian soil. The waters of this celebrated river deposit large amounts of nitrogen, while other famous streams, such as the Rio Grande and St. Lawrence, hold in solution invaluable substances extremely beneficial to vegetable life.

The plant which provides the staff of life is subject to innumerable adverse influences at the hands of cold and dispassionate Nature. In addition to the disasters which overtake the cereal in seasons of excessive rainfall, gales, drought, and cold, there exist various diseases and insect enemies which flourish at the plant's expense. Vegetable pathology is a recently developed department of science. In 1885 four institutions only were engaged in the study of plant maladies in the United States. In 1895 over one hundred expert investigators were actively occupied in this field of research, while fifty agricultural colleges were seeking to solve the economic and botanical problems involved. Weeds, again, choke the crops and impoverish the soil. The so-called Russian thistle, which is really a saltwort, has shown itself a hardy enemy to the husbandman. It was unknown in the United States until 1873 when it was unwittingly sown with flax seed imported from Russia. Dakota, where it was accidentally planted, is an ideal habitat for the weed, and it spread rapidly in succeeding years. Within a couple of decades "it infested a continuous area of about 35,000 miles, and caused at least 1,600,000 dollars damage to wheat every year." By 1895 this weed had invaded a vast territory, and its depredations assumed very serious proportions. As the average Russian thistle produces from 20,000 to 30,000 seeds, while some giant specimens have been estimated to carry as many as 200,000, its powers of reproduction are immense. In its native land this weed is a positive curse, which worsens as the years pass away. Indeed, in the Caspian region, large and important tracts of land formerly cultivated have become so overrun that they have been abandoned. Science, however, has arrested the thistle's advance in America, and, no doubt, it will soon be reduced to the level of an ordinary weed. Wild garlic, cockle, true thistles, darnel, and other forms of "plants in the wrong place" when present in the wheat fields, are a serious eyesore to the farmer, but good husbandry produces heavy crops, and heavy crops keep down the weeds.

Painstaking inquiries in America and elsewhere acquit the birds of the charges made against them by sundry writers. Among all the feathered creatures frequenting the grain lands not one species can be said to be entirely harmful. In sober truth it is ascertained that—

> the good that many of them do by destroying injurious insects and seeds more than counterbalances the damage occasioned by the eating of grain. At least fifty different birds act as weed destroyers, and help to eradicate nearly 100 species of noxious plants. The number of weed seeds eaten is enormous, one bird eating a thousand seeds of some kinds for a single breakfast. The insects eaten by these birds are also generally noxious. There is usually an equilibrium of organisms in Nature, and birds become harmful only when they disturb this proper balance by increasing out of proportion to their environment.

Among the fungoid pests of wheat are "glume spot," wheat scab, smut, rust, blight, and mildew. Smut is a fungoid disease of a serious character, and two kinds of this ailment attack wheat. In Greece and Rome this malady was common, so that it is an ailment of long standing. The amount of damage due to "stinking smut" varies. As the parasite lives exclusively at its victim's expense the crop is injured in proportion to the number of infected wheat plants. The spores of the fungus discharge an offensive odour, hence the term "stinking smut." In bad cases from 50 to 75 per cent. of the heads of wheat are diseased while the remainder becomes so contaminated as to be worthless as flour, and positively dangerous as seed. This disease is widespread, and unless it is dealt with it increases in intensity. Loose smut is not so repellent, and leads to smaller loss, but it will injure the crop in normal instances as much as 10 per cent., while, at times, it will ruin half the harvest. Science has provided various remedies for these diseases which, when properly applied, have yielded satisfactory results. But many farmers refuse to adopt them, with the consequence that in the States, Canada, and in Europe, the ravages of the smut maladies are still very great.

Wheat rust is also due to the presence of parasitic plants on the cereal. In Northern America this disease inflicts heavier losses on the wheat raiser than any other fungoid or insect foe. It is estimated that the monetary value of the wheat ruined every season in the States alone totals twenty million dollars. Terrible is its toll in Russia and other lands, while in moist warm climates, such as prevail in parts of China and Japan, rust disease is one of the main obstacles to the growth of the grain. Even in an old agricultural country like England, rust in some seasons represents a very grave loss to the wheat producer. There seems no certain remedy for the pest save, perhaps, the evolution of rust proof varieties of the plant.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

A Story Without a Title.

By Vladimir Korolenko.

In the fifth century, even as nowadays, the sun rose every morning and set every evening. In the dew-besprinkled morning his first beams saluted each other, the earth awakened, and the air was filled with gladness and hope and delight. In the evening the earth had had time to sober down again, and went to sleep in gloomy darkness. One day was made in the likeness of another day, and one night of another night. Sometimes the clouds gathered overhead, and the thunder rattled noisily and angrily. Sometimes a wandering star would drop from the sky, or a monk white with fear would rush in and tell his brothers how he had seen a tiger not many paces from the monastery. And then once again the days resembled other days, and the nights other nights.

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The monks worked hard, and said their prayers. The old abbot played the organ, wrote Latin verses, and composed music; for the wonderful old man had marvellous gifts. Even the oldest monks, whose sensitiveness had become dulled by age, could not keep back their tears when the sounds of music-making came from his cell. When he spoke of the most ordinary things—the trees, the sea, or God's creatures, the animals—it was impossible for them to listen without smiles or tears. It was as though the chords of the organ were repeated within his soul. But when he was angry, when he gave himself up to excessive joy, or when he began to talk of things terrible or great, then he was overcome by a passionate inspiration, tears welled in his eyes, his face flushed, his voice thundered, and the monks felt that their souls were aflame with his inspired words. At such great and wonderful moments his power was limitless, and if he had ordered his brethren to throw themselves into the sea they would have hastened to carry out his commands.

His music, his voice, his verses in which he glorified God and heaven and earth, were a fountain of contentment and joy for the holy monks. It did happen at times that, with the monotony of their life, they grew weary of trees and flowers, of spring and autumn; the unceasing murmur of the sea and the singing of birds became a burden to them, but the precious gifts of their aged abbot was their bread of life.

Decades went by, and still one day resembled another day, and one night another night. Saving the wild birds and beasts, not a living thing was to be seen around the monastery. The nearest city was a long, long way off, and you had to journey across a hundred miles of desert to reach it. Only men who hated and had renounced life, and who entered the monastery as a living tomb, only these had the courage to cross the desert.

What was the astonishment of the monks when one night they heard a loud hammering at the monastery gates! It was a man, a dweller in the city, an ordinary sinning mortal who loved life. Before he asked the abbot's blessing, he called for food and wine. When he was asked how he came from the town to the desert, he answered by telling a long story. He had gone out hunting, had drunk too much, and had lost his way. When they wanted him to become a monk and save his soul, he said with a smile: "I am no fit companion for such as you."

His hunger and thirst being satisfied, he looked round at the monks who were waiting upon him, and shook his head reproachfully. "You monks," he said, "do nothing. You only know how to eat and drink—nothing else. Is this the way you save the soul? While you are sitting here in peace, eating and drinking, and dreaming of everlasting bliss, your fellow-beings are perishing and going post haste to hell. Look at what goes on in the cities! Some are dying of hunger; others, not knowing what to do with their money, wallow in debauchery, and perish like flies in honey. Men have no faith, no truth. Whose business is it, then, to save them? Must I do it? I, who am drunk from morning to night. Has God given you faith and loving hearts for you to stay here within four walls, and do nothing?"

The drunken words of the townsman were rude and distasteful. But in some strange way they affected the old abbot. He exchanged glances with the monks, turned very pale, and said:

"My brothers, this man speaks truth to us. The poor people, in their unwisdom and weakness, are perishing through wickedness and unbelief while we stir not from our seats. Why should I not go out and tell them of Christ, whom they have forgotten?"

The old man was carried away by the words of the townsman. The next day he said good-bye to his brethren, took his staff, and set out for the town. And the monks were left without his music, his eloquence, and his verses.

Wearily they lived through one month and then another, and still the old man did not return. At last, when the third month had gone by, they heard the well-known knocking of his staff on the monastery gate. The monks rushed to greet him, overwhelming him with questions. But instead of rejoicing with them, he wept bitterly, and refused to answer their many questions. The monks saw that he had aged very much, and had grown thinner. His face was weary and expressed deep sorrow, and when he wept he had the appearance of a man who had been insulted. The monks wept in sympathy with the old man. They asked him why his face had become lined with grief. But he made no answer to their questions, and locked himself in his cell. For full seven days he sat in his cell, eating and drinking nothing, and weeping unceasingly. When they knocked at his door and besought him to come to them and share his sorrow with them, his only answer was a profound silence.

At last he came out. Gathering the monks around him, his eyes red with weeping and his countenance full of sorrow and indignation, he told them of what had happened to him in those three months. His voice was calm and his eyes smiled when he described his way from the monastery to the town. On his way, he said, the birds sang to him, the brooks murmured, and young and sweet hopes stirred within his soul. He was a soldier marching to battle, confident of victory, and so light was his heart that the long journey seemed but a very short one.

But his voice shook, his eyes flashed, and he was full of wrath when he began to speak of the town and its people. Never in his life had he seen or dared to imagine what he saw when he went through the town. Now, for the first time in his life and in his old age, did he see and understand how powerful the Devil was, how beautiful evil was, and how weak, cowardly, and insignificant was our common human nature. By an unfortunate accident, the first house he visited was a house of ill-fame. He found men and women eating and drinking without measure. When they were drunk with wine they sang songs, and boldly uttered terrible and disgusting words which no God-fearing man would dare to say. Immeasurably bold and free and happy, they had no fear of God or the Devil or death, but spoke and did anything they wished, and went wherever their lusts led them. And the wine, clear like amber and flashing with golden sparks, must have been strangely sweet and aromatic, because everyone that drank of it smiled blissfully and craved for more.

And the old man, becoming more and more enraged, and weeping with anger, continued to describe what he had seen. On a table among the feasters was standing a half-naked harlot. It would be difficult to find in nature anything more beautiful, more ravishing. This serpent in a woman's form was young, with jet black hair, sparkling eyes, and full red lips. Shameless and naked, she smiled as though she would say: "Behold how immodest and how beautiful I am!" A silken gauze fell in lovely folds from her shoulders, but her beauty refused to be concealed by the drapery, and, like the young, green blades of grass, easily broke through its sheath. The shameless woman drank wine, sang lascivious songs, and gave herself to those who desired her.

Then the old man, stamping his foot with anger, described the chariot races, the bull fights, the stage

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plays, and the studios of the artists, where naked women were painted or modelled in clay. He spoke of these things eloquently, with inspiration, and the monks listened greedily to his words, breathless with a strange excitement!.....After describing all the charm of the Devil, the beauty of evil, and the ravishing loveliness of the loathsome body of woman, the old man cursed the Devil and all his works, and turned round and went back to his cell.

The next morning, when he came out of his cell, not one monk was to be seen in the monastery. They had all rushed off to the city.

(*Translated from the Russian by*)

George Underwood.

Correspondence.

CHRISTIANITY AS FACTUALITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—As one who has been deeply interested in this controversy, I should like to express my great approval of the admirable spirit manifested by both gentlemen concerned in it.

But Mr. Powell's last article seemed to contain one or two faulty points.

He objects to Mr. Lloyd's assertion that "the world is chock-full of evils and wrongs" if meant in any absolute or ultimate sense.

In what way are we to judge of right and wrong, truth and justice, except relatively to our standards?

Mr. Powell appears to suggest that God's standard of morality may in the ultimate not be ours at all, and if this is so, he cuts the ground from under his feet when he stands up in his own pulpit.

And, again, how can Mr. Lloyd be dogmatic in asserting what every one knows to be a truism, that the universe is "infinite in extent and eternal in duration"? This seems to savour of quibbling. The question of whether there is a God or not does not seem to me as important as the uses to which the belief in God is applied. If the God of Science (as in Mr. Powell's sermon) is deaf to prayer and praise, what is the use of worshipping a "Father-heart"?

Mr. Powell is one of the new school of theologians, and we, as Rationalists, are proud to think that his views are the result of the magnificent work of the grand pioneers of Freethought, but he has a little bit further to go before complete emancipation is attained from the shackles of past ages.

It will come in time; but, for the present, I am content to welcome with a good heart all work such as Mr. Powell's from *within* the Church.

John Breese.

P.S.—Your readers may be interested to know that Mr. Powell has a "Chart of the Ages" hung in his church from which he teaches the children *the truth* regarding Man and the Universe. Rationalists could not wish anything better than this. Gain the child, and we have gained the day.—J. B.

The preacher was having a sort of test meeting by asking the congregation questions on their conduct. "Now, brethren," he said, "all of you who pay your debts will please stand up." In response to this there was an apparently unanimous uprising. "Now," said the preacher, asking the others to sit down, "all those who do not pay will please stand up." One man alone rose. "Ah, brother," said the preacher, "why is it that you, of all this congregation of brethren, should be so different?" "I don't know, parson," he replied, slowly, as he looked around over his friends and acquaintances in the meeting, "unless it is that I'm not a liar, and 'cause I can't get what the people round me owe me."

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 Institute (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 7, Chapman Cohen, "Religion Before and After the War."

Mr. A. D. Howell Smith's Discussion Class (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Wednesday, May 2, instead of Thursday, at 7.30.

Outdoor.

West Ham Branch N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, E. Burke, a Lecture.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Hyatt; 6.30, Messrs. Kells and Yates.

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Views and Opinions.

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

Nearly a year ago we called attention to the attempt of the London County Council to seriously curtail the rights of propaganda in the parks and open spaces under its control. On May 30, 1916, a resolution was passed deciding to prohibit the sale of literature after September 30. The fixing of the date was in itself suspicious. If the literature sold was such as ought not to be permitted, or if the selling of it was a nuisance to people using the parks, the proper course would have been to stop it at once. But, with the meetings in full swing, this would have ensured a public outcry, and publicity was the last thing the reactionists on the Council desired. By postponing the enforcement of the order until the lecture season was practically over, it was, undoubtedly, hoped that the thing would have been accomplished without more than an ineffective grumble, particularly as public attention was absorbed by the War. This, we think, would have happened but for the publicity given the matter in the *Freethinker*. That exposed the plot. On the initiative of the N.S.S., a meeting of London societies was called, and the Rev. Stewart Headlam opened the fight in the Council itself. A protest committee was formed, of which Mr. F. Verinder is chairman, Miss Vance, secretary, and on which I represent the N.S.S. That committee consists of between thirty and forty London societies, including the London Trades Council with its very large membership. It has been at work right through the winter, and, with the opening of the lecture season, it will assume a more public activity.

* * *

The Purpose Behind.

What was there behind the Council's attempt to prohibit the sale of literature in the parks? The avowed reason, the one given at the time the resolution was passed, was that there was no longer any necessity to permit it, as it could be bought elsewhere. There was no hint that those who had permission to sell abused that permission, or that there had been annoyance to anyone in the selling. A more miserable excuse for an attempt to rob the public of a long standing right was never made. It imposed on no one. Those who voted for the resolution knew better, and those who voted against laughed at it. There is no doubt whatever, there is no room for doubt, that this prohibition was intended as a first step towards abolishing the meetings altogether. They have always been regarded with disfavour by some members of the L.C.C., and these thought that distraction of mind by the War offered a favourable opportunity for action. The prohibition was a first step. It is the literature to-day, it will be the meetings to-morrow. It is wiser and easier to resist reaction at the outset than to fight it when it has gained confidence through success and grown insolent through achievement.

* * *

Forcing the Issue.

That is the view taken by the committee of protest, and it is one with which we heartily concur. Writing last year, we said that literature *would* be sold in the parks whether the Council agreed or not. In spite of a discussion on the Council, in spite of the arguments of a deputation it agreed to receive, the Council declined to budge. It would not even agree to postpone the whole matter until after the War. It probably felt it was a case of "now or never." Well, the result was that the sales went on as before. Literature was sold right through October and part of November. It was then dropped owing to the severe weather, which made outdoor meetings impossible. The names of a number of sellers were taken, and, in due course, Miss Vance was written by the Council's solicitor to the effect that literature had been sold at N.S.S. meetings in defiance of the Council's regulations, and that unless an "undertaking" was given not to repeat the offence proceedings would be instituted. Of course, the undertaking was *not* given, and no proceedings have been instituted. That is how the matter stands at the moment of writing. The Council has not withdrawn its prohibition, neither the N.S.S. nor the other societies associated have weakened in their determination to keep on selling. The commencement of the summer lecturing season once more brings the question to the front. If the Council, by its unjustifiable interference with a long standing public right, forces a public agitation, at a moment when such an agitation may be deprecated "in the interests of the War," it has only itself to blame.

* * *

Step by Step.

Let us once more emphasize the real nature of the Council's action. The right to sell literature in the Council's parks has never yet been interfered with, save to the extent of requiring that copies of the things to be sold should be submitted to the Council for approval. And this, it will be observed, gave the Council the power to prohibit any literature which it thought unsuitable for sale. The literature could only be sold *at* the meetings, so that the general public could not be subjected to annoyance. This arrangement has worked with the

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utmost smoothness for years. The Council's own officials report that there has been no complaint and no trouble. Why, then, interfere now? The only reason is the desire to ultimately prohibit meetings altogether. That, indeed, is the logical thing to do. To prohibit propaganda by literature and permit it by speech is ridiculous. What a man writes, he will usually exercise some care over; whereas a man may, on the spur of the moment, say things that are unwarranted, and even reprehensible. And we do not believe that the reactionists on the L.C.C. are so illogical as to willingly permit the one while they deny the other. The right of publication and the right of public meeting hang together. The Council is trying to prohibit one as a preliminary to forbidding the other.

* * *

A Call to Arms.

The issue, then, is once more before us. Had we not been at war, a County Council election might have convinced these reactionists that they had embarked on a dangerous course. But there are ways of influencing the members of the Council even between elections. And to this end we repeat our advice of last year. Let lovers of freedom write letters of protest to their L.C.C. members. Let societies everywhere follow the same plan. If these fail, well, the Council is a statutory body, and it may find that there are means of challenging the way in which it exercises its powers before another and a higher tribunal. Above all, we must show the Council that we are in earnest. *Literature will continue to be sold in the parks*, and if the Council is obdurate, people will be prosecuted, and we presume fined, for selling it. To that end we must organize our forces. It is useless having a score of sellers in one place and none in another. Let all who are willing to act as sellers of pamphlets while the struggle is on send their names in to the N.S.S. Secretary, who is also Secretary of the General Committee, saying when and where they are prepared to sell. The fight can then be conducted on effective lines, and we shall gain a maximum of result with a minimum of effort.

* * *

Worth Fighting For.

This is the second attempt made by the Council within five years to curtail freedom of propaganda. Knowing that many struggling societies depend upon collections to help meet expenses, it first issued a ukase that collections would no longer be permitted. This was resisted, and we won. The second attempt is now being made, and we think we shall win again if we only show ourselves determined enough. If we are told that this is not a time for internal public quarrels, the reply is that the quarrel has been forced upon us, and we cannot stand quietly by while our liberties are filched from us. Five millions of British soldiers are under arms for the purpose, we are told, of preserving our freedom. Well, let us remember that if they are fighting for our liberties abroad, it is our duty to defend their liberties at home. When they return, it should be to a homeland not less free than when they left. It would be the cruellest of satires to find that just when we are beating Prussianism in the field, we are quietly submitting to its establishment in the Council-chamber. There is nothing more difficult to gain than freedom; there is nothing easier to lose. In this case vigilance and courage will, we are sure, overcome the efforts of a handful of reactionaries clothed with temporary power. And we have no doubt we shall have a good public opinion behind us in the fight.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A racehorse has been named Armageddon. Is this another proof of the promised revival of religion?

Christianity and the Symbolism of Factuality.

UNDER the above heading the Rev. F. E. Powell contributes a second article to this journal for March 15 in criticism of my friendly attack upon his theological views as originally expressed in a published sermon, entitled "The Father-Heart of God and the World-Agony of War"; but, with all due deference, I must say that instead of answering he ingeniously evades all the points raised in my article for March 25. In doing this he indulges in several curious charges against me. The first is that I "part company with known facts and speculate upon unverifiable assumptions" in expressing my acceptance of the scientific belief in the eternity and infinitude of the universe. I should like to have those known facts, from which I thus depart, enumerated and named, and I invite Mr. Powell to undertake the task. What facts are there, for example, against the eternity of Nature? Everybody admits that our solar system has had a beginning, and must of necessity come to an end; but we learn from astronomy that it was preceded and shall be succeeded by other solar systems; these come and go, but Nature stays on for ever. It is true that, in 1850, when *Social Statics* appeared, Spencer believed in creation, the argument from design, and the possibility of balking "the creative design" (pp. 81-88, 517); but, by 1862, when the first edition of *First Principles* came out, he had outgrown those views and come to teach the Indestructibility of Matter, which implies its eternity. Either a beginning or an end to matter was now philosophically inconceivable. As Mr. Powell persists in thrusting Spencer at me, I feel obliged metaphorically to pelt him with Spencer in return, for Spencer is decidedly on my side. He puts the case for the eternity of matter thus:—

> Thought consists in the establishment of relations. There can be no relation established, and therefore no thought framed, when one of the related terms is absent from consciousness. Hence it is impossible to think of something becoming nothing, for the same reason that it is impossible to think of nothing becoming something—the reason, namely, that nothing cannot become an object of consciousness. The annihilation of Matter is unthinkable for the same reason that the creation of Matter is unthinkable (*First Principle*, p. 158).

Sir Oliver Lodge, also, is substantially sound on this point. He says:—

> We may all fairly agree, I think, that whatever really and fundamentally *exists* must, so far as bare existence is concerned, be independent of time. It may go through many changes, and thus have a history; that is to say, must have definite time-relations, so far as its changes are concerned; but it can hardly be thought of as either going out of existence, or as coming into existence, at any given period, though it may completely change its form and accidents (*Life and Matter*, p. 101).

Spencer's very definition of Evolution involves the idea of the eternity of the universe in some form or other. The sum total of Matter never varies; but it is perpetually undergoing changes of form, and evolution, according to Spencer, is the name given to the whole series. What is evolution? Mr. Powell's Master answers: "Evolution under its most general aspect is the integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion." It may be simple or compound, but in essence it is always the process that creates history.

Again, are there any known facts which give the lie to the belief in the infiniteness of nature? The reader will notice that I did not say it can be *proved* that the universe is infinite in extent; but all the facts hitherto

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discovered by astronomers point in the direction of its limitlessness. This is a legitimate assumption, because it rests, not upon mere speculation, but upon well-attested astronomical facts. Neither did I speculate in any direction upon that assumption, whether verifiable or unverifiable; I merely stated that I accepted it, and could discern no trace of an infinite and eternal energy above or apart from the force and energy within the universe known as natural laws. Mr. Powell does me a direct injustice when he accuses me of "dogmatizing" concerning the infinitude and eternity of the universe. With the utmost respect, I challenge him to point to a single dogmatic statement either in my review of his sermon or in my rejoinder to his reply. I am not in the habit of dogmatizing on subjects concerning which I know nothing; and the only fault I found with the reverend gentleman was, not that he cherished beliefs which I could not share, but that he offered such beliefs to the public as well established facts. My contention was and is, not that a person has no right to believe in "the Father-heart of God," if he can, but that the Father-heart of God is not an established fact. But I do affirm most unhesitatingly that the reverend gentleman is radically mistaken when he says that his belief was Spencer's.

It is altogether too funny to say of me that "whilst affecting Agnosticism concerning the origin and destiny of the vast world-process, I immediately blossom out into a full-fledged Gnostic who knows what is and is not consistent with the nature of the force underlying *all* phenomena." I have not made the least pretension to such wonderful knowledge. What I have said and do say is, that I have neither consciousness nor knowledge derived from obesrvation of "the Infinite and Eternal Energy" which, to Mr. Powell, means the Father-heart of the God of Jesus Christ. I plead total ignorance of the two Gods, the one stern and the other loving, and of the two Fathers, the one of science and philosophy and the other of revelation and experience, whom the reverend gentleman believes in and preaches. The ultimate significance of the universe is beyond me altogether, and those who talk about it with such confidence do, in my judgment, but darken counsel "by words without knowledge."

Mr. Powell declares that "the supreme question is, not how far Spencer believed in the Infinite or Eternal Energy as apart from and of prior existence to the universe, but whether such an energy exists at all." To begin with, Spencer does not assert that *such* an energy does exist at all. Mr. Powell says that "we can only know of it by its effects"; but, I ask, are there any effects which directly or indirectly testify to the existence of an energy apart from and of prior existence to the universe? How can there be, when, to adopt Spencer's own words, "we can no longer contemplate the visible creation as having a definite beginning or end" (*First Principles*, p. 506)? "Science," says Mr. Powell, "is concerned with phenomena only." Spencer agrees with him, but significantly adds:—

> Intellect being framed simply by and for converse with phenomena, involves us in nonsense when we try to use it for anything beyond phenomena. This inability of the thinking faculty in presence of the Unconditioned is shown not only by the self-contradictory nature of its *product*, but also by the arrest of its *process* before completion. In attempting to pass the limit it breaks down before it has finished its first step.

That extract is from the Postscript to Part I. of *First Principles*, written in the year 1899, in which he says further, that "it cannot be denied that to affirm of the Ultimate Reality that it is unknowable is, in a remote way, to assert some knowledge of it, and therefore involves a contradiction." And yet he contends that, despite all contradictions and nonsensical attempts to think the unthinkable, there remains a consciousness of that Ultimate Reality, but, alas, "a consciousness which cannot be put into shape." Tens of thousands of people are without that shapeless consciousness, that illogical belief in the supernatural which cannot give an intelligible account of itself; and to them there is nothing outside, beyond, or above the universe. On this point Sir Ray Lankester writes as follows:—

> One may regard the utmost possibilities of the results of human knowledge as the contents of a bracket, and place outside that bracket the factor x to represent those unknown and unknowable possibilities which the imagination of man is never wearied of suggesting. The factor x is the plaything of the metaphysician.....The self-appointed task of the metaphysician was not long ago compared by a keen thinker and great lawyer to that of "a blind man in a dark room hunting for a black cat which—is not there." The black cat which is not there is the reality represented by x. The search for it is surely not a very healthy occupation either for the blind man or for those who solemnly give attention to his accounts of his subtle devices and evergreen self-assurance (Preface to Hugh Elliot's *Modern Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson*).

Now, as regards Spencer, it should be borne in mind that when *First Principles* appeared in 1862, he was under the spell of the philosophy of Sir William Hamilton as interpreted by Dean Mansel in his *Limits of Religious Thought*, a work from which he liberally quotes in Part I. Mansel's position was that it is contrary to reason to believe in the Unconditioned, the Absolute, or God, and that the Christian's faith rests, not upon reason, but upon the authority of the Bible as God's infallible Word. In the light of the Higher Criticism that position is no longer possible, except to members of the Bible League. Spencer maintains that thinking signifies relationing; but there is a limit to the power of relationing; and writing of it in 1899 this is what the distinguished philosopher says:—

> The inevitable effect of our mental constitution is that on reaching the limit thought rushes out to form a new relation and cannot form it. A conflict hence arises between an effort to pass into the Unknowable and an inability to pass—a conflict which involves the inconsistency of feeling obliged to think something and being unable to think it (*First Principles*, p. 100).

One personal word may be allowed in conclusion. Towards Mr. Powell, though in sharp intellectual opposition to him, I entertain the friendliest possible feelings. I admire his great courage in so intrepidly championing views which are violently denounced by the overwhelming majority of theologians even in his own church. I wish to extend to him the right hand of cordial fellowship for venturing out in defence of those views into the columns of this journal. He occupies to-day the ground on which I stood, or tried hard to stand, for many years. I passed into it out of the narrowest and most bigoted Calvinistic orthodoxy; and, at last, after a long and painful struggle, I passed out of it into pure Humanism, in which I have found a home that satisfies at once my intellect and my heart. To me now the fatherly and brotherly heart is a product of social evolution; and, as Mr. Powell himself admits, evolution is an extremely slow process. Social welfare can be won only as the reward of persistent struggle, and there are times when the struggle seems futile; but our firm hope is that, in the long run, the fittest shall survive.

J. T. Lloyd.

Bishop Brent says there is Prussianism in the Churches to-day. This is very sad news, for the clergy maintain that Prussianism means Atheism.

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Mr. Kipling's New Book.

A Diversity of Creatures. By Rudyard Kipling. (Macmillan; 1917.)

SINCE Byron awoke one morning to find himself famous, few writers ever took the field with so instant and signal a success as Mr. Rudyard Kipling. Emphatic, impetuous, and audacious, he voiced contemporary passion and sentiment with no uncertain sound. Its possibilities and dangers were both mirrored in his stirring talent. First came the rumour of a new genius from the Orient, after the manner of creeds from time immemorial. Then *Plain Tales from the Hills* put many in an uncritical stage of admiration. *Soldiers Three* and *In Black and White* completed the conquest; and subsequent works in prose and verse caused the reading public, like Oliver Twist, to ask for more.

There has been, perhaps, a slackening of public interest in Mr. Kipling's works during later years, but the production of an *edition de luxe* of his writings—a rare compliment to a living author—met with so ready an appreciation that it augured well for the continuance of his fame. And Mr. Kipling's latest book, *A Diversity of Creatures*, is typical of his talent; but the prevailing impression left upon the reader is surely one of instability. The range of his subjects has widened, it is true, and the variety of his experience has increased, but there is far less sympathy and artistry, and his humour lacks the old, rich relish of former days. In a sense he may be said never to have entirely grown up. His youthful ideals are his ideals still, and they are voiced with the implacable accents of middle age. The sure touch of the true artist is so often changed for the rougher methods of the politician and propagandist.

This is particularly noticeable in his studies of abnormal phenomena, in which the neurotic element frequently approaches the "tommyrotic," such as the story of "Mary Postgate." She is a middle-aged companion to an elderly lady. The old lady has a nephew, whom the companion loves secretly. When the War breaks out, the lad joins the Flying Corps, and is killed by an accident before he goes to the Front. Mary stands by his open grave, and all the tenderness of which her womanhood was ever capable leaves her. Grief turns her into a monster, and she takes an awful vengeance on a wounded German.

Another story, "As Easy as A.B.C.," deals with the world in the year 2065, when mankind has got rid of war and democracy, and suffers only from fear of crowds. This story is vitiated by Mr. Kipling's sniffing contempt for his fellow-men. It will be seen that the gods of Mr. Kipling's youth are still the gods of his maturity, but sadly battered by the process of the years.

But Mr. Kipling's passions were always elemental, and he has given crude expression to his hatreds in some of the verses interspersed among the stories. The following lines embody his creed:—

> Whatsoever, for any cause,
> Seeketh to take or give,
> Power above or beyond the Laws,
> Suffer it not to live!
> Holy State or Holy King—
> Or Holy People's Will—
> Have no truck with the senseless thing.
> Order the guns and kill.

Happily, the book does not deal only with the sinister side of life. For Mr. Kipling has other facets to his talent, among which is a real sense of humour. Indeed, his earlier stories, such as "The Taking of Lungtugpen" and "The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney," recall the open-air humour of Marryatt and the high spirits of Fielding and Smollett. The comic satire, "The Village that Voted the Earth Flat," is quite in the old irresponsible, boyish vein, and as funny as anything he has ever written. A country member of Parliament and magistrate sets traps for motorists, fines them heavily, and insults them from the Bench. Two of his victims happen to be a great music-hall proprietor and the owner of a hundred newspapers. They take their revenge, and lampoon him on the stage and in the press. They arrange for questions to be asked in Parliament, and invent a society advocating the Flat-Earth theory, and send it down to the village for its annual meeting. By bribery, the villagers are induced to vote that the earth is flat, and in the end the publicity given to the M.P. causes him to retire into private life amid a blaze of ridicule.

There is another comic story, "The Horse Marines," in which two opposing armies at manœuvres pelt each other with mangel-wurzels, and yet another of public-school life, introducing once again "Beetle," poking fun at masters and boys alike. The remainder of the stories give life and vigour to a lively collection, which, while it will not add much to Mr. Kipling's reputation, will yet give pleasure to his numerous readers.

Like Meissonier, Mr. Kipling always succeeds best on a small canvas. *The Light that Failed*, *Stalky & Co.*, and *Captains Courageous* were magnificent failures; but his short stories, at their best, are admirable. Despite his limitations, he is one of the most popular writers of the day. With Bret Harte, he presents us with infinite riches in a little room. The best of his work would hardly bulk more largely than one of the interminable novels of old Samuel Richardson, which used to draw tears from the eyes of our great-grandmothers. For readers of to-day like their sensations brief and pungent Had Mr. Kipling's stories been told in the manner of the "penny dreadful," devoid alike of grace and grammar, we had yet read them with pleasure, so vital are they in essentials.

The most extraordinary thing about Mr. Kipling is his piety, which is constantly peeping out in his writing. The young men of the Tory press proudly acclaim him as the most religious writer since Dryden, and the Nonconformist journalists shake their heads and retort sorrowfully that he has no "soul." This, however, is the merest partizanship. Of all the gods created by men in their own likeness, the Anglo-Indian deity of Mr. Kipling is the most astonishing. For the piety is so often charged with politics, and the hymns are so often hymns of hate. But, fortunately, people read his books for his fun and fancy, and not for his theology. He helped to make India a reality to dwellers in the United Kingdom, which is no mean achievement. And he is a clever and entertaining artist.

MIMNERMUS.

Science and Spiritualism.

VIII.

(*Continued from p. 262.*)

We agree with Mr. Maskelyne that there is no use laying down a test for the spiritualists any more than for the clairvoyants. To begin with, they always object to it, and when the tests are rigidly enforced by men of a scientific cast of mind, the wonder-workers always fail. How often, for example, have the clairvoyants or ghost-seers been asked to read some document or tell the number of a bank-note carefully locked up, and always in vain? Sometimes they offer the excuse that spirits cannot, or will not, tell everything. Very likely, it is said, the shades do not care whether physiologists believe in them or not, and will not condescend to answer impertinent questions or to suffer cross-examination of a detective character. You must take what they tell you in the way they tell it to you. The spiritualists have never told us anything worth knowing, and, what is worse, they are in hopeless disagreement with one another. Will common sense

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not teach people that, if there really were a channel of intercourse between the living and the dead, many a message would come from friends gone before, of serious and weighty import instead of trifles and ineptitudes which have a suspicious resemblance to echoes of the thoughts of the living. —*Dr. Ernest Hart, "The New Witchcraft,"* p. 164.

As for religion—why, I served it, sir!
I'll stick to that! With my *phenomena*
I laid the atheist sprawling on his back.
—*Sludge, in Browning's "Sludge the Medium."*

ALTHOUGH Home was never publicly exposed in the act of trickery, still there is no doubt that many must have seen through his tricks, or some of them; but, as we have pointed out, his peculiar position as an honoured guest placed him above the category of the ordinary professional medium. Mr. Podmore, in fact, mentions a letter written by a gentleman in 1889, "in which the writer relates that at a seance held in 1855 he saw plainly that the alleged 'spirit hands' were supported by and in obvious connection with Home's arms."[1] But as this was written thirty-four years after the event, it would not be fair to attach much weight to it.

It has also been stated that Browning, the poet, caught Home in the act of trickery. Browning denied this to Mr. Myers; but, nevertheless, he considered Home a trickster and a charlatan, disagreeing with his wife on this matter, who seems to have been converted by Home to a belief in Spiritualism, much to the Poet's distress. There is not the least doubt that Browning's scarifying *Sludge the Medium* was aimed at Home. Home himself, in a savage attack on Browning in *Incidents of My Life*,[2] declares, "Mr. Browning did intend his fancy portrait of Mr. Sludge to represent me," and tells of a violent scene that occurred between them a few days after Mr. and Mrs. Browning had attended one of Home's seances, Mrs. Browning, according to Home, taking sides with Home against her husband.

Another famous man who was very dissatisfied with Home and his phenomena was Dr. Barthez, Napoleon's physician, afterwards physician to the Prince Imperial.

In his recollections, entitled *The Empress Eugenie and her Circle*, there is a letter, written by himself from Biarritz, September 5, 1857, in which he describes a visit by Home to the Empress Eugenie, who had sent for him as soon as she knew Home was in the neighbourhood. Dr. Barthez observes: "The entire belief she has in him, the animation and violence with which she speaks of him, really distress me." Home's apparent ingenuousness did not impose on Dr. Barthez, who observes: "His simple, timid, half-awkward air seemed to me to conceal a very able *savoire-faire*."

The Doctor did not attend the first seance, but, being requested to remain to the second one, he joined the company round the table, upon which the company placed their hands. Immediately the table moved, raps were heard, there were scratching sounds right and left—whether the spirits were scratching themselves, and if so, why? is not stated—Her Majesty's dress was pulled; a handbell was taken from a gentleman's hand; an accordion, held by Home with one hand, played an air. All this took place under the table, and lasted a quarter of an hour. Then the spirit rapped out a message that there were too many present, and indicated those whose presence it did not desire. "I was among the number," says the Doctor; "the explanation of that being the incredulous smile which I felt was visible on my face."

Dr. Barthez declares to his friend that he is absolutely ignorant of the manner in which the phenomena were produced, but remarks that "inasmuch as everything has to take place under a table, out of sight, and as no one is allowed to look, feel, or examine; so long as I am not allowed to use such means as I have at my disposal to obtain information and avoid error; so long as I am told that my incredulity hinders these manifestations from the other world; I shall say that I have a perfect right to disbelieve in spirits and to suspect the existence of very ordinary means, although these may escape me. In short, Mr. Home seemed to me to be a very able man, not only as a performer of tricks, but especially as a man who can command intelligences; but the spirits he evokes are not those of the other world; they are living intelligences that do his bidding."[1]

However, Dr. Barthez did not remain long in ignorance as to Home's method of producing phenomena; for, in another letter to his friend, he throws light upon the subject. He says:—

It will amuse you to hear that one of the means by which Mr. Home evokes his spirits has at last been detected. The Empress is reduced to saying that the Home of to-day is not the Home of other days; that he has lost his power and is seeking to replace it by subterfuges. The matter is simple enough. Mr. Home has thin slippers, easily drawn on and off; he has also, I fancy, cuts in his socks, which leave his toes free. At the proper moment he throws off a slipper, and with his toes tugs at a dress here and there, rings a handbell, gives a rap on this side or that, and the thing once done, quickly slips his foot back into the slipper again. This was seen by M. Morio, who drew up a full signed and written statement, with all the details necessary to establish the genuineness of his discovery. Home saw that he was found out, and I can tell you he cut a very sorry figure. He went out, saying he was ill, and all night he had nervous attacks and visions, and has been surrounded by spirits. Finally, as he was judged to be on the point of death, a priest was sent for, and a doctor.

The next day, death seeming still to be imminent, Dr. Bartley was sent for, and continues:—

He pitched a long tale about his sufferings, the spirits that tormented him, and so forth. Unhappily he had the most natural pulse imaginable. Then he pretended to go into a trance; his eyes turned up and became fixed; evidently the spirits were returning, and about to torment him again. So I took him by the arm, shook it rather roughly, and said in his ear, "Come, Mr. Home, no nonsense; let all the spirits be; you know I don't believe in them." The trance ceased at that, and he looked me straight in the face, and saw plainly enough that I was laughing at him; and the spirits immediately flew away.....I even drew up a statement which I gave to M. Morio de l'Ile to add to his account. The evocation of spirits at the villa has suddenly ceased, and we will hope this unworthy charlatan is revealed in his true colours. But Her Majesty cannot admit that anyone could have the face to play tricks on herself and the Emperor for a whole year.[2]

The signed and attested statement of M. Morio ought to be published, if it has not been destroyed in deference to imperial wishes. It is certain that Home would have been exposed upon this occasion but for the fact that the presence of the Empress prevented the exposers from causing a scene. That is where Home had the advantage over the ordinary medium; his position as a member of society on an equal footing with his patrons protected him.

We can see by this account of Dr. Barthez how Home did some of his unaccountable tricks. He could use his feet as a substitute for his hands. We know that this is quite possible if the feet are trained fairly early in life; and, as we have seen, Home commenced mediumship in his teens. I can remember, when a lad, hearing

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 230.
[2] Second Series (1872), p. 98.

[1] Dr. E. Barthez, *The Empress Eugenie and her Circle* (1912), pp. 139-142.
[2] Barthez, *The Empress Eugenie and her Circle* (1912), pp. 164-5-6.

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my father say that he saw an armless painter in Antwerp Cathedral painting pictures, holding the brush with his toes. The unshod peoples of warmer climates are much more proficient in using their toes than those whose feet have been cramped by boots. Eusapia Palladino, as we shall see, used her feet to produce "phenomena" in exactly the same way; and as her parents were Italian peasants, probably she went unshod in early life.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

American Churches and the War.

IGNORING as of none effect the dictum of their Prince of Peace that they who take the sword shall perish by the same instrumentality, the New York Federation of Christian Churches has endorsed by a vote of 158 to 52 the universal military service which men of violence propose, and recommend the most extreme measures necessary. The vote by Churches stood:—

	FOR.	AGAINST.
Baptist	16	1
Congregational	10	0
Disciples of Christ	3	0
Seventh Day Adventists ...	1	1
Protestant Episcopal	27	3
Reformed Episcopal	0	1
Evangelical Association ...	1	2
Society of Friends	0	2
German Evangelical Synod ...	0	1
Lutheran...	14	7
Methodist Episcopal	23	4
Primitive Methodist	1	0
Moravian	4	1
Presbyterian	27	20
Reformed	19	3
Unitarian	1	0
Universalist	1	2
Union Protestant	10	4

It required the 20 negative votes of the Presbyterian communion to prevent the Churches from going 5 to 1 for the sword. The *Public*, which holds that Christianity has "received a blow in the house of its supposed friends," observes that sixty years ago the Federation of Churches would have voted thus affirmatively for black slavery. The record for belligerency that the Church is making now will not give it any hesitancy, after peace shall have been established permanently by Humanitarianism, in claiming that it abolished war.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Correspondence.

ATHEISM IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am obliged to Mr. Robert Arch for his reply to my defence of Hebert, which calls for further comment. May I say at the outset that the "case against Hebert," as originally drawn up by Robert Arch, K.C., on behalf, it would seem, of the *Society of Bourgeois Respectability* and the *Guild of Serious Humour*, contained nothing whatever about Hebert's "dishonesty," nor the question of his taking the wrong "political" road? Therefore, I respectfully submit to my learned brother for the prosecution that I am only concerned with the original indictment under which I accepted a brief for the defence. This latter charged the defendant Hebert, the editor of the *Pere Duchene*—a "disreputable paper," we are told—with being a "gutter journalist," "not worthy of respect," since he used the "vilest slang of the gutter" at the expense of "dignity and decency."

Now, I submit, my Lord (Mr. Editor), and I think that the gentlemen of the jury (the readers of the *Freethinker*) will agree, that the prosecuting counsel has not substantiated his case against Hebert. All we have been told is that he cannot produce the actual incriminating document against Hebert, but that the indictment was framed upon the testimony of a person named Aulard, who gave a few specimens of the language used by Hebert. But this, I insist, is not evidence; and, mark you, the prosecution does not even say what Aulard says that Hebert says! At the same time, I am willing to agree that this Aulard is certainly a most reliable witness; and as the prosecution begs the court to give particular attention to this witness, I will go so far as to admit him.

Yet, strange to say, this witness does not help the prosecution an *iota*. In no place does this Aulard condemn Hebert's journalism as "vile," "indecent," or "disreputable." On the contrary, we are told that Hebert is a "prudent" writer, though possibly for another reason. But I do know of another person further out of court from a point of view of "evidence" than Aulard, and I refer to his English translator, who has taken it upon himself to vilify Hebert, as he does Thomas Paine, in the most outrageous manner. I submit, though I hope I am mistaken, that Mr. Arch may have been influenced by this unscrupulous person.

However, it is upon the *excerpts* (a few seeds from a granary, though by no means a specimen of the harvest) from the *Pere Duchene*, as quoted by the original witness Aulard, that Mr. Arch bases his indictment. These *excerpts* I have since looked into, and I can assure every right-minded person that, even when translated into colloquial English, they would probably leave a Methodist mothers' meeting unmoved. Yet Mr. Arch insists that if the *Freethinker* were to "habitually" use "some" of the phrases "customary" with Hebert (Mr. Arch refers possibly to other than those given by Aulard), it would be prosecuted by the police as "obscene." Of course, if we must go to the police for an opinion upon "obscenity," nothing further need be said. The truth is, that the "customary" phrases with Hebert are such as those I have already quoted. I have a distinct recollection of their nature, as I once made a comparative study between Hebert and his imitator in the Paris Commune of 1871—Eugene Vermesch, who also edited a *Pere Duchene*. As to "some" phrases, but not "habitual" with Hebert, which Mr. Arch, or at least I might say the police, might call "obscene," we must bear in mind that the open and free mind of the Gallic race is totally at variance with the cramped and narrow notions of the Anglo-Saxon race to which Mr. Arch, the police, and myself belong. May I recall, in conclusion, the incident of H. M. Stanley and the Arab sheik? Stanley was abashed at the sheik's ideas on wives, and the Arab was equally scandalized at Stanley drinking coffee! Surely nothing further need be said.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

RELIGION IN THE ARMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Referring to the interesting letter of Mr. Arthur Chapman, in your issue of April 22, and his experiences, I should like to point out that they were the result of ignorant junior officials in the Army. The War Office has explicitly laid down that a recruit, either at his attestation, or on any subsequent occasion, is not to be heckled in any manner whatever, but that his answers are to be entered accurately in the document that is being dealt with. Here is the official notification on the subject:—

ARMY COUNCIL INSTRUCTION.
No. 179 of January, 1916.

War Office, 21st January, 1916.

179. Religious denomination of a Recruit on attestation.

It has recently come to the knowledge of the Army Council that in certain cases Recruiting Officers and others when filling up the attestation papers of recruits enlisting in the Regular Army on a Duration of the War engagement, or in the Territorial Force, are in the habit of asking them to state their religious denominations. It is therefore necessary to point out that on the attestation papers referred to there is no printed question as to religion, and no question on the subject should be addressed to a recruit at the time of his attestation.

In this connection attention is drawn to W.O. letters 27/Gen. No./2514 (Chaplains), of 23rd Nov., 1914, and 27/Gen. No./4279 (Chaplains), of 30th June, 1915, and all

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Officers and N.C.Os. are reminded that whenever it may be necessary to obtain information as to a soldier's religion, as for the completion of his identity disc, etc., his own statement on the point should be taken without any attempt to influence him, and should be acted on without question. 27/Gen. No/5063 (A.G. 28). By Command of the Army Council.

It would be well if any Freethinker, likely to be associated with the military, cut the above out, and produced it when necessary.

E. B.

Acid Drops.

Mr. H. G. Wells has created a very uneasy feeling, to quote our alleged democratic newspapers, by a letter to the *Times* advocating the formation of Republican societies in Great Britain. Mr. Wells explains that he intended the subject to be discussed quite apart from the question of our own monarchy—which reads as though he were writing with his tongue in his cheek. Republican societies in this country could hardly discuss the subject without reference to our own monarchy, although it might well be done without reflection upon the present occupant of the throne. Others denounce Mr. Wells, not because Republicanism is wrong in principle—that could hardly be done in the face of recent events—but because they say we are already a Republic—a Crowned Republic. Any phrase will do so long as it sounds well.

Of course, there is no need to attack the personal character of the present occupant of the British throne, or to attack the personal character of any monarch, in order to discuss the respective merits of Republicanism and Monarchy. A change in the form of Government may be advocated at any time without the least reference to the character of anybody. All the same, the discussion has hitherto shown the small amount of clear thinking people bring to bear upon political or social issues. For the essential issue is, not whether the monarchy in its present form is good or bad, but whether it is democratic. And the complaint of rational democracy is that it is hereditary. If the people elected the head of the country, it would not make the least difference whether he were called President, King, or Emperor, or by any other title. But an *hereditary* monarchy, carrying with it an hereditary aristocracy, is anti-democratic, whether it be a good or a bad thing. And it is a pity that this simple issue cannot be kept clearly before the public.

The Mohammedan priests are very like other ecclesiastics. In view of the adverse military position of the Turks, the priests have carried off the treasures of the famous temple at Medina, which are said to be worth millions. Apparently, Allah is as powerless as all other deities in face of military force.

A brass tablet is to be placed in St. Matthew's Church, Ealing, in memory of the late Rev. H. C. Douglass, who died while celebrating Holy Communion. Had he been a Secularist who had died whilst lecturing, there would have been an edifying moral.

St. George's Day was almost forgotten this year, owing to the strenuous times in which we live. Perhaps it is as well, for this Cappadocian bishop was originally a fraudulent contractor who made big war-profits by providing the Roman Army with bad bacon. This saintly sinner was made patron of England by Henry V., and "St. George for Merry England" was long a battle-cry. Now England is no longer merry, perhaps we can dispense with the saint?

The North Leith United Free Church is periodically treated to a lengthy letter from its pastor, the Rev. Hugh Alexander, who is with the Y.M.C.A. in France, and the letter is faithfully reproduced *in extenso* in a local paper appropriately named the *Leith Burghs Pilot*. In the course of a recent letter this sky pilot says:—

> The other day I took the Bible Class, and had for my subject, "Is Prayer Answered?" It was a most memorable meeting. Each man recounted his experience on the subject —how God has answered his prayer. One man told how he was sent from one line of trenches to another. He had seen comrade after comrade shot down by the enemy, and when his turn came round he engaged in silent prayer, asking God to spare him for the sake of his loved ones at home. Not a shot was fired at him, and when his comrades asked him why he had so miraculously escaped, he replied, "It is in answer to my prayer."

What a soldier! *And* what a God! Week by week, for years and years, the latter was prayed to in innumerable churches to "Send peace in our time, oh, Lord!" but it did not restrain him from permitting the horror of the present conflict, and the blasting in the flower of their manhood of thousands and thousands of fine young lives. What about *their* loved ones? Will all the members of Mr. Alexander's congregation swallow the ineffable rubbish he pens from France?

Clerical psychology is a fearful and wonderful thing. Mr. Alexander says that "What saves our faith from disaster is the assurance that in the world to-day God is suffering on that account most of all; and this War means for God Himself sorrow and anguish. Such is the very message of the Cross, a God who suffered for the sins of men, and a God who still suffers for the sins of men. It is worth while being a preacher in these days to proclaim such a Gospel." Echo answers: "Such a Gospel!" It is, therefore, only in sorrow, suffering, and gloom that God is a reality! Brightness, cheerfulness, and mirth are *taken* in the presence of this lachrymose old deity. But all his weeping is not going to save *Him*. According to Christian teaching, he *could* have prevented this War and did not raise his little finger to do so. By his silence and indifference he has consigned millions of human beings to untold miseries. It is the sins of God and not the sins of men that require expiation. If we weigh the "sins" of men against the sufferings, physical and mental, which are imposed upon them, we shall find that the latter far outweighs the former. And the only "sins" that men can be guilty of are offences against nature, and nature, by her inevitable law of cause and effect, alone imposes the punishment. We commend this view of life to the apparently guileless Mr. Alexander.

In the House of Lords, on April 24, the Marquis of Crewe, objecting to the War Office exercising authority over the press, said: "The habit of authority grew upon those who exercised it, and he easily foresaw that at the close of the War all manner of reasons might be advanced for continuing the powers conferred by the Defence of the Realm Acts." We commend this semi-prophecy to those who so lightly view the surrender of civil liberties because it is "for the period of the War only." It is always easier to lose liberties than to regain them.

At last we have a really genuine case of faith-healing. And it is given in the *South Wales Echo*. Selina Hicks, aged ten, of Cadoxton, was diagnosed to be suffering from tuberculosis of the knee. Her knee was placed in plaster of paris, and she was advised to be sent to a home in Hampshire. Some time after she said to her mother, "Take me out of the chair; I can walk. Jesus tells me in my heart I can do so." And when the mother took off the splints, the child could walk. And the child, who "had been fond of reading the Bible," said, "Jesus has cured me." That settles it.

Many people have complained of the nuisance of church bells, particularly since the War has brought home so many nerve-shattered men, to whom quiet is a vital consideration. Mr. Newman, a Manchester solicitor, has offered, through the columns of the *Cambridge Magazine*, to give £5 towards a fund to test the right to ring church bells in defiance of the wishes of near-by residents. It is really astonishing that whereas the calling of newsboys disturbs the day of rest, the ringing of church bells and the blaring of Salvation Army bands is held to conduce to its restfulness.

We see that the prohibition on Mr. Zangwill's play, "The Melting Pot," has been withdrawn. It was disallowed because it depicted the sufferings undergone by the Jewish

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people in Russia at the hands of the late Government—and the Church. Now that the play is permitted, we wonder whether Mr. Zangwill will be permitted by the Press Bureau to publish the suppressed chapter—"The Story of the Steam Roller"—which should have appeared in his book "The War for the World."

At Forest Hill a woman was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment for telling fortunes. Yet 50,000 ministers, who tell people where they will spend eternity, are never molested.

The Rev. H. S. M'Clelland, of Glasgow, tells us that on his way to the south, recently, he found himself in a railway compartment with three fellow-travellers, "each of them typical, in his own way," of many of his Correspondents in the *Christian Commonwealth*. "One was an Atheist; that, at any rate, was what he called himself"; but before they reached the end of the journey Mr. M'Clelland had shown him that the creed he held deserved a better name than Atheism. This is a story with which we are perfectly familiar, and which we are bound to characterize as essentially false. That is to say, either the Atheist was in no sense "typical," or Mr. M'Clelland was entirely mistaken in thinking that he had won him over to any form of Theism.

Our contention is that in Mr. M'Clelland's article, entitled "Talking Theology," in the *Christian Commonwealth* for April 25, there is no argument for Theism which a fairly enlightened Atheist would have had the slightest difficulty in triumphantly rebutting. The reverend gentleman's argument was thus stated:—

> The love of the ideal, the very possession of an ideal, is only possible to personality. How comes it, then, that Humanity possesses that which you say cannot be found in the Supreme Power from whom Humanity came? The less cannot produce the greater.

No intelligent Atheist believes in the existence of "a Supreme Power from whom Humanity came," or that the possession of an ideal is any indication whatsoever that it has had a supernatural origin. To him all we are and have is the outcome of the evolutionary process. Ideals are social assets gradually acquired during countless æons of social experience. Mr. M'Clelland may be a very clever man; but he does not even understand the Atheistic position.

From a purely religious point of view, Dr. Horton is amply justified in opposing Sunday labour, even as a means of preventing future starvation, because the permission of Sunday labour for any purpose whatever would be the effectual beginning of the end of Puritanical Sabbatarianism. Dr. Horton, being fully aware of this, does his utmost to oppose the introduction of the thin end of a wedge which he knows would rob Nonconformist ministers, in particular, of the congregations upon which they depend for their livelihoods. This, too, explains the divergence of views between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Hampstead Congregational divine.

The snobbish reverence for authority affected by many people is something that helps their self-interest. Dependence upon God and an everlasting dread of what people will think are the marks of the helpless parasite who has no imagination, and who so long as he can find something to feed on will conform to any system or state of society.

Religious folk have a perfect genius for misrepresentation. The *Daily Telegraph* says the War "is veritably a crusade undertaken on behalf of the fundamental claims of the Christian faith." We do not think that the soldiers of "Infidel France" would agree to this assertion.

An evening paper has made a sensation with stories of German corpse-burning, and prints a message stating that the Pope is terribly upset. Yet Catholics are taught to believe in the resurrection of the body, and in the dogma of hell-fire.

Many newspapers made eloquent references to the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in America on the occasion of the service at St. Paul's Cathedral, held to commemorate the entry of the United States into the War. This recalls Ingersoll's jest that it was a pity that, instead of the pilgrims landing on Plymouth Rock, the Rock had not landed on the Pilgrim Fathers.

In his sermon at St. Paul's Cathedral, Bishop Brent emphasized the spirit of democratic liberty which has always inspired the American Commonwealth. He forgot to mention, however, that this "spirit of democratic liberty" stops at the colour line, and that white Christians are very prone to kick coloured brethren under the coat-tails.

The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, though a zealous advocate of the immoral doctrine of the Atonement, admits that it is supremely difficult to bring it home to the modern mind. The truth is that the modern mind, realizing its true character, rejects it as at once dishonouring to any respectable God, and humiliating to man. Mr. Phillips admits, further, that the Pulpit cannot win the modern mind until the Cross of Christ breaks its heart, which means that the Pulpit's day is practically gone—gone for ever.

Speaking at the recent Baptist Union meetings, Dr. Selbie, Principal of Mansfield College, declared that unless a revival came soon, the Church was doomed; "that they would either win great triumphs for the Gospel during the next twenty-five years, or, humanly speaking, they would go under." What stubborn things facts are; they force even clergymen to tell the truth about their own prospects—*sometimes*.

Mr. Hamilton Fyfe writes in the *Daily Mail* of April 25 that "chief among the agencies for the spread of sympathy with the German is the Church" in Spain. This is very magnanimous of the Spanish Church seeing that, as our own clerics inform us, Germany has renounced Christianity and become a nation of Atheists.

Mr. Fyfe also says that the parties which are for better education, for elections fairly managed, for honesty among officials, and for an enlightened national policy, oppose the Church as their obstinate foe. He adds that: "For the Atheism which prevails among so many of the educated and progressive in Spain the clergy are responsible." The essence of the statement is that Atheism in Spain stands for enlightenment and progress. But it would never have done to have told the readers of the *Daily Mail* the truth in that way.

God has always been useful, if not necessary and indispensable, to the powers that be in every land. The fear of God has been cunningly described as "the beginning of wisdom," whereas it is really something entirely different. It is a means by which the common people are kept in ignorance and in subjection to their "betters," and it is the chief pillar of autocracy and despotism. The names of wealthy people and high Government officials are always appearing as patrons of God and his ambassadors on earth.

We are reminded of this on observing the circulars of a touting agency called the Evangelization of India Society, or a similar name. Three British Lords have their names printed on these circulars as patrons of the Society. These three Lords are all servants of the British Empire holding high posts with large salaries! Must not our Mohammedan fellow-subjects marvel at our politeness? It is surprising that English noblemen should lend their authority to such impudent sectarianism as is manifested by this precious evangelization society. They might also reflect that total detachment from missionary schemes of the kind would better consort with the dignity of their positions, seeing that the British Empire contains only a small minority of Christians—a minority too uninfluential to stop the opium traffic in India.

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About Ourselves.

We have received a number of complaints lately from readers who find it impossible to get their *Freethinker* regularly, or get it only after considerable trouble. We know of no justifiable reason why this should be the case. Some have solved the difficulty by subscribing for it by post, others have pressed their newsagents until they did get it. But this is very annoying, and naturally, has a tendency to do us injury. Will readers please, therefore, note that the *Freethinker is supplied to all newspaper agents at the usual trade terms*, and on *sale or return*. No order has been issued by the Board of Trade prohibiting the return of unsold copies, and we have not, therefore, departed from our usual system.

It is very difficult to counter the bigotry that seeks to injure us by reporting the paper "out of print," or by inventing some other excuse, and we earnestly beg the assistance of our friends in this matter.

Just now it is more important than ever that our sales should be, if possible, more than maintained. The cost of production is ever on the increase, and only those who are behind the scenes can appreciate the constant labour and anxiety of keeping a journal like the *Freethinker* alive in these times. We feel ourselves justified in asking Freethinkers to be on the alert to help *their* paper whenever opportunity offers. They can do this by inducing their newsagent to display an extra copy, by calling the attention of their non-subscribing friends to its existence, or by sending a copy wherever they think it is likely to be appreciated. We will send it ourselves if the addresses are forwarded.

If only a fourth of our present readers were to gain us one new subscriber each, our troubles, on the financial side, would be about at an end. That is not an impossible achievement, and we believe it could be realized if our readers worked with a will in the matter. We are doing our best, and working our hardest at this end, and that encourages us to ask for the assistance of those who are as interested as we are in seeing that neither the bigotry nor the indolence of newsagents stands in the way of the *Freethinker* reaching the largest possible public.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—May 6, South Place Institute, South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.

I. Izekowitz.—We have read your letter with great interest. You have evidently passed through a rather trying experience, and we congratulate you on having achieved mental serenity at the end. The paper is being forwarded.

W. Roscher.—Your subscription has been handed to the N. S. S. Secretary. We wish all Freethinkers were of your opinion that it is almost a crime not to join the N. S. S. We have no knowledge of the "Ten Commandments for Freethinkers"; it never reached us. If you will write the N. S. S. Secretary, she will be able to suggest the best way for the disposal of your back numbers.

J. Benton writes to thank us for the copies of the *Freethinker* sent him to Egypt.

Humanitarian.—We quite appreciate the difficulties of your position. In such a situation, everyone must help the cause in the way that seems best, and we have no doubt that you are doing your part.

Norwich.—Will come in as a useful anecdote for some purposes.

H. T. Phillips.—Pleased to have the good wishes of a regular reader. We are not surprised to learn that you greatly value your acquaintanceship with our contributor, Mr. A. F. Thorn. If that, and the War, have converted you from a passive to an active advocate of Freethought, it has, at least, done that amount of good.

W. Gregory.—It is useless inserting notice of a meeting on May 3 in a paper dated May 6. Your card is evidently a week late.

H. Mains.—Our opinion of Haeckel's work as a Freethinker has not been changed in the least by his attitude towards the War. Why should it be? His intense patriotism cannot affect the quality of his pre-war work as a scientist, any more than, say, the quality of Darwin's work would have been affected had he attempted to assassinate Queen Victoria.

F. Downaton (Wigan).—We shall be pleased to hand Mr. Underwood any communication that reaches this office.

L. Cottam.—We do not think the *Nation* ever said that our soldiers were found wanting, whatever criticism may have been directed against their leaders and the Government. The corrective for ill-informed newspaper writing is a well-informed public. In any case, the suppression of papers by officials is a dangerous practice. By the way, you are mistaken in saying that Marshal Haig complained of the article. The Government has stated that this is not the case.

E. Greenwood.—Crowded out this week.

T. Patterson.—Your communication received and contents noted. We have for some years adopted the plan of sending specimen copies of the *Freethinker* to addresses furnished by our readers.

F. Horday.—P.O. received. Pamphlets are being sent.

E. J. Pearce.—Received. Many thanks.

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.

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

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

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.

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. Cohen opened the course of lectures at South Place Sunday evening last, and the meeting was in every way a success. There was a fine attendance, the lecturer was in excellent form, and the meeting was *alive* from start to finish. Mr. Collette Jones presided, and discharged his duties as chairman with dignity and efficiency.

The lecturer to-day (May 6) is Mr. Lloyd. His subject is "Humanism Versus Christianity," and in his hands it is bound to be an interesting topic. We hope that London Freethinkers are doing their best to make these meetings known. Mr. Lloyd's meeting offers an excellent opportunity for inducing Christians to attend. We hope that many will avail themselves of it.

Whit-Sunday is approaching, and with it the National Secular Society's Annual Conference. The Conference Agenda will appear in our next issue, and there is just time for Branches to send any resolutions they have for discussion. The Conference this year will be held under difficult circumstances, but we hope that Branches will do their best to send delegates, and that individual members in goodly numbers will find it possible to attend. Those provincial friends who intend visiting London on Whit-Sunday, and would like accommodation found for them, should write Miss Vance without delay, stating requirements. She will do her best to see they are "fixed" up as comfortably as is possible.

Mr. E. A. Cave, B.A., Headmaster of the Boys' High School, Harrow, writes in the *Daily News* very appreciatively of the educational work of Mr. F. J. Gould. Such a helper, Mr. Cave says, "deserves a State pension of £200 a year

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for life." We quite agree; but we are certain that he won't get it.

One of our lady readers sends us the following concerning her brother—a member of the Canadian contingent now in France:—

> My brother and I are members of a family reared in the Protestant faith. I was the first to break away from the Church after my marriage, four and a half years ago. Once firmly convinced of the truth and justice of Freethought, I have never lost an opportunity of trying to impress others, with more or less success, as occasion offered. While my brother was on leave, prior to his departure for France, nearly twelve months ago, he stayed with us a couple of days. My husband and I talked to him on the subject of Freethought, and aroused his interest. I tried to keep it alive in my letters to him, and a few months ago I asked him if he would like me to send him the *Freethinker*. He replied, "Yes." I then wrote to you and asked you to send him a few copies. You did so, but when no more came he wrote and told me they all missed it very much, and would I send him some more. I immediately placed an order for an extra copy, and have sent it to him regularly ever since, and shall continue to do so. In his letters he has repeatedly told me that not only himself but others as well were coming round more and more to our way of thinking.
>
> I hope the following quotation will justify the foregoing remarks:
>
> "Just received your welcome letter, also *Freethinker*, which I welcome, as I am very interested in it now. I guess I am getting round a lot to your way of thinking; a fellow can't help it out here with the sights he sees, and I can assure you I am not the only one by a good many.
>
> "I had a good laugh the other night; we were talking about the War ending when one fellow said: 'I wish Jesus Christ would just drop down on to No Man's Land, and hold up his hands and say, 'Stop this!' Another chap made reply: 'If he did, he would damn soon get a blighty.' It raised a good laugh. Well, Flo, I can tell you the fellows don't place much faith in God when they are going in the trenches or over the top, it's always 'Well, we are off again, wonder what luck this time.' So I am afraid the Churches will have very few attendants out of the returned soldiers after the War."
>
> I am pleased to be able to tell you that he has come safely through the latest fighting.

A correspondent points out, *apropos* of our remarks in a recent issue concerning the way in which the notices of the Holyoake centenary ignored his being an Atheist, that *Lloyd's Newspaper* duly chronicled his "anti-religious" opinions, and also the fact of his imprisonment for blasphemy.

We have received the following resolution from the Newcastle Branch of the N.S.S. which was passed at a public meeting:—

> That this meeting of Newcastle Secularists and Ratepayers strongly protest against the Newcastle Education Committee's agreement to engage ministers of religion as teachers in State schools, believing that the interests of the country and education would be better served by withdrawing the teachers from the Army and reinstating them as required, and thus obviate giving a false air of importance to an unnecessarily privileged class. We, therefore, urge the Education Committee to use their best efforts to secure the return of the teachers.

The Humanitarian League holds its Annual Meeting at the Caxton Hall on Wednesday, May 9, at 7.30. Sir George Greenwood occupies the chair, and there will be several speakers. We feel sure that many of our readers will be interested in the work of a Society which deserves well of all who appreciate unselfish labour in a worthy cause.

REALIZING HIS OWN IMPORTANCE.

Louis is the only boy, not only in the immediate family, but also in the collateral branches. One night, at his nurse's knee, he said his prayers aloud:—

> Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
> If I should die——

Pausing, he reflected a moment, and then broke out: "Golly! Wouldn't there be a row in this family if that 'u'd happen." —*Harper's Magazine*, February, 1917.

Woman and Christianity.

IT would be difficult to point to a time when life in general was happier, and the character of men and women set in more noble forms, than as depicted in the pages of the Greek poet Homer, who lived 1000 B.C. Like all great poets, he does not hold woman's nature in light esteem. Penelope bears up for twenty long years of faithful life, awaiting the return from his travels of her husband, Ulysses. Nausicaa, the daughter of King Alcinous, is playing ball with other maidens, when the slimy and naked Ulysses is cast upon her father's coast. She is the perfect conception of female modesty, and meets the situation with an exquisite naturalness and courtesy which could only have been bred in a society of highly cultivated men and women. Andromache behaves with all the natural tenderness of a modern wife and mother. In Homer, we have the Caucasian woman advanced to a fairly high point in the path of her progress. Women are as capable of heroic virtue as men were, and the ideal of this heroism is one to which we have scarcely added. There is no trace of any mental seraglio system. The ladies appear in society naturally and gracefully.

It is true that an undercurrent of antipathy to woman is observable in the later Greek poets. But we get the heroic love of Alcestis, voluntarily dying that her husband might live; the filial piety of Antigone; the majestic grandeur of the death of Polyxena; the more subdued and saintly resignation of Iphigenia, excusing, with her last breath, the father who had condemned her.

As regards ancient Rome, the historian Lecky says:—

> Monogamy was, from the earliest times, strictly enjoined, and it was one of the greatest benefits that have resulted from the expansion of Roman power, that it made this type dominant in Europe. In the legends of early Rome we have ample evidence of the high moral estimate of women and of their prominence in Roman life. The tragedies of Lucretia and of Virginia display a delicacy of honour, a sense of the supreme excellence of unsullied purity, which no Christian nation could surpass (*History of European Morals*).

It is quite realized that, generally speaking, woman never reached her highest and purest selfhood in Greece and Rome; but the condition of the courtezan in the ancient world compares favourably with that of the armies of prostitutes in the Christian cities of Europe.

According to Christian apologists, woman owes her position in the modern world, such as it is, to Jesus of Nazareth. The Bishop of London describes Christianity as woman's best friend. Other bishops assure women that Jesus Christ was the first to respect them, and represent the Christian attitude towards women as an advance on all previous attitudes. But the truth is that all the progress women have made in the Western world has been in spite of the Church. Woman has only really come into her own in any sense during the last hundred years or so. Whilst she lay bound for nearly twenty centuries of Christendom under a few New Testament texts, two Freethinkers—Mary Woolstonecraft and J. S Mill—came to her rescue. Harriet Martineau, another pioneer of the Woman Movement, was outside the Church, and to day there are hundreds of freedom-loving women without religious beliefs.

Certain texts in the Old and New Testaments have been constantly employed to hedge women round. Women writers from time to time have written the story of the degradation of their sex in Christian Europe, and it is the object of this article to assist other women readers of the *Freethinker* in clearness of vision with regard to the arrogant assertion of the modern Churches on the subject of women.

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There is nothing in the Gospel Jesus which can be construed as a factor for promoting the individuality or the social power of woman, making her a force in human progress. The nominal founder of the Church was neither a lover, a husband, nor a father. His kingdom was not of this world, and he utters nothing new upon the relations between the sexes. The oft-quoted Matthew v. 28 was already the ethic of the contemporary Jewish leaders like Rabbi Hillel. The Talmud says: "He who regards men and women with an impure intention has already, as it were, committed adultery." Again: "In every act, it is above all the thought, the intention, which he will judge." Romantic love appears in ancient Greece about 400 B.C., and, like science, art, and philosophy, is entirely absent from the New Testament. The first Christists were too intent upon getting to heaven to worry about any of the problems of earth. Of the few passages showing Jesus' attitude towards women, take Luke ii. 49. Here he appears to have anticipated G. B. Shaw's dictum that children are useful to shock their parents and keep them up-to-date. By playing truant at the age of twelve, he caused his parents much anxiety in searching for him, and coldly replies to his mother's agonized reproach, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing," with "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?" When a man claims to be God Almighty, one would expect him to behave with superhuman tenderness towards his earthly mother, setting an example of chivalrous devotion for all time to succeeding generations. According to the legend, he was pedantic enough to instruct the wise men of his age; but he makes no allowances for the solicitude of his loving, distracted mother, thereby falling below the level of normal humane feeling. His manners did not improve with age. At the marriage feast at Cana (John ii. 4), in response to his mother's statement that there is no wine, his churlish reply is, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" No man worthy of the name would have answered his mother in such a way. Yet, with the inconsistency to be expected of a legendary narrative, Jesus nevertheless performs the desired miracle, to prove his thaumaturgic power as a God. Later on (Matt. xii. 46), his mother, standing on the edge of the crowd to whom he is speaking, sends a message saying she wishes to speak to him, but receives the callous answer, "Who is my mother?" His example has given warrant for the behaviour of thousands of Christian saints through the centuries who have deserted their earthly duties as fathers, mothers, and citizens in order to devote themselves exclusively to the selfish salvation of their souls. Jesus did not disdain feminine society, but knew how to exploit women for his own ends, as his followers have done up to the present hour. In Luke viii. 2-3 we find him followed about the country by women, who ministered to him of their substance, and he resented any attempt to divert their activities into more useful channels (Luke x. 41; John xii. 6). But though Jesus graciously accepted the ministrations of the women, it is evident that he regarded them as inferior beings, whose touch was unclean. After his crucifixion, he says to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John xx. 17), while it is recorded in the same chapter that he invited Thomas Didymus to "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side."

At the cross he apparently softens towards the mother who bore him, and graciously confides her to the care of John, who "took her unto his own home," and, we trust, treated her with more filial respect than her own son had given her.

For other references to Jesus' teaching regarding sexual relationships, see Matt. v. 27-32 and Matt. x. 34-38, which poison the sources from which all human life and happiness spring. In the private life of the family, the secret of public welfare is reposed. The foregoing extracts show that Jesus left no word of encouragement, enlightenment, or guidance for women; yet pious women through the ages have turned him into a fetish, and endowed him with qualities for which there is not the slightest evidence in the Gospel narratives.

When we come to study the character of Paul as revealed in the Epistles bearing his name, we get more clearly defined views of woman than the scanty sayings attributed to the mythical Carpenter of Nazareth. This peevish monogynistic gentleman has no insight into the essentially feminine soul. He appears to have no idea of the refined feelings which a true woman brings to love and marriage, or of the mental and moral stimulus which one sex can have upon the other in a decently civilized community. There is no charter for woman's freedom in the preposterous nonsense of the chapter 1 Cor. 7. Here, again, we see faith is a malignant principle, separating those whom reason and love would join together. This is inspired teaching—the fruits of the Holy Spirit. It is noteworthy that most religions are drawn up by men for men, and that women are expected to accept them with all the passivity of children, who cannot think or frame a trustworthy ideal of their own. Men, seeing the difference between their ideal and their actual, have created priesthoods to keep the ideal before their minds; but what woman has any need of Paul's teaching? In the mother nature there is no war between her flesh and her spirit, that obsession harped upon in the Epistle to the Romans. Only an ancient priesthood, fighting for its existence in a continually evolving society, could dare to claim, in the face of Paul's plain utterances, that Christianity has elevated woman and bestowed freedom and holiness on the begetting of human life. Seeing that, after twenty Christian centuries, women are beginning to think for themselves once more, the Christian Church must claim that the Woman Movement was contained in the teachings of the New Testament, only somehow it has not been detected heretofore. The truth is that the so-called inspired writers could not rise above the level of the communities in which they lived, and were not even cognizant of the high position which women had partially attained in Greece and Rome. They wrote for the lower classes among the socially and politically disinherited communities of the Eastern Mediterranean world in the period of the Roman decline, people credulous to the extreme, and without any pretence to scientific or philosophic culture.

As with Jesus, so with Paul, it is a hallucination for woman to think that the Epistles throw any light on the psychology of woman, or provide her with a spur or incentive for making the world a happier and better home for himself, or her husband, or her children. "I know that in me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing," says Paul, in Romans vii. 18. All that is born into the world of man and woman is sinful, under God's anger and curse, condemned to death. All men born of a father and mother are children of wrath by nature, as Paul testifies in Epistles to the Ephesians ii. Theories of original sin and total depravity are foreign to the woman-nature. For the mother, her body is full of sweet and holy mysteries, and there is no war between the flesh and the spirit. According to Paul, marriage is only a reluctantly adopted safety valve for sensuality (1 Cor. vii.). The mystery of original sin is the mystery of sexual desire. Sex life was then condemned as unclean, and supreme virtue imputed to the celibate. The churching of women after childbirth is a survival of this superstition. However much Paul may appeal to men,

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a woman has no part or lot in his pathological condition, and can only see in his serio-comic views of womanhood the choicest specimen in all literature of masculine vanity, impudence, and profound conceit. "But she is happier, if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also I have the spirit of God" (1 Cor. vii. 40). Paul does not agree with Thoreau that "for him to whom sex is impure, there are no flowers in Nature."

The Fathers of the Church were not slow to follow Paul's lead, and the priestly literature of the Dark Ages teems with abuse and condemnation of woman. A sentence taken from Chrysostom will suffice to illustrate this: "What is woman but an enemy of friendship, an unavoidable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable affliction, a constantly flowing source of tears, a wicked work of nature covered with a shining varnish?"

For the aberrations of the Christian clergy under the influence of the ascetic doctrines of the New Testament, see the work of a Christian writer, *The History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, by H. C. Lea. It is a history of the sufferings and slavery of women as nuns and concubines, of confessional scandals and solicitations. For the brutal details of the questions which the confessor was required to ask of his penitents, female as well as male, see Burchard's *Decretorum*, lib. xix., c. v. I dare not give even a specimen.

FRANCES IVOR.

(To be continued.)

The Monarch of Cereals.

VI.

(Continued from p. 268.)

THE growing wheat plant is preyed upon by about one hundred species of insects, while fifty others infest the granary. In America the Hessian fly is an undesirable alien. It is an ancient pest in Europe, Asia, and Northern Africa, and the exasperating insect derives its name from the alleged fact that it was introduced into New England in straw conveyed to that region by the Hessian troops sent over by George III. to vanquish the insurgent Americans who shook off British supremacy. This destructive fly is now widely distributed in Canada, and, since 1888, it has invaded New Zealand. The female insect deposits from 100 to 300 eggs in the plant blades, and the reproductive season continues through the summer. The fly is a deadly foe to the developing cereal, and the average annual injury inflicted in America amounts to more than 50,000,000 bushels. In several seasons it has ruined half the crops, and, in some instances, it has occasioned utter failure. In 1900 the Hessian fly played havoc with the American wheat when the damage throughout the States totalled 100,000,000 dollars, while the loss inflicted in 1901 in Ontario was very serious. Systematic and concerted action among the wheat raisers is the only practical remedy for the depredations of the insect.

The chinch bug is another parasite which flourishes in various lands, and, owing to its immense rate of reproduction, appears to be increasing in destructiveness in some areas. Insect enemies of wheat are comparatively rare near the Pacific coast, and this is attributed to the custom of burning the straw over the grain fields every year. The hibernating insects are thus destroyed. Other checks to the chinch bug are the useful insectivorous birds, and several fungous diseases ravage the parasite.

The wheat midge, plant lice, and locusts are all troublesome pests, but the latter, which in the past, at times, swept entire territories bare of vegetation, are now usually kept under control. But in Canada, as late as 1901, a plague of locusts invaded the land, and, even now in parts of Montana, they frequently destroy every available form of plant life. Other pests penalise the wheat grower, and the combined ravages of all the various insects injurious to the cereal may be safely estimated at 20 per cent. of the crop. The total annual loss to the wheat raisers in the States alone has been put at 100 million dollars. Nor is the ordeal ended with the gathering of the grain, for weevils, worms, moths, and beetles infest the stored wheat, and a further 10 per cent. loss is occasioned to the grain and flour. This makes a total damage of 30 per cent. to the growing and garnered cereal.

Farmers can insure against given risks to their crops. Insurance societies cover the crops for a small premium against the risks of storms and conflagrations. Insurance against hailstorms was known in Scotland in 1780, while there existed twenty mutual and five stock hail insurance companies in Germany in 1888. Barrau made a fruitless attempt to establish a system of insurance against hail in France in 1801. Quite naturally he was accused of profanity in presuming to tamper with the designs of Providence. The Government officials obstructed him, and, in 1809, the Council of State decreed his society illegal, thus bringing the progressive Barrau to ruin. By 1823, however, public sentiment had become sufficiently enlightened to permit the founding of permanent hail insurance in France. Austria, England, and America followed the example thus set, and this useful system is steadily extending wherever the crops are liable to serious damage from wind or storm.

Wheat being essential to civilized humanity's sustenance, and its price, in company with that of other necessaries of life, being subject to supply and demand, a subtle and complex system has arisen which enables speculators of several grades to profit by the temporary fluctuations in the exchange value of the commodity. The operators who manipulate the great grain markets have at their disposal the latest resources of scientific communication. Unlike the local producer, whose decisions are determined by his ordinary information when he sells his grain or waits for an advance in price, the modern expert, who operates on a giant scale, receives prompt telegraphic intelligence regarding wheat from every quarter of the globe. He notes the overdue monsoon in India; he hears of the crop prospects in Minnesota and Dakota; of the early arrival of grain from the Southern Hemisphere in London; of the rise or fall of freights; of the risks which attend war, with the scores of other details which assist him in his capacity as dealer or speculator in the food supply of mankind.

The wheat speculator has attained his highest position in the States. The Chicago wheat-pit is probably the most celebrated institution in which men gamble with the world's bread-stuffs. And much as the betting system depends for its stability on the comparative honesty of the racing fraternity as a whole, so, among the wheat speculators, a high standard of integrity is maintained. This is not because the brokers and others are any better than people in general, but simply because it would spell disaster were the manipulators dishonest among themselves. As a shrewd writer has observed:—

> Any quantity of wheat can be bought on the floor of the Chicago Exchange by a sign, a nod, or a shout, or by a scrawl on a trading card. Either party to the deal could easily claim that the sign had not been noticed or understood, and the contention could not be disproven, nor could the contract be enforced before any court in the land. Considering the great confusion and excitement of the pit, the ease and rapidity with which fortunes are often made and lost, and the many opportunities and

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temptations for dishonest dealings, it is certainly an exceptional record that the Chicago Board of Trade finds it necessary to expel, on an average, only five members a year.

The evils of speculation may assume international proportions when manipulators secure sufficient of the year's wheat to dictate terms to the market. The "corner" is an ancient institution, and the legend of the prescient, if modest, Joseph may contain some basis of fact. Piles of money have been gained and lost by modern cornerers. Hutchinson operated successfully in the 'sixties: but Lyon, who copied his methods, was ruined in 1872. In 1887, a group of "bulls," who seemed anxious to screen their identity from the vulgar gaze, were eagerly engaged in cornering wheat. Rumour had it that this clique was composed of several smart millionaires and their special friends. The battle which raged between the clique and the wheat interests ended in the rout of the former. The immaculate E. L. Harper was found among the fallen. Harper was charged with robbing the bank of which he was vice-president, and "the last chapter of the corner was written in 1906, when the United States Circuit Court rendered a verdict against Harper for $5,280,333 in favour of the receiver of the Cincinnati Bank."

More nefarious in some respects was the notorious corner of 1897-98. The cornerer, Joseph Leiter, picked out a period when the world's wheat harvests were much below the average, and at a time when the United States held the bulk of the export crop. The plan of this American Joseph was to completely control this corn *and* compel the European consumer to purchase at his price. The campaign was conducted on a colossal scale, but the elevator or great granary companies fought him relentlessly, and their leader, the astute Philip Armour, by almost superhuman efforts, loaded Leiter with wheat as fast as he could pay for it. The cornerer amassed enormous stores of grain, and for a time monopolized the market. Prices rose, and the European loaf became dear, so dear that the costliness of bread led to riots and bloodshed in Italy, and much misery elsewhere. During his period of supremacy Leiter is said to have netted profits to the tune of $5,000,000, but he was unable to maintain his monopoly, and the corner smashed. All the millions he had wrung from the toil and sufferings of the poor he lost, with millions besides. Professor Emery contends that owing to the scarcity of wheat, prices would have soared in any case, and that it was to the world's advantage to realize the truth that at any time the general wheat supply might fall far short of the public needs. If this was the lesson to be learnt from Leiter's nearly successful manipulation, it was disregarded by the world. There are also solid reasons for the statement that in 1896 the then Russian Government submitted to the United States a scheme for promoting an international corner in wheat. The American authorities gave no countenance to the proposal, which was based upon the theory that the Russian Empire and the Western Republic would hold sufficient wheat for consumption within their own borders, while foreign States would be compelled to purchase grain at the price demanded by the surplus-holding countries.

The milling of wheat, like everything else, is a matter of evolution. Primitive man ground his grain with his teeth, but more satisfactory methods were slowly devised for milling. Hand stones for pounding acorns, nuts, and grain date back to the Old Stone Age. The stone mortar and pestle came later, and the crushing of corn was succeeded by grinding between two stones. From the ancient "saddle" stone device were evolved all subsequent forms of milling-stones. The extinct civilizations of Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt utilized these rugged mills, and the prehistoric Swiss pile-dwellers likewise employed them. Even in Imperial Rome corn was commonly ground by hand between stone slabs. In Homer's day the Greeks, like other early races, allowed the labour of corn-grinding to devolve upon the women, and a large proportion of the population devoted their labouring hours to preparing flour. With the growth of society milling became a distinct and highly respected occupation, and the merry miller, his mill, and his men, were commemorated in song and story among all the cereal-eating nations of the earth. Water-mills have existed in Western Europe from traditional times, but in some lands the windmill seems to have preceded the old stream machines. England treasured both, but the windmill was the greater favourite, and several existed in our island by the year 1200. The steam-mill was first used in England in 1784.

In contemporary milling three basic processes are indispensable. The grain must be spotlessly clean, and free from foreign seeds and other impurities. Then it must be tempered, and water or steam, or both combined, are applied for this purpose. Then comes the milling itself, and the wheat berry is ruptured so that the bran may be easily eliminated from the white interior which forms the flour of commerce. An immense mill is that of the Pillsbury Washburn Company of Minneapolis. This mill's average production is now about 17,000 barrels of flour per day. Ten years ago the mills of Minneapolis prepared a total of 90,000 barrels daily. The tremendous advance of the milling industry is vividly shown "when it is remembered that the first crude mill of the ancients could not produce over three bushels of partly ground meal in one day. Later, the Greeks ground from five to ten bushels of meal per day."

And there has also been a constant increase in the quantity of flour milled from each bushel of wheat. Prior to 1860 the annual output of flour in the Minneapolis mills was 60,000 barrels, but at the close of the nineteenth century their yearly milling yielded some 15,000,000 barrels. Budapest remained the premier milling centre until 1890, when the Hungarian capital was eclipsed by Minneapolis. The Hungarian flour is of very superior quality, and commands a better price than the finest American product. The English miller bears, and doubtless deserves, an excellent reputation, and Liverpool is one of the world's milling cities. The miller's trade has revived in Holland, and other countries are making progress in this important industry.

(To be concluded.) T. F. Palmer.

A Voice in the Wilderness.

The Dangers of Half-Preparedness. By Norman Angell. Putnam's Sons. 2s. 6d. net.

Either by implication or by direct avowal, Mr. Angell makes in this essay what we cannot but regard as a questionable, if not dangerous, assumption. He assumes that, because military preparedness in Germany has not led to peace there, therefore it will not lead to peace elsewhere, that because the dominance of a militant ideal has had evil effects in Germany, therefore it will have a like influence elsewhere; that because "My country, right or wrong," is bad in Germany, therefore it is bad elsewhere; that because the erection of the idea of the State as superior to all the dictates of the individual conscience is an evil in Germany, therefore it will be an evil elsewhere. In other words, Mr. Angell assumes that like causes produce like effects, and, although that is an axiom in science, it is an unsafe inference in sociology—in war time. It is a patriotic duty to assume that the German psychology is fundamentally different

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from the psychology of the Allies. Indeed, we think that a case might be made out—in the *Daily Mail* or in *John Bull*—to establish the proposition that even those biological laws which apply to the Allies do not apply to the Germanic peoples.

If we overlook this fundamental flaw in Mr. Angell's essay, the rest of it is perfectly clear, as are all this author's writings, and might even be called unanswerable—if we were not at War. The larger part of the world is at war, and the rest is thinking of joining in. Those that are not at war are preparing for war, and before even the present conflict began there was the mania for "preparedness" of the Great Powers. Now, Mr. Angell does not denounce "Preparedness," on the contrary, he professes a belief in it. What he does not believe in is "Half-Preparedness"—that is the notion that peace can be maintained by each nation becoming stronger than the other one—which, when one looks at it, does seem a little odd. So he argues that the real preparedness is to—over and above the massing of men, and munitions, and ships—include in our preparedness for war a clear statement intelligible to the whole world of what it is we want, what it is we are willing to grant other nations, and what it is we are prepared to back up with all the physical force at our disposal. If men will suffer for their country, and work for their country, and die for their country, Mr. Angell calls upon them to take final steps in the scale of hardships and *think* for their country. Prepare for war by knowing exactly what it is your country stands for, and when *you* know, see that the whole world knows it, and also let it know that you are prepared to fight for those things to the last gasp.

That is the central idea of Mr. Angell's essay. In ordinary times we should say that its logic was impeccable, and its reasoning unanswerable. And we might have added that Mr. Angell has provided as powerful an indictment of pure militarism as has been written. But, as it is, we can only say that he has written a dangerous work. He asks people to pause and think what they are fighting about, and to make clear to the other party what they are fighting for. Could anything be more absurd?

CRITICUS.

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.

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INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE INSTITUTE (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 7, J. T. Lloyd, "Humanism *versus* Christianity."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, Miss K. B. Kough, "Liberty According to the L.C.C."

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NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Miss K. B. Kough, "Liberty According to the L.C.C."

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WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Howell Smith, a Lecture.

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Views and Opinions.

Why were the Clergy Exempt?

Many people have wondered why on earth the clergy were exempted from the operation of the Military Service Act. On every earthly ground they seemed the most suitable class to which it could be applied. They are, or ought to be, more certain about a future life than others; they are, or ought to be, ready to quit this life with less reluctance than others. No religious compunction should have stood in the way of their killing the Germans since Archdeacon Wilberforce said: "The killing of Germans is a divine service in the fullest sense of the word," the Bishop of Ripon that "Our cause is identical with God's cause," and the Bishop of London that "This is the greatest fight ever made for the Christian religion." In such a holy war the clergy ought to have been the first to rush to the Colours. Moreover, the clergy were unanimous in urging everybody to enlist. Why, then, did the clergy claim and receive exemption?

* * *

The Secret Out.

Some light was cast on the subject by a recent remark from the Archbishop of Canterbury before the House of Convocation. Addressing that august assembly he said, the clergy—

> had been exempted from combatant service by the nation's representatives in Parliament without so far as he was aware, a dissentient voice, simply because to them had been assigned a great responsibility in the nation's life at all times, and never more so than at such a time as this.

Now we know all about it, or rather we are *told* all about it. Of course, the Archbishop is not accurate when he says there was not a single voice raised against clerical exemption, but one does not look for accuracy in a clergyman. Some voices were raised against it in Parliament and outside Parliament, the Trades' Union Congress voted against it. But the fact remains that Parliament did exempt the clergy. It put into actual practice Sydney Smith's famous division of the nation into men, women, and clergymen, by conscripting men, calling out the women, and placing the clergy in a category by themselves. And, presumably, on the principle that a live jackass is better than a dead lion the clergy are content—even jubilant.

* * *

More Light.

Still we are puzzled. *What* is the part played by the clergy that endows them with so "great a responsibility in the nation's life"? Parliament didn't say, the Archbishop is diplomatically vague, and so we are left to surmise. The production of good crops is a very old standing function of the priesthood, and a great many religious observances have clustered round that. But Parliament couldn't have exempted the clergy on that ground or it would have issued an appeal for their assistance. Nay, it very curtly declined to sanction a general day of prayer at which all the clergy would have paraded and gone through their magical hocus-pocus with all the solemnity of painted medicine men dancing round a wooden idol. Many thousands of allotments have been laid down, but I haven't heard of a single clergyman being called in to bless one of them. All the clergy appear to have done here is to start a row among themselves as to whether God will blast the ground because people have taken to digging on Sunday. They cannot have been exempted to look after the weather—until quite recently that was vile. They cannot have been preserved to arrest the submarine danger, that has grown. It was suggested that German prisoners should be placed on board hospital and passenger ships, but no one suggested parsons on board as a means of protection. They were not exempt in order to protect the people against "profiteering," that has gone on in all directions—and the clergy have maintained absolute silence. Nor could it have been to guard the morality of the nation. For that, if we are to judge by reports of alarmist committees, has deteriorated since the opening of the War. What was the "great responsibility" laid upon the clergy by Parliament?

* * *

The Spirit of Sacrifice.

An idea strikes us. Perhaps they were exempt in order to encourage the spirit of sacrifice. If so, one is compelled to admit that they have met with a measure of success. For people have been exhorted and encouraged to make sacrifices. The shopkeeper has called upon his customers to sacrifice. The mineowner has called on the consumer to sacrifice. The shipowner has asked the merchant to sacrifice. The merchant has passed on the inspiring message to the dealer. There never was such a demand for sacrifice; and the clergy have sacrificed their desire to bear their share of the fighting; they have sacrificed the honours and distinction they might have won at the "divine service" of killing Germans, by remaining at home and keeping their establishments open and ready for business "when the boys come home."

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A Parasitic Order.

Seriously, what is one to make of a public that can be fooled by such empty talk as that of the Archbishop's? Can anyone seriously contend that there is a single function discharged by the clergy that cannot be, and is not discharged, by the layman? Have the clergy, as clergy, really contributed anything to the successful pursuit of the War? Have they done a single thing that has not been done by men and women who are not connected with the priesthood? The parson, as a man, may be a quite admirable person; as a priest, he is an anachronism in a civilized age. For all the real use that the Christian Church has been to the nation, it might as well have been closed in August, 1914. And yet the clergy *are* exempt from military service. That is the significant fact. Thousands of businesses have been closed in the interests of the War, but the business premises of the clergy are in full swing. Economy has been urged upon the people, but funds for foreign missions and similar fantastical absurdities are still forthcoming. It was not essential that the widow's son should remain at home, but the parson might. The head of a family, upon whose welfare depended the future of his children, must go; the person of the celibate priest remains inviolate. Take the citizen, but leave the priest. That is the attitude of an order which has been a burden upon the shoulders of mankind from the very dawn of history. It is the attitude of a priesthood careful only of its own interests and of the interests it finds to its own benefit to defend.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Roots of the Christian Tree.

VI.

CONCERNING Christianity two facts are now indisputably established and candidly recognized as such by all scholars, namely, the first, that it is an eclectic religion, containing not a single element of which it can honestly say: "This is my own, my very own," and the second, that it did not differ in any essential sense from any of the great religions from which it borrowed, and which were its rivals during the second, third, and fourth centuries. Particularly in the third century all the influential religions were, in essence, very much alike. Harnack calls our attention to "the rise of new ideas and emotions which meet us on the soil of Hellenism—that Hellenism which, with its philosophy and its development of the ancient mysteries, coalesced with Orientalism." What those new ideas and emotions were we learn from this learned critic:—

> *The soul, God, knowledge, expiation, asceticism, redemption, eternal life*, with *individualism* and with *humanity* substituted for nationality—these were the sublime thoughts which were living and operative, partly as the precipitate of deep inward and outward movements, partly as the outcome of great souls and their toil, partly as the result of the sublimation of all cults which took place during the imperial age. Wherever vital religion existed, it was in this circle of thought and experience that it drew breath.....Whenever Christianity came to formulate ideas of God, Jesus, sin, redemption, and life, it drew upon the materials acquired in the general process of religious evolution, availing itself of all the forms which these had taken (*Expansion of Christianity*, vol i., pp. 33-39).

We may not agree with every statement in that extract, but its author does not hesitate to recognize the principle that Christianity, in its completed form, "fails to be considered as syncretistic religion in the fullest sense"; that it "may be just as truly called a Hellenic religion as an Oriental, a native religion as well as a foreign"; and that though from the very outset it had been syncretistic upon Pagan soil, yet it was not till the middle of the third century that it was first seen "in full bloom as the syncretistic religion *par excellence*, and yet, for all that, as an exclusive religion." The following is Harnack's description of the syncretistic religions, each of which aimed at complete sovereignty:—

> Three great religious systems confronted each other in Western Asia and Southern Europe from the close of the third century: *Neoplatonism*, *Catholicism*, and *Manichæism*. All three may be characterized as the final results of a history which had lasted for over a thousand years, the history of the religious development of the civilized nations from Persia to Italy. In all three the old national and particular character of religion was laid aside; they were *world-religions* of the most universal tendency, with demands whose consequences transformed the whole life of man, both public and private.....Formally, therefore, all these religions were alike, and they were also similar in this respect, that each had appropriated the elements of different older religions. Further, they showed their similarity in bringing to the front the ideas of *revelation*, *redemption*, *ascetic virtue*, and *immortality* (*Ibid*, vol. i., p. 393).

Now, with those facts in mind, we are face to face with the problem of how to account for the triumphant survival of Christianity and the somewhat sudden and complete disappearance of its powerful rivals. Harnack declares that both Christianity and Manichæism were superior to Neoplatonism, for the very reason that the latter adh no *founder;* and yet on Harnack's own showing Christianity itself could boast of no founder except in name. He assures us that Jesus Christ did not belong to the circle of ideas which, by the end of the third century, constituted the Christian religion, but that it was his disciples who were responsible for its primitive shaping. It is doubtless true that the fact that Christianity had a nominal founder was a factor of considerable influence in its expansion; but in this respect it enjoyed no advantage over Manichæism which ceased to be in the Western world. The divines aver that Christianity conquered Europe because of its divine origin and nature, but a mere glance at the history of the fourth century shows the utter absurdity of such a claim. The conversion of Constantine is a question upon which there has never been unanimity of opinion. Some critics have always regarded it as having been occasioned by political rather than purely religious considerations. Many different accounts of it were written by Eusebius, the Christian Lactantius, the Pagan Nazarius, and the Arian Philostorgius; but whatever version of it may be accepted as being in the main accurate, the fact remains that Constantine was actuated in all he did subsequent to it by political motives, in which ethical principles had scarcely any place at all, as is abundantly proved by the many dark deeds for which he was directly responsible. What moved him to befriend the Christian Church, to adopt the Cross as the symbol of victory in war, and to exalt Christianity into the position of State religion? We will answer this question in the words of a Christian theologian, Adolf Harnack:—

> In the bishop or priest, or even in the ecclesiastical fabric and the cultus, the masses had a direct sense of something holy and authoritative to which they yielded submission, and this state of matters had prevailed for a couple of generations by the time that Constantine granted recognition and privileges to Christianity. *This* was the Church on which he conferred privileges, this Church with its enormous authority over the masses! *These* were the Christians whom he defined as the support of the throne, people who clung to the bishops with submissive faith and who would not resist their Divinely appointed authority! The Christianity that triumphed was the Christianity of blind faith, which Celsus has

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depicted. When would a State ever have shown any practical ineterest in any other kind of religion? (*Ibid*, vol. i., p. 280).

At the close of the third century both Armenia Major and Armenia Minor were converted to Christianity by Gregory the Illuminator, who had been persecuted and driven from his native land by the Persians. When the Armenians succeeded in releasing themselves from the Persian rule, Gregory gave his support to the Armenian monarch, who became a Christian, and adopted Christianity as the State religion in his country, because he believed that "as an exclusive religion it was far better adapted than the cults of Hellenism and the native Armenian faith to safeguard the Armenians against the Persians." Thus the Armenian king embraced Christianity for himself and his kingdom simply because he was convinced that the action would prove of the highest political advantage. Now, listen to Harnack:—

> When Constantine recognized and granted privileges to Christianity, he was only following in the footsteps of the Armenian king (*Ibid*, vol. ii., pp. 345-6).

This is a Christian theologian's explanation of the triumph of Christianity over all rival cults in the Roman Empire. Its survival was due, not to any supernatural intervention, not to the belief that it alone was true, but to the fact that the Emperor looked upon it as the only faith that engendered the spirit of unquestioning loyalty to authority in those who professed it. The bishop was supreme, because he claimed to be God's vicegerent, and surely a Christian emperor would occupy the same position in his administration of State affairs. The truth is that the rival faiths did not die a natural death, but were destroyed by force. As Mr. F. Legge well says:—

> Constantine's accession proved to be, like the coming of Alexander, a turning-point in the history of the world. His so-called conversion put into the hands of the Catholic Church a weapon for the suppression of all rivalry, of which she was not slow to make use. Already in his reign many of the Heathen temples were torn down, and under the rule of his morose and gloomy successor, Constantius, the work of demolition went on apace.....The end came under Gratian, when the temple estates were confiscated, the priests and vestals deprived of the stipends which they had hitherto received from the public treasury, and the Heathen confraternities or colleges were declared incapable of receiving legacies. Only a few rich men like the Vettius Agorius Prætextatus, whom we have seen among the worshippers of Mithras, or the Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, whose learned and patriotic life has been so well described by Sir Samuel Dill, could henceforth venture to practise, even with maimed rites, the faiths condemned by the Court and the Church (*Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, vol. ii., pp. 358-9).

Prior to the conversion of Constantine, Christianity had to struggle against all her rivals "in a contest where the victory was not always on her side"; but no sooner did she become the religion of the State than her supremacy was an absolute certainty. As Mr. Legge suggests, there was "no need of the miraculous powers which were once assigned as the reason for her gradual and steady advance to all but universal dominion." She was only one among many until Constantine discovered that she was the best adapted of them all to help him in securing the blind submission of the people to his imperial will. She became the whole-hearted servant of the State in order that by the co-operation of the State she might carry out her own ambitious and well-considered designs. Enough has been said to prove that neither her origin nor her triumphant advance to pomp and power indicated any supernatural interference.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Fear of Death.

> Death, and his brother Sleep. —*Shelley.*
> Death, not armed with any dart,
> But crowned with poppies. —*Julian Fane.*

Shakespeare, the supreme genius of literature, has told us that "our little life is rounded with a sleep." The materialistic similitude of death to sleep is a thought which has possessed a peculiar fascination for great writers, ancient and modern, but more particularly for Shakespeare, whom it always prompts to utterances of universal sublimity. With this lofty thought is mingled a touch of simple pathos that strikes home to every heart, as, for example, in the saying, "Tired we sleep, and life's poor play is o'er."

Sleep! All that the human fancy can conceive of refreshing and delightful things are compressed in that gentle word. Poets in all ages and in all countries have sung its praises; but of all tributes uttered on this subject, the most striking, probably, is that which Cervantes puts in the mouth of Sancho Panza: "Sleep! It covers a man all over, thoughts and all, like a cloak. It is meat for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, heat for the cold, and cold for the hot."

Priests, on the other hand, have ever sought advantage from the fact that man is mortal. They have taught men that death is the most dreadful evil. All the terrors that theology could gather from savage nations were added to increase the horrors, and they invariably tried to paralyse reason with the clutch of fear.

The advent of Christianity deepened this terror. Never has death been the cause of such craven timidity as in the Christian world. To visionaries like Catherine of Siena, or Emanuel Swedenborg, it may have been different, but to the uncultured masses death has been, and is, the King of Terrors, from whose approach they cower in an agony which Marcus Aurelius and Socrates would have scorned. These great Pagans invested death with dignity, but Christians fear death as children fear the dark. In Bacon's famous essay on death all the instances he gives of its being borne with equanimity are taken from Pagans. For Christianity added a new terror to death in the thought of being cut off in sin "unhouseled, unaleled." The Church of England has a prayer against sudden death, which Pagans regarded as best. This idea is strikingly illustrated in *Hamlet*, where the Prince refrains from killing the King whilst at prayer, because—

> To take him in the purging of his soul
> When he is fit and seasoned for his passage

is to send his father's murderer to heaven.

Religion has found it advantageous to invest death with all that is hideous. "Prepare for death, flee from the wrath to come," have been its cries. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," shout the evangelists. By such appeals to fear and imagination it has made a terror of that which should be accepted with serenity. Charles Spurgeon, the most popular preacher of his generation, whose works are so admired by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, preached and wrote that the majority of the human race was destined to everlasting torture in full view of the Deity:—

> In fire, exactly like that which we have on earth to-day, will lie, asbestos-like, for ever unconsumed—every nerve a string on which the Devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament.

Yet to the Materialist, who deems death "the poppied sleep, the end of all," dissolution can have no terror, whilst Christians might ponder the wise words of Marcus Aurelius:—

> What is it to die? If we view it by itself, and stripped of those imaginary terrors in which our fears have dressed

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it, we shall find it to be nothing more than the mere work of Nature; but it is a childish folly to be afraid of what is natural. Nay! It is not only the work of Nature, but is conducive to the good of the universe, which subsists by change.

Lucretius, the noblest of the Roman poets, writing, be it remembered, twenty centuries ago, tells us that death is dreamless rest:—

Thou not again shall see thy dear home's door,
Nor thy sweet wife and children come to throw
Their arms round thee, and ask for kisses more,
And through thy heart make quiet comfort go:
Out of thy hands hath slipped the precious store.
Thou hoardest for thine own, men say, and lo!
All thou desired is gone. But never say
All the desire as well hath passed away.

Omar Khayyam, the most splendid poet whose lyre sounded under the Mohammedan crescent, was as emphatic:—

Oh, threats of hell and hopes of paradise!
One thing at least is certain—this life flies;
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies,
The flower that once has blown for ever dies.

Many men dread dying rather than death, and here science comes to the rescue of mankind with its anodynes and anæsthetics. The clergy, who opposed the introduction of chloroform because they said it interfered with God's primal curse upon woman, are fond of pointing the feeble finger of scorn at scientists. Did the whole of the clergy of Europe ever do so much for humanity as Lister and Simpson? The doctors fought all their lives against the horrid shapes that follow the rider on the pale horse. The clergy made death more awful and gruesome, but Lister and Simpson and the rest of their glorious company robbed death of half its terrors. As a result of their discoveries, death comes as a tender nurse to patients who had otherwise died in cruel suffering. They saved more lives than the wars of the century had wasted, and they took away a black fear out of life.

Despite clerical nonsense, most people die as unconsciously as they are born. Physicians notice that fear of death departs with the dying. The nearer the end, the less the apprehension. Dr. William Hunter, the famous anatomist, when dying, said: "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write how easy and delightful it is to die." That gay, old sinner, Louis XIV., of France, said: "I thought that dying had been more difficult." Wise old Michel de Montaigne, having met with an accident which was thought to be fatal, said on restoration: "I had sincere pleasure in the thought that I was passing away." Walter Savage Landor, in extreme age, wrote:—

Death stands above me whispering low,
I know not what into my ear:
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.

In the Highlands of Scotland people have a time-old proverb, "There is always peace before death." Christians claim that the King of Terrors can only be encountered by aid of their faith. Yet modern Japanese have as great a contempt of life as the old Greeks and Romans. In truth, Christianity has, for its own ends, harped on the terrors of death.

"Rounded with a sleep!" "These words created whole volumes in me," said Jean Paul Richter, acknowledging the power of the master-mind of Shakespeare. Is it not a superb tribute, remembering that so many of the highest minds have ever been fortified by the same thought? Freethought everywhere destroys the terrors of death. The Atheistic poet, Shelley, in the opening lines of his *Queen Mab*, sings of death and sleep being brothers. Walt Whitman, "the tan-faced poet of the West," chants a hymn of welcome to death. The dead are made one with Nature, and death is presented as a friend, is "lovely and soothing," is always "gliding near with soft feet," and the body, weary with life, turns, like a tired child, and nestles close in the bosom of the eternal mother. Our own George Meredith asks with a fine touch of stoicism:—

Into the breast that gives the rose
Shall I with shuddering fall?

For thousands of years priests have chanted the old, sad, disheartening refrain of death as an enemy, but the Freethinker listens to far other and better strains. The contemplation of death as a deliverer, dissevered from the terrors of the imagination, comforts him. Living without hypocrisy, he dies without fear.

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

MIMNERMUS.

Science and Spiritualism.

IX.

(Continued from p. 278.)

Turning, now, for the moment, to the historical side of this question, we find that there is scarcely a medium producing physical phenomena who has not, at one time or another, been exposed in the grossest kind of fraud, and that the whole history of the subject—so far as the physical phenomena are concerned—is battered with evidences of fraud and the worst "moral mud" and intellectual mire imaginable! It presents an almost unbroken chain of evidence, showing that fraud and nothing but fraud has been practised throughout, by mediums; and presenting scarcely any evidence whatever that they are ever genuine, or did really happen as stated.—*Hereward Carrington, "The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism,"* p. 6.

When engaged in the investigation of table-turning, I constructed a very simple apparatus, serving as an index to show the unconscious motions of the hands upon the table. The results were that the index moved before the table, or that neither index nor table moved; and in numerous cases all moving power was annihilated. A universal objection was made to it by the table-turners. It was said to paralyze the powers of the mind;—but the experimenters need not see the index; they may leave their friends to watch that, and their minds may revel in any power that their expectation or their imagination can confer. So restrained, a *dislike* to the trial arises; but what is that except a proof that whilst they trust themselves they doubt themselves, and are not willing to proceed to the decision, lest the trust which they like should fail them, and the doubt which they dislike rise to the authority of truth?—*Faraday, "Observations on Mental Education." A Lecture, reprinted in "Science and Education," edited by Sir Ray Lankester* (1917), p. 51.

IT may be as well to deal here with the phenomena of table-turning and rapping. No doubt most people have met with persons who have taken part in table-turning, and who assure you that the table really did move without any pressure being exerted through the hands resting on the table.

The phenomena of table-turning became quite an epidemic in England in 1853, being introduced from the Continent, where it had broken out in 1852. The usual method followed was for the party to seat themselves at a round table, upon the edge of which they rested their fingers, spread out, and the last finger touching the last finger of his, or her, neighbour. The table-turning mania reached such dimensions that several scientific men turned their attention to it. A committee of four medical men made an investigation, says Mr. Podmore. "Briefly they found, as the result of several trials, that when no expectations were formed of any probable result, and the attention of those sitting round the table was diverted by conversation or otherwise, the table did not move at all. Again, no results followed when half the sitters expected the rotation to take place in one direction and half in another. But when expectation was allowed

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free play, and especially if the direction of the probable movement was indicated beforehand, the table began to rotate after a few minutes, although no one of the sitters was conscious of exercising any effort at all. The conclusion formed was that the motion was due to muscular action, mostly exercised unconsciously."[1] Dr. Braid, who also investigated the subject, declared that at "all the experiments at which he had assisted someone had always announced beforehand the direction in which the table might be expected to move, and had thus helped to bring the unconscious expectations of the sitters into unison."

But this was too simple an explanation of the mystery to commend itself to the multitude, who revel in the mysterious and unexplainable. The spiritualistic interpretation found its strongest advocates among the clergy, who found that the tables were tilted by diabolical agency.

The Rev. N. S. Godfrey, a Church of England clergyman, of Leeds, with his wife and his curate, held a meeting for table turning in the presence of the National schoolmaster and others. After various unsuccessful attempts to induce the table to confess that it was moved by diabolic agency, Mr. Godfrey continues:—

> I was now prepared for a further experiment of a far more solemn character. I whispered to the Schoolmaster to bring a small Bible, and to lay it on the table when I should tell him. I then caused the table to revolve rapidly, and gave the signal. *The Bible* was laid on the table, and it instantly stopped! We were horror-struck.

"After supper, the experiment was resumed, and the following test was tried: 'If there be not a devil, knock twice; to our horror the leg slowly rose and knocked twice.' It need hardly be said that these appalling disclosures were made public without delay."[2]

Later, at another seance, the "table admitted, in answer to leading questions, that it was moved by the spirit of a dead man, a lost soul, sent from hell by the devil, for the express purpose of deceiving the circle there assembled, and doomed to return to hell when the nightly task was accomplished." Later still, the spirit of a deceased parishioner appeared on the scene. "This spirit confessed that he had only once before been in the schoolroom (where the seance was held), and then not to attend Sunday-school, but for the carnal delights of a tea-meeting. In earth life he had generally attended the Wesleyan chapel, but now deeply regretted he had not paid more heed to Mr. Godfrey's counsel."[3]

"The inconceivable Godfrey," as Mr. Podmore calls him, published alarming revelations under the titles *Table-Moving Tested, and Proved to be the Result of Satanic Agency* (1853), and *Table-Turning the Devil's Masterpiece*; also *The Devil's Modern Masterpiece*.

Later in the year, the Rev. E. Gillson, of Bath, after *one* sitting, published his experiences under the title of *Table-Talking: Disclosures of Satanic Wonders and Prophetic Signs*. Mr. Gillson, at this sitting, got into communication with a departed spirit "who expected in the course of ten years to be bound with Satan and all his crew, and cast into the abyss." Another clergyman, the Rev. R. W. Dibdin, in a lecture delivered in the same year (1853), and afterwards printed, contended that the spirits at work were not those of departed men and women, but those of devils. "But whether spirits of men or devils," says Podmore, "all these clergymen were agreed that the motive power and the aim were alike diabolic."[4]

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 8.
[2] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 13.
[3] *Ibid*, vol. ii., p. 13.
[4] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 14.

It was Faraday who gave the death-blow to this rank growth of superstition by the method of scientific experiment, and we cannot do better than give Mr. Podmore's account of it:—

> Faraday, like other thoughtful men, was aghast at the hold which the table-turning mania had gained on all classes of society, and at the loose thinking and presumptuous ignorance which the popular explanations revealed. Amongst the various theories commonly offered to account for the movements of the table he mentions spirits, electricity, magnetism, "attraction" of some kind, and the rotation of the earth! By the use of some apparatus Faraday showed conclusively that the movements were due to muscular action, and to that alone, exercised in most cases without the consciousness or volition of the sitters. Perhaps the most effective of his test apparatus was the following. He prepared two small flat boards a few inches square, placed several glass rollers about the thickness of an ordinary pencil between them, and fastened the whole together with a couple of indiarubber bands in such a manner that the upper board would slide under lateral pressure to a limited extent over the lower one. A light index, consisting of a haystalk or a piece of paper, was fastened to the apparatus so as to betray the least movement of the upper board to the lower one. It was found that, in all cases, the upper board moved before the lower board, which rested on the table, showing that the fingers of the operator moved the table, and not—as the sitters themselves supposed—the table the fingers. But the most striking proof that the movement was due to a muscular effort of which the performer was quite unconscious is that when the sitters learned the meaning of the index and kept their attention fixed upon it, no movement followed; "when the parties saw the index, it remained very steady; when it was hidden from them, or they looked away from it, it wavered about, though they believed that they always pressed directly downward."[1]

Thus did science give the death-blow to this peurile superstition. The public excitement on the subject quickly died down, and henceforth the practice was confined solely to spiritualistic circles, where it still continues a languid existence. It would be utterly incredible that a man of such scientific eminence as Sir Oliver Lodge is a believer in this superstition, and practises it to get into communication with the spirits of the dead, if we did not have his own word for it. In his lately published book, *Raymond*, Sir Oliver gives pages and pages of communications from spirits obtained by this means. Chapter viii. is entirely taken up with them; and there are many others!

Dr. Ivor Tuckett, who has himself experimented in the subject, says that the conditions for success in table-turning are chiefly three: (*a*) that there should be no one taking part who is profoundly sceptical; (*b*) that someone should be a convinced believer in the "spiritual explanation" of table-turning, usually of a neurotic temperament; (*c*) that the performance should be carried out in a dim light. These are just the conditions for inducing a state of auto-suggestion or hypnotism. Dr. Tuckett also gives the rational explanation of the phenomena, as follows: "After a few or many minutes of sitting with outstretched fingers, one or more of the sitters will become the subject of fatigue of the neuro-muscular system, encouraged by the expectancy of phenomena and by the concentration of attention not to miss the moment the table begins to move. This fatigue leads to a certain degree of tremor in the hands, and probably evinces itself first in those who are the most intense believers, especially if they are of a neurotic temperament—that is, have a nervous system easily excited and depressed. As the finger-tips are fixed by

[1] *Ibid*, vol. ii., p. 9.

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contact with the table, the tremor gives the feeling that the table is vibrating, and in the belief that it is about to move, the enthusiasts quite subconsciously push the table. The moment the table moves ever so little, the whole company, including the least enthusiastic, become the subjects of a process of auto-suggestion, and aid the deception quite unconsciously by pushing. If, however, a profound sceptic is present, he will not be the victim of this auto-hypnotic process, and by not doing his share of the pushing, or by withstanding the tendency of the table to move, which is very slight at first, he will defeat the action of the others."[1]

It is easy from this to understand why mediums always object to sceptics joining their circles.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

A Puritan on Paine.

A FEW days ago I came across a new book of essays by Mr. Augustine Birrell. I must confess to no very violent interest in matters political, but I have a sort of vague recollection that Mr. Birrell was Irish Secretary under the late-lamented Liberal Government. It would seem that he is one of those much praised writers who have brought to perfection the art of saying nothing in particular in an airy and charming way. This is, no doubt, as good a reason as any other for co-opting him into a job which is handsomely paid by a long-suffering nation. An elegant taste in letters and a witty style are by no means the invariable intellectual characteristics of your professional politician, who, for the most part, is a dreadfully dull and heavy-handed man. It is, therefore, pleasing to know that Mr. Birrell succeeded in "pulling off" one of the big prizes. Be this as it may, what I am now concerned with is not Mr. Birrell as politician, but as critic. The book I mentioned above is called *Self-Selected Essays* (Nelson & Co.; 1s. 3d. net). The essays appear to have been selected by Mr. Birrell himself, and not, as was the case with a former book, by one of his admirers. They have, however, on the *whole*, so little coherence that they might very well have selected themselves. A few of them not even the most out-and-out admirers would ever have dreamed of admitting. In their place in the columns of literary and other journals they were, no doubt, promptly read and praised, and then as promptly forgotten. To give them a permanent form, especially at a time when paper is scarce, is simply to invite the jibes of the unfriendly critic. After all, we hardly expect a man who has been extolled for his exquisite humour and sense of proportion to exhibit a foolishly lavish affection for his literary offspring.

The essay that has a particular interest for the Freethinker is one on Thomas Paine, written in 1900, as a review of Mr. Moncure Conway's *Life*. It is a short article of nine pages or so; and, in order to bring out the contrast of method and temper, it should be closely compared with another essay, a long one on Burke, originally a lecture delivered at Edinburgh. It is difficult for Mr. Birrell to be reasonably fair to Paine; it is equally difficult for him to be anything but generous to Burke. Yet both the writers have equal strength and sincerity; one being plain, logical, and controlled; the other, rhetorical, emotional, and potent. What, then, is the reason for this uncritical preference? I cannot imagine that Paine's plebeian origin could have much influence, although it is noticeable that the average middle-class critic is often disposed to handle tenderly a commonplace book by an aristocrat. How often have we seen them tumble over themselves in their hurry to acclaim an insignificant piece of history or sociology by Lord Rosebery or Lord Cromer! It is impossible not to find a suspicion of snobbishness in Mr. Birrell's irritating prejudice against Paine, although it is the critic's narrow and orthodox Christianity that accounts for much of the animus.

Let us now see what he thinks of Paine, noting at the same time how Burke strikes him. We are first told, with emphasis, that Paine was a "rank failure" up to the age of thirty-seven. This is an unpleasant way of saying that Paine had not done anything of note up to that age. "Rank," like the more modern "rotten," is one of those meaningless adjectives by which a writer expresses his unintelligent contempt. With his natural advantages of social position, education, and money, Burke was quite as much, or even more, of a failure at the same age. He had done nothing more than amuse himself with parodying Bolingbroke's reasoning on religion, and making the subject of the "sublime and beautiful" even more attractive and difficult than it was. But Mr. Birrell does not mention failure in connection with Burke, and "rank" is an epithet you keep for plebeian democrats. However, he does admit that Paine was a success from the moment he landed in America. This is quite a generous admission for Mr. Birrell, who also credits Paine with being a born journalist, and tells us that, having found the right groove, he never left it, but went on "*scribbling* his advice, and *obtruding* his counsel on men and nations." Surely this is the height of Puritan insolence! But when he proceeds to tell us that Paine "hated British institutions with the hatred of a civil servant who has had the 'sack,'" he simply shows that malevolence will make a clever man talk foolishly. In no one more than in Paine was personal feeling so completely, so admirably, under control. The closely woven logical fabric of his thought is evidence of a fundamental sincerity, which is by no means the quality we found below the gorgeous eloquence and uncontrolled vehemence of Burke. Again, Mr. Birrell is pleased to tell us that Paine was "a bad gauger for King George, but an admirable scribe for a revolution conducted on constitutional principles." My answer is that if Paine did once neglect his duty as an exciseman, he admitted his fault and took his punishment in a manly way, while a politician like Dundas used public money for private purposes and played the injured innocent when he was impeached.

Another of Mr. Birrell's Puritan objections to Paine is that he was not a teetotaler, and that he was inclined to redness. I don't know if Paine's favourite stimulant was gin-and-water. If not, it was no doubt something equally vulgar, something far removed from the old and aristocratic port which seems to have been the tipple of Burke and his friends. As Mr. Birrell knows, it was an age of hard drinking. Many of the greatest statesmen of the time cultivated convivial habits, and some of them made a point of never going to bed sober. "The lampoons and cartoons of the day," says Mr. Lovatt-Fraser, "frequently dwell on the bibulous tendencies of Pitt and Lord Melville," who, it is said, were able to finish seven bottles of wine between them and yet take their seats next day in the House with steady nerves and clear brains. A hundred years ago men had stronger stomachs and harder heads. Drinking was one of the signs of a vigorous and expansive temperament. It set up no more deterioration in Thomas Paine or Charles Lamb or Pitt than did the deplorable opium-habit in Coleridge, for whose moral shortcomings Mr. Birrell would be the first to find excuses.

[1] Dr. Ivor Tuckett, *The Evidence for the Supernatural* (1911), p. 82.

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But what concerns us most as Freethinkers is Mr. Birrell's attitude to the *Age of Reason*. He knows—Mr. Conway's *Life* has made it quite clear—that Paine was a sincere Deist, and not an Atheist, as is ignorantly and commonly supposed. Yet on other points he shows lamentable ignorance. "Nobody now," he assures us, "is ever likely to read the *Age of Reason* for instruction or amusement." Now, I hardly think I am far wrong when I say that the R.P.A. sells a dozen copies of Paine's work for one of Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*. This surely proves that some people do not share Mr. Birrell's tastes; and I am able to assure him that I, for one, have found it both instructive, amusing, and attractive. If we read a little further on, we are able to see why Mr. Birrell has gone astray. He is content to repeat the stupidities of the average orthodox critic. "Paine," he tells us, "is a coarse writer, without refinement of nature, and he uses brutal expressions, and hurls his vulgar words about in a manner certain to displease." Certainly it must come as a crude shock to the Christian to find that there are undeveloped humorous possibilities in the *Pentateuch*, and many absurdities even in his cherished *New Testament*. It was Paine's business, as he conceived it, to put these absurdities and contradictions plainly, with the intention of forcing the believer to examine for himself. To have handled the subject more delicately would have been to miss his opportunity, as the orthodox are notoriously thick-skinned. But to say that Paine is naturally coarse is to show yourself both ignorant and foolish. When he attacked people whose principles he hated, he never let himself loose like the immaculate Burke, who was naturally coarse-grained. You need only scratch the aristocratic statesman to find the hackney cab-driver. There is nothing in Paine to put against the outrageous coarseness of Burke's abuse of Warren Hastings and of the principal actors in the French Revolution. Mr. Birrell, no doubt, could put his finger on the passages I am hinting at; but he prefers the more congenial task of discrediting Thomas Paine.

Geo. Underwood.

Acid Drops.

Speaking in the Upper House of Convocation on May 1, the Bishop of London said he was not happy at the little response made by the nation to the appeal for half a million men for the Army. "He was most anxious that the Church, which had been at the bottom of all the nation's struggles for freedom in all its history, should call the nation's attention to that appeal." Exactly, the Church has always been at the bottom in all the nation's struggles for liberty. At the bottom, or behind, anywhere but on top or in the front. If anyone doubts that the Church has been at the bottom, let him look up the votes of the Bishops in the House of Lords.

The Bishop added that "Many of the agents of the Devil are perfectly prepared to go and work in factories at 30s. a week side by side with the girls and use their influence to lead them astray." We have heard this kind of thing before—from the Bishop, and from agents of the Salvation Army—but we should like to see something like facts produced in support. Until they are forthcoming we are inclined to put them along with the romantic stories of the Bishop's encounters with Atheists in the East End. We do not say that men do not lead girls astray, and sometimes girls lead men astray. Both things are possible in this Christian country with its moral sense heightened and purified by this Christian War.

The death of Sir Francis Burnand, a famous editor of *Punch*, reminds us of his ready wit. At a Foreign Office reception, a guest in brilliant uniform came up to Burnand and shook hands with great cordiality. Burnand looked embarrassed, so the guest said, "I see you don't know me from Adam." "My dear sir," replied Sir Francis, "I didn't know Adam."

At the funeral of Sir Francis Burnand, Father Fox said that Sir Francis was "famous before God and the saints in heaven." We had no idea they took such an interest in *Punch*. But we daresay the poor things were glad of anything to enliven the deadly monotony of their existence. And one can imagine the angels crowding round Sir Francis, the moment he arrives, begging for the last good story.

The side-tracking of education by the clergy is continuing, and a large number of Welsh Nonconformist ministers have become elementary day-school teachers. This will mean a very big Bible in the schools.

A London magistrate says that beggars exhibit much better manners than formerly. Nowadays, when they were refused, they went off saying, "God bless you," or something of that sort. Perhaps the dear clergy will claim this as proof of the belated revival of religion.

The Archbishop of Canterbury issued a special prayer asking God to "protect our merchant ships and those of our Allies, and of the neutral nations against the attack of our enemies." Now the Government says that the submarine menace is growing, and the number of ships sunk increasing. What will the Archbishop do about it? Will he conclude that God doesn't want to help the Allies, that he can't help the Allies, or that he is helping the Germans? Or will he move a vote of censure on the Lord for his inactivity? Clearly something ought to be done.

Owing to the paper shortage, the Plymouth Education Committee has cancelled an order for the supply of 20,000 hymn-books. So war does bring some benefits in its train, after all!

The intrusion of the clergy into the teaching profession reminds us that over 10,000 members of the Church Lads' Brigade are with the Colours. The parsons evidently like their fighting done by proxy.

Vegetables are being grown in the old burial-ground of the Chapel of the Ascension, Marble Arch, London. As the ground has been consecrated, the vegetables ought to be "very fine and large."

A suggestion was made before the Cinema Commission that many empty churches might be filled if they were equipped with a cinema-screen to illustrate the sermons. If the sermons were on Jonah and the Whale or Noah's Ark, the pictures should be as funny as a Charlie Chaplin film.

Some German editors object to English parsons styling them Atheists, and one points out that Bismarck stated in the Reichstag that he was a Christian, and that the Hohenzollerns have been very pious

In an article on the late Dr. Zanenhof, the inventor of Esperanto, the *Daily Telegraph* says that the famous linguist tried "to undo the effects of the Tower of Babel." Babble on Babel is more suitable to the pages of a parish magazine than the columns of a newspaper.

Following upon an argument concerning the War, the Rev. Robert Barry, a Congregationalist minister at Bronville, U.S.A., murdered his wife and mother-in-law, and committed suicide. The restraining power of religion is not very evident in this.

Lord Devonport has issued an order that anyone found wasting food will be punished. But what will he do with one who prevents the growing of food? We ask this because the Secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society writes in the *Times* that, as a punishment for our desecration of the Sabbath, "God, by his weather, prevented ploughing on

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several of the proposed seven Sundays." Now, that is clear and definite. God is aiding the enemy by preventing the growth of foodstuffs. And we seriously ask, What is Lord Devonport going to do about it?

Billy Sunday, the Yankee revivalist, it is said, is working under his own name, but his name has been too much for its owner. So long as he was a baseballer, he thought of the other six days; but when he took up preaching, the one day won. Before he got on the religious war-path he was William A. Sundy.

Scratch a Christian and you find a barbarian. Even the clergy find this out sometimes. At a Plymouth meeting, protesting against lenient treatment of conscientious objectors at Princetown Prison, a Nonconformist minister wished to move an amendment, but was howled down, and had to seek police protection.

The Revs. W. B. Selbie, F. B. Meyer, and J. Scott Lidgett have sent a letter of protest to Mr. Lloyd George concerning the policy of reprisals, in which they contend that by so doing we have become partners in the enemy's evil deeds. So far, about a dozen out of 50,000 clergymen have protested.

The Rev. George Davies, a Baptist minister, fell dead in the street whilst visiting London for the May Meetings. There is no moral.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell says that children must be taught the culture of the soul. In order, presumably, that the clergy may reap the harvest.

The clerical boast that the War is doing good to religion does not often square with the facts. Owing to paper shortage, Plymouth Education Committee has cancelled an order for the supply of 20,000 hymn books.

On Shakespeare's birthday the poet's monuments in Westminster Abbey, Southwark Cathedral, and other churches, were decorated. The author of *Hamlet* did not often trouble the pew-openers during his lifetime.

The Loretto Heights, near Arras, which has been the scene of a great battle, is a reminder of the Italian town Loretto, which Catholics believe contains a house in which the Virgin Mary formerly lodged. The story tells how, in the thirteenth century, it was brought from Galilee by angels. This story is as true as the Gospels.

The *Daily Chronicle* reminds its readers that George Jacob Holyoake invented the word "jingo" to describe fire-eating militarists. Our contemporary refers to Holyoake as "the Social reformer," but omits all reference to his Secularism.

There are 227 petitions for divorce to be tried during the coming law term. This discounts the clerical boast that those whom God has joined, no man shall put asunder.

One of the "Reporters" of the Imperial War Conference remarks: "A simple calculation shows that, had the annual wastage of infant life during the last fifty years been no greater than it is at present, at least 500,000 men would have been available for the defence of the country to-day." What a glorious thought! And what a commentary upon the benefits of Christian dominancy. The crowning argument for looking after our babies is that it will provide us with more men for "cannon fodder." Who says that Christianity does not protect the home?

Truly the clergy learn nothing and forget nothing. It is at a time like the present when thrones are toppling that the House of Convocation, at the instance of the Dean of Canterbury, pass a resolution in favour of the reinsertion of the name of Charles I. in the Calendar as a saint and martyr. To call him a martyr is absurd. We do not say it is absurd to call him a saint because most saints are absurd. But what a topic to engage the thoughts of men in the midst of a world War. And when all is said and done the only claim of Charles I. to distinction is that he was beheaded. That is a distinction other monarchs have earned, but have not always received it.

Rev. Dr. Eyre has complained to the East Sussex Education Committee that facilities for religious instruction have been infringed by the instruction given at cookery centres. Shocking! And yet we fancy that most sensible people would rather see girls grow up capable cooks than good theologians.

Sir Robert Borden told the British and Foreign Bible Society that democracy must be guided by the Bible. We suggest the following as the guides that would suit: "The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." That is the kind of text which we should imagine would commend itself to such leaders of the democracy as the late Czar, the Kaiser, or Lord Milner. And we are overwhelmed by the democratic enthusiasm burning in such a text as "Servants (slaves) be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ"! Could anything be more democratic?

A Sunday paper complains that we wear too many clothes, and calls for a sumptuary controller. We hope this does not mean a return to the very primitive fashions worn in the Garden of Eden.

In a religious periodical appeared the following piece of beautiful sententiousness: "To-day is the to-morrow you were worrying about yesterday." It sounds like an attempt to parody the Athanasian Creed.

Now we know why the clergy were exempted from the operations of the Military Service Act. Last week the Archbishop of Canterbury told the House of Convocation that the clergy had been exempted from military service by the nation's representatives in Parliament "without a dissentient voice," and this was because "to them had been assigned a great responsibility in the nation's life at all times." So we know all about it. But one still wonders what *is* the great responsibility assigned to the clergy. The Archbishop doesn't enlighten us. Perhaps he was initiating a guessing competition.

The death of Canon McFadden, parish priest of Glenties, County Donegal, recalls the time when the priest was arrested, in full vestments on a Sunday morning, for the part he took in the Irish Plan of Campaign. The police inspector who carried out the order was killed by the peasantry. Religion and politics make a highly explosive mixture.

A Salvation Army advertisement states that its workers "have been engaged in the collecting and sorting of waste-paper for over a quarter of a century." This is a frank admission of the business side of salvation.

The late Rev. W. F. Hale, of Reigate, left estate to the value of nearly £50,000. That should be quite sufficient to keep him out of heaven.

"Some" Ghost.

I BELIEVE in the Holy Ghost,
Believe that he is ever most,
That we can expect from the Host,—
That is Religion's chiefest boast;
Believe he's nothing but a Ghost;
He won't make material roast;
He's neither here nor at his post;
He's naught, in fact; so no fine toast
Can *we* propose to such a Ghost. C. B. W.

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To Correspondents.

J. CRASSIE.—Your letter received. If it did you any good to write it, the benefit is all on one side.

R. C. YOUNG.—Now that Mr. Rosetti is in France, we will see that you get your *Freethinker* until he returns.

J. HARDING.—We quite appreciate your solicitude. But we do not think we are overworking, only working hard; and it is not hard work that hurts, but worry and anxiety. We could do with less of the latter, but must make the best of it.

ASHTON RIDLEY.—Have placed your name in newsagents' list. We are not surprised to learn that the War has scattered many of your old customers for the *Freethinker*. That has been one of the difficulties we have had to face during the course of the War.

MR. G. K. HARPER writes that *La Revolution*, by L. Madelin (Hubatte, Paris), is one of the best works on the French Revolution, and was awarded a prize by the *Institut*. The book is available in an English translation.

S. THOMPSON.—Pleased to know that you are now a regular reader of the *Freethinker*. We don't think "God" does occupy the whole of our space. On the contrary, the weekly fare provided is a very varied one. Our policy is to treat all things from a Freethought point of view, and for that purpose the paper exists. Other suggestion noted.

"FATHER" RUDDY.—Not at all offended—on the contrary, rather interested.

C. HARPUR.—Sorry we have not the space at our disposal to publish your letter. Communications must be brief, if they are to be inserted. But if you insist in preferring a personal conviction against all evidence, is controversy worth while?

W. RAWETT.—If you are convinced, as a Spiritualist, that Mr Mann's articles can only aid your cause, and as we have a quite opposite opinion, controversy seems quite needless. We are both in agreement as to the value of the articles.

W. KENSELT.—We were under the impression that the feeding of inmates of prisons had been improved of late years. If things are as you say, there is evidently room for improvement. As you say, prisoners are not sentenced to semi-starvation.

H. C. HEBBES.—You appear to have overlooked the sarcasm in the review of Mr. Angell's book by "Criticus."

L. JENNINGS (Bristol).—Thanks for new subscriber. We are quite certain that if our readers were to put their backs into it, a thousand new subscribers might be secured in the next three months.

Sugar Plums.

We are not at all surprised to hear that Mr. Lloyd's address on "Humanism *versus* Christianity" was greatly appreciated by the South Place audience on Sunday last. We should have been surprised had it been otherwise. "After the War," perhaps, something may be done. Meanwhile, we draw the special attention of Freethinkers to the fact that the lecturer to-day is Mr. Harry Snell. His subject is "The Imposture of Faith Healing." We trust that our friends will see to it that the hall is crowded—as it should be.

Every little helps. Added to the exceptional and excessive high cost of paper, a rise in the wages of compositors has just been arranged between the masters and men, which puts between £30 and £40 per year on our printing. We quite sympathise with the men in getting this advance, but that does not help *us* much. So, as we said, every little helps—to make the burden heavier.

Capt. W. H. Rushbrooke, of Cosford, Milford, Surrey, writes that someone sent a copy of our "garbage entitled the *Freethinker*" to his address, and that he put the paper in the fire, "the fittest place for it." We hope the gallant captain feels better after informing us that we are living under the frown of his displeasure. But we can assure Captain Rushbrooke that if he thinks of setting up a claim for originality on the score of what he has done, he is quite unwarranted in doing so. Bless the man's innocent Christian soul, the *Freethinker* has been put in the fire by just such cultured and courteous gentlemen many a time. It is an old practice. We are very downcast, but are bearing up, and in time hope to forget this blow to our feelings.

But although cast down by Captain Rushbrooke's displeasure, we are cheered by the following from a Manchester correspondent:—

> I hope your readers will ponder the advice given in your "About Ourselves." The marvel to me is that a paper of such sustained excellence as the *Freethinker* does not have a very large circulation.....(Compliments deleted by office censor.) But if Freethinkers put their backs into it, the circulation ought to be very soon doubled. I am doing my bit, inasmuch as I have gained one new reader this, and I hope to get another one within the next week. If 25 per cent. of your readers (your own figure, Mr. Editor) did the same, your anxiety would be lessened and the *Freethinker's* usefulness increased.

Our correspondent will be pleased to learn that other of our readers *are* working hard in the matter, and, we trust, will meet with the success they deserve.

Miss Vance reports that our outdoor propaganda commenced last Sunday under favourable conditions both as regards weather and audiences, although the latter were somewhat interfered with by the May Day Labour demonstrations. These also engaged the attention of many of those who would have offered to sell the *Freethinker*, but all who had sold last season repeated their evil doings aided by recruits, and are now cheerfully awaiting the Council's promised attentions. The paper was eagerly bought, showing that the ban placed upon it by the Council had, naturally, served to increase the demand. Curiously enough, the impression that the Council had caved in at the end of last season had to be corrected in several instances, and, when this was understood, a resolution condemning the action of this reactionary body was was put and carried unanimously. Miss Vance concludes with the request that additional volunteers to sell the paper may reach her in good time for Sunday next.

We have just published a new pamphlet, *Freethought and Literature* (price one penny, by post three halfpence), by "Mimnermus." Curiously, although "Mimnermus" has been writing in the *Freethinker* and elsewhere for many years, he has never yet put anything into permanent form. We feel sure that our readers will welcome his new departure with as much pleasure as they read his weekly contribution to our columns. His review of some of the world's great writers in their relation to Freethought will be helpful to Freethinkers and illuminating to Christians. We have no doubt but that the pamphlet will have the wide circulation it deserves.

A great many of our readers will be interested in the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, and these will be pleased to hear that a meeting demanding its withdrawal, "and the postponement of such legislation until women have political responsibility," is to be held at the British Schools, Kentish Town Road, on Friday, May 11, at 8 o'clock. As the present issue of the *Freethinker* is in the hands of most London readers before Friday, this notice may be of use. There will be various speakers, and admission is free.

Owing to pressure on our space, we are obliged to hold over the concluding portion of Miss Frances Ivor's "Woman and Christianity." For the same reason we are compelled to hold over the report of the N. S. S. monthly Executive meeting. Both will appear in our next issue.

Presidential Notes.

IN another part of this issue there will be found the Agenda of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference. The Conference will be held in the South Place Institute which is, perhaps, one of the most centrally situated halls in London. The Agenda, it will be noted, affords ground for profitable discussion, particularly those resolutions having a vital relation to the position of Freethinkers and Freethought in public

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life. It is just possible that events will occur between now and the Conference that may call for notice, but the Agenda has to be prepared some time beforehand, and it can only deal with affairs as they stand at the time of going to press.

Two things may offer serious developments at any moment. One is the trouble with the L.C.C., about which I wrote last week. The other is the Clydebank case in connection with the Oath's Amendment Act. It will be remembered that a witness was refused the right to affirm in defiance of a clear statutory right. On behalf of the executive, Miss Vance was instructed to write the Secretary for Scotland calling his attention to the matter. But these letters brought no more than an official acknowledgment of their receipt. A letter to the editor of the paper, in which the case was reported, did, however, bring the startling information that the witness had actually been threatened with contempt of court for refusing to take the oath. This made the case still more serious, and on mentioning the matter to Sir George Greenwood, M.P., he very kindly volunteered to place an interrogation on the question paper of the House of Commons if I desired it. I was, naturally, pleased that this should be done, and the question was accordingly asked the Secretary for Scotland. The following is his reply:—

> My attention has been drawn to this case, and I have caused enquiries to be made. The information before me is that the witness, although given the opportunity of doing so, did not avail himself of either of the statutory grounds provided by the Oaths Act, 1888, on which he might have been entitled to give his evidence on affirmation. These grounds are (1) that the witness has no religious belief, and (2) that to take the oath is contrary to his religious belief. The court accordingly refused to take his evidence, and at the close of the proceedings intimation was made to him that the incident would be reported to the Burgh Prosecutor, in terms of the section of the Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1908.

All I have to say now upon this answer is that it is quite at variance with the published newspaper report of the case, and is little better than an evasion of the question at issue. It was clearly the magistrate's duty to explain to the witness the grounds upon which an affirmation might be made, and there is no indication that this was done. On the contrary, there is evidence that the witness was actually pressed to take the oath. He was asked such irrelevant questions as "Do you attend church?" In short, there is a very ugly look about the whole of the proceedings.

But the matter cannot be allowed to rest here. The important thing is to find out the address of the witness, Charles Stewart. The gentleman who first drew my attention to the case applied to the court for this, and was refused. I then wrote to my friend, Mr. T. Robertson, of Glasgow, asking him to instruct a solicitor on behalf of the N.S.S. to probe the matter to the bottom. Acting on instructions, the solicitor also applied to the police for the witnesses address. It was refused, but he was referred to the "Assessor." On applying to this official there was another refusal. It is, therefore, quite evident that the officials feel they have done wrong and are trying to hush the matter up. Further pressure will, however, be applied, and we must await the result. The important thing is to find the address of Mr. Charles Stewart, who was a witness at Clydebank Police Court on March 12. Surely some one must know him, and I beg Freethinkers on the spot to do what they can to find out where this gentleman resides. It will be a monstrous thing if officials, whose duty it is to see that the law is carried out, can act in the manner indicated without there being some means of calling them to account.

One way and another, the immediate future of Freethought in this country is not likely to lack interest, even if it fails to provide excitement. It is certain that the Churches will strive their hardest to repair their shattered prestige when the War is over, and we shall need to be well on our guard if we are to counteract their efforts. So far we have no cause for complaint, although one would like to have seen greater activity in some quarters. The past year has been one of exceptional difficulty; but, on the whole, the most has been made of opportunities that occurred for work. The lecture propaganda has been revived and carried into new fields with success. New Branches of the Society have been opened, and the ground prepared for others. There has been a larger number of members join the Society than has been the case for many years past, and I can at least close my first year of office with the feeling that I have not spared myself. Continuous lecturing up and down the country, attending to a hundred and one odd matters that crop up, in addition to running a weekly paper single-handed, and under more trying conditions than has ever before been experienced, quite ensures one against rusting out. I console myself with the reflection that I am fairly tough and not likely to *wear* out in a hurry. And I know that I have done what I promised to do—my best.

This year, the increased cost and difficulty of railway travelling may have the effect of diminishing the number of delegates who will attend the Annual Conference; but I hope that all Branches will make an effort to send a delegate, nevertheless. After all, the Conference only occurs once a year, and all should make a very special effort to rise to the occasion. It is in times of stress that co-operation is most needed and most appreciated. There is a great work to be done yet by the N.S.S. if it only rises to the occasion. That work may involve a good deal of reconstruction of the internal mechanism of the Society, the precise nature of which cannot at the moment be indicated. Much will depend upon events that are now in the shaping. Much will, of course, depend upon the whole-hearted energy which each one puts into the common cause. And that cause is great enough to act as an inspiration to all who value freedom, enlightenment, and progress.

CHAPMAN COHEN (*President, N.S.S.*).

National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

SOUTH PLACE INSTITUTE, SOUTH PLACE, MOORGATE STREET,

London, E.C.

WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 27, 1917.

Agenda.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.
   (*a*) Motion by West Ham, Bethnal Green, and Birmingham Branches:—
   "That Mr. Chapman Cohen be re-elected President."
6. Election of Vice-Presidents.
   (*a*) The following are nominated by the Executive for re-election: Bailey, W.; Baker, W. H.; Bartram, J. G.; Bowman, E.; Chapman, R.; Charbonnel, Victor; Collins,

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W. W.; Cowell, H.; Davidson, W.; Dobson, J. G.; Dodd, W.; Elstob, T. H.; Fathers, R. G.; Gorniot, T.; Grange, John; Hammond, J.; Heaford, W.; Hins, Eugene; Hurd, S. L.; Kough, Miss Kathleen B.; Leat, W.; Lloyd, J. T.; McCluskey, G. B. H.; McGlashan, James; Moss, A. B.; Neate, J.; Nelson, Wallace; Nichols, R. T.; Partridge, J.; Peacock, S. M.; Pegg, C.; Pitt, W. T.; Quinton, C. G.; Robertson, Thomas; Roger, Victor; Rolf, G.; Rolf, Mrs.; Rosetti, R. H.; Ross, J. T.; Ross, Miss Mary; Samuels, S.; Shore, T.; Silverstein, H.; Stanley, Miss Alma; Terry, J.; Thurlow, T. J.; Turnbull, John H.; Vance, Miss E. M.; White, G.; Whitwell, C. J.; Williams, E. Clifford; Willis, F. E.; Wood, Frederick.

7. Election of Auditors.

8. Adoption of Revised Rules.

9. Motion by Mr. Cowell:—

"That in order to place the Society on a more democratic basis the office of President be abolished, and in place thereof a committee of three be appointed by the Executive to act in emergencies and report."

10. Motion by Birmingham Branch:—

"That in the opinion of this Conference the earliest opportunity should be taken of publishing the judgment of the House of Lords in respect to the Bowman case."

11. Motion by Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A.:—

"That, having in view the elaborate preparations being made by all sections of the Christian Church to meet post-War conditions, and the possibility of reaction resulting from such activities, this Conference urges Freethinkers throughout the country to counteract the tactics of the Churches by effective organization on their part, and suggests the formation of Branches of the N. S. S. wherever possible."

12. Motion by North London Branch:—

(*a*) "That future Conferences of the Society be held twice yearly, at Whitsuntide and in the autumn; the annual election of officers to be made at Whitsuntide, and the balance-sheet to cover the same period as at present."

(*b*) "That this Conference, realizing the profound importance of the *Freethinker* to the Secular Movement, and being anxious to induce all Branches at their indoor and outdoor meetings to push the circulation of the paper, favours the weekly insertion of brief reports of meetings in that organ, feeling that these notices are calculated to promote and sustain a keener interest in the Freethought Movement."

13. Motion by Mr. Lloyd:—

"That this Conference regrets the absence of all mention of the religious question in State schools from the educational scheme outlined by the Minister for Education in his recent speech before the House of Commons, and is of opinion that no assured progress is possible so long as the schools are permitted to be the arena in which religious bodies fight for a sectarian advantage, and calls upon the Government to restrict the State schools to subjects defined as 'secular' in its own code, and thus end a state of affairs which hinders the progress of education and inflicts an injustice upon a large body of citizens."

14. Motion by Mr. Louis Brandes:—

"That the same person shall not hold the office of President for more than two consecutive years, and shall not be eligible for nomination for two years after the expiration of his last term of office."

15. Motion by Mr. A. B. Moss:—

"That this Conference protests in the strongest terms against the repeated flouting of the provisions of the Oaths Act of 1888 in the public courts; it draws special attention to the case in the Clydebank Police Court in March last, when a witness was not only refused the right to affirm, but was subsequently charged with contempt of court; and calls upon the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Scotland to see that the administration of the law is no longer obstructed by ignorant or bigoted officials."

16. Motion by Mr. C. Cohen:—

'This Conference, noting the fact that our great Ally, France, is, without injury to the conduct of the War, able to grant her soldiers and sailors complete freedom with regard to attendance at religious worship, regrets that such attendance should still be compulsory in both branches of the Service under the British Government, and regrets that in a War in which 'Freedom' and 'Justice' play so large a part, Freethinkers serving with the Forces should be compelled to participate in a religious service in which they have no faith, and should be denied that freedom of choice in matters of belief which is now generally regarded as the condition of a progressive social life."

17. Motion by Executive:—

"That, having in view the ambition of the Vatican to regain some portion of its lost temporal power, bearing in mind also the danger to European liberty of permitting the presence of representatives of the Papacy at the Peace Congress that will be called at some future date, this Conference welcomes the agitation now being carried on in continental Freethinking and Liberal circles against the international recognition at a Peace Conference of a Church which has always distinguished itself as an enemy of enlightenment and Freedom."

18. Motion by Executive:—

"That this Conference protests against the policy of allowing trained teachers in State schools to be replaced by ministers of religion, who are fitted neither by training nor tradition for so technical and responsible a task as the education of the nation's children."

This Conference will sit in the South Place Institute, South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. Morning session, 10.30 to 12.30; afternoon session, 2.30 to 4.30. Both are purely business meetings. Only members of the N. S. S. can speak and vote. A public meeting will be held in the evening at 7 o'clock.

By order of the Executive

C. COHEN, *President.*
E. M. VANCE, *Secretary.*

The Monarch of Cereals.

VII.

(Concluded from p. 285.)

As an article of food, wheat has always been used in various ways. In remote ages, the unground cereal was soaked in water and then dried into cakes in the sun. Frumenty or furmity was for centuries a favourite dish in England. This food was prepared by soaking the grain, boiling it with milk, and then adding some sweetening substance. Macaroni and several other edible commodities are made from wheat, but bread is the oldest and most valuable of its products. Charred fragments of bread have been discovered in the Lake remains of the Neolithic Age. The loaves of these far-off days were prepared from crushed wheat. Many were the varieties of cakes and bread consumed by the classic Greeks. As many as eighty-one loaves of bread, quite modern in texture, were recovered from an ancient Roman oven in the overwhelmed city of Pompeii, while the old Egyptians were long acquainted with leavened bread.

The modern loaf is leavened by the action of yeast, and unless the dough rises, the bread is certain to be sad and heavy. After the dough has been kneaded and shaped into loaves, a temperature of from 70 to 75 degrees F. is regarded as best for obtaining light and palatable bread. Yeast, or "barm," is a fungous plant which, when introduced into the dough, nourishes itself chiefly on the sugar contained in it. As the yeast spreads, it exhales alcohol and carbon dioxide gas. This gas and "the generated steam expand with heat, force their way through the dough, and thus lighten it." The changes set up by the fermentation initiated by the yeast result

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in an average loss of 2 per cent. of the flour content. It is officially stated that "in exceptional cases, as in prolonged fermentation,.....the losses may amount to 8 per cent. or more."

This serious leakage led to the substitution of chemical preparations for ordinary yeast. But these substitutes have failed so far to secure the benefits required. The best bread baked from German yeast lacks taste, and has other blemishes. There is some talk now of the possibility of preparing yeastless bread, in which the waste due to fermentation will be avoided, but it remains to be seen whether this unfermented loaf has yet passed beyond the stage of experiment.

The "Ready-to-Eat Wheat" industry has developed considerably in America since 1895. Shredded wheat biscuit is said to contain every part of the grain. Wheat straw finds innumerable uses on all farms. In mediæval England this straw formed the house thatch, and in some Old World lands wheats of certain kinds are expressly cultivated for the straw used in making hats and baskets. Although bread is a staple in most countries, the use of rye and other cereals lessens the consumption of the wheaten loaf. The chief European consumers of wheat are France, England, Belgium, Spain, and Switzerland. Elsewhere wheaten bread is greatest in request in Canada, Australia, and the States.

In area the wheat fields of Russia are the largest in Europe, and the land of the recent revolution may yet become the granary of the Old World. The potentialities of the Russian soil are beyond all reasonable calculation once a rational system of government permits the progress of the agrarian population. The renowned black soil of European Russia consists of an arable plain situated in the south-east of the country. It is of vast extent, and the earth is remarkably fertile. Nor need this occasion surprise, for the dark soil results from many centuries' constant decomposition of the plant life of the region. The eighteen provinces of European Russia which mainly possess this rich soil raise two-thirds of the wheat of the country. Of Russia's 328,000,000 acres of plough land, nearly 60 per cent. is situated in the area of black soil. The remaining arable domain of Russia lies towards the north-west, and is greatly inferior to the sable soil. This poorer land is devoted chiefly to the raising of rye. Mainly owing to the shameful secular misgovernment of the country and the sinister influences of the Sacerdotalists the Russian peasant is still steeped in ignorance, superstition, poverty, and squalor. Despite the miserable standard of living and the wretchedly recompensed toil of the labourer, the effete methods of farming, and the antiquated system of land tenure, have made Russian wheat a high-priced grain, considering its inferior quality. During recent years, however, a spirit of progress has appeared. Machinery is being set to agricultural service, and the rotation of crops is being practised. In Western Russia, from 1870 to 1904, the production of wheat increased 122 per cent., and a far greater area was employed in its cultivation.

Asiatic Russia has also moved forward. The building of the Great Siberian Railway has necessitated many changes of a progressive character. Siberia, which remained until recently to the world in general as a synonym for all the horrors which attend autocracy, suddenly stood revealed as our planet's future granary. This magnificent vision has thus far failed to materialize, but the promised fruitfulness of this immense territory when controlled by capable and conscientious administrators is indeed vast. Siberia is twenty-four times the extent of Germany, and nearly double the area of the United States. Intensely cold is the climate, and much of the country is unfit for human habitation. Yet there remains a huge region for cultivation, and especially for the cultivation of wheat, which is already Siberia's leading crop. After recent happenings, we may safely regard Russia as a great permanent contributor to the world's wheat supply.

India became an important wheat exporting centre with the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, and with the development of internal railways at a later date. India is a peninsula so large, and agricultural and climatal conditions are so various in the country, and as the weather fluctuates considerably from season to season, the annual output of wheat is subject to marked variations. In consequence of this, Indian wheat is always an extremely uncertain factor in the world's markets. Were it possible to predict the approximate yield of the export crop for a series of years, Indian grain would materially affect the world's wheat prices. In British India there are about 30,000,000 acres under wheat, and the cereal is harvested in the European spring.

Although the average agriculturist in Argentina is decidedly unenterprising, and despite the fact that cattle breeding has long eclipsed all other aspects of husbandry, the Republic has made remarkable progress recently in wheat production. Some thirty years since, not sufficient wheat was raised for domestic demands, but the cereal has now become the staple crop. The annual export exceeds 50,000,000 bushels, and it is thought that at least 60,000,000 acres will, at no distant time, be devoted to the growth of wheat.

It is, however, to Canada that we must look as the coming wheat-field of the world. Every facility is afforded in the great Dominion for immediate and unexampled development. Not alone are soil and climate almost ideal for wheat culture, but the Canadian farmer is usually industrious, intelligent, and up-to-date. Canada possesses an area in which wheat can be conveniently and profitably cultivated, which has about three times the acreage of the wheat region of the United States. Truly a tiny percentage of this immense territory is at present under cultivation, but this small area yielded more than 100,000,000 bushels of wheat ten years ago. An American authority admits that "the hard wheat of the Canadian North-West ranks with the world's best wheat, and the Toronto papers quote it at a price about 15 cents above that of Ontario wheat."

Intensive agriculture, combined with suitable soil, produce more bountiful returns in Canada than in the American wheat lands. As a permanent source of European supply, Australia is less reliable, as in that Southern land wheat proves unremunerative in comparison with other crops, and the cereal is severely handicapped by the recurrent droughts.

About 95 per cent. of the world's total wheat crop is produced in the Northern Hemisphere. And not only does this hemisphere consume all that it raises, but it absorbs a considerable percentage of that grown in the Southern Hemisphere as well. More than half the entire wheat crop is cultivated in Europe, but owing to the density of that continent's population, Europe absorbs the world's surplus in addition to her own yield. No marvel then that in our war-stained countries the cry increases that flesh and blood seem cheap, while the indispensable loaf becomes steadily scarce and dear.

T. F. PALMER.

Book Chat.

As an earnest of a serious attempt to rouse the British public to a due sense of the value of Pure Science, *Science and the Nation* (Cambridge University Press, 5s.) deserves a warm welcome. The volume is well planned, and the thirteen scientific authorities, who between them

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range over the larger part of the scientific world, deal with their subjects in a way which, while bringing out the importance of scientific research to the commercial and economic life of the nation, duly emphasizes the fact that genuine scientific progress is only possible to those who are animated with a love of knowledge for its own sake. And there is need for this lesson. As Lord Moulton, who contributes a preface to the work, points out, there is a real danger that the widespread determination to remedy our national neglect of industrial science may defeat itself by leading to as great a neglect of Pure Science after the War as existed before that catastrophe broke upon Europe. The volume before us is designed to avert that danger, and it deserves success. Each of the thirteen essays is fascinating in its account of the marvels already worked, and not less so in the worlds of speculative possibilities indicated. We cannot think of a better volume to place in the hands of those who think science a "dry" and uninteresting subject. The sciences of Chemistry, Physics, Metallurgy, Botany, Geology, Forestry, Medicine, Ethnology, etc., are passed in review, and fairyland is made contemptibly matter of fact and commonplace by the tale of wonder unfolded. Lord Moulton may well say that these essays "offer an unchallangeable argument in favour of Pure Science," or, as I should prefer to call it, Experimental Science motivated purely by the desire to increase knowledge.

And that is the only spirit in which really important scientific work is ever accomplished. You cannot set down a first-rate scientific worker to discover something useful or commercially profitable; you must leave him free to discover something that is true. Its commercial exploitation will be pretty sure to come later. It is to our national discredit that hitherto we have thought much of the latter and little of the former. This is due, says the Cambridge Professor of Chemistry, to the fact that "during the past fifty years hardly any English public man of affairs possessing any knowledge of scientific principles has arisen, and no Government department having the faintest interest in scientific industry has existed."

How much better we shall be after the War remains to be seen. But it is certain that we shall not be better off unless by some means a public interest in the right direction is created. It is as a step in that direction that *Science and the Nation* is to be welcomed. It is both informing and inspiring, and the man or woman who can read it through, from the opening essay to the fascinating ethnological chapter, by H. R. Rivers, without being fired by the spirit of adventure, must indeed be of "coarse clay and common mould."

The famous Swedish author, Helen Key, has a large and international, if somewhat peculiar public, and in *War, Peace, and the Future* (Putman's Sons, 6s. net) she deals with the question asked her at the opening of the War, "In what way can humanity prevent war?" Her answer to that query is, "by making humanity really human," and her work is an examination of the causes that produce war, with an indication of the means that may prevent its recurrence. The causes of war—the jealousies of nations, the persistence of false ideas of greatness, the piling up of armaments, the fact of the desire for peace not being so powerful as the desire on the part of each nation not to declare war, have been so frequently stated as not to need dwelling on at any length here. And the folly and inutility of the policies dominating the nations of Europe should by now be plain to all. If proof be needed, the War itself surely furnishes all that is required.

A sub-title to the volume is "A Consideration of Nationalism and Internationalism and of the Relation of Women to the War." But, on the author's own admission, women stand in no special relation to this War, if they ever do at any war. Women have supported war in general, quite as much as have men, and have as often as not urged men to war. One ought not to forget, in this connection, those impertinent and vulgarian fashionable women who, in the early months of the War, made it a rule to hand a white feather to any young man they saw in civilian dress. If it be said that in this respect women have accepted the ideals that men have placed before them, and they will know better as their social education becomes perfected, we agree; but man himself, we hope, will learn better with the growing of the years. We have, indeed, a strong dislike to all attempts to consider this or that social question from "the woman's point of view." It is a heritage, by reaction, from the practice of considering social questions from the man's point of view. Social questions are neither women's questions nor men's questions. They are just social questions, and concern men and women alike. And men and women need to be trained in the light of that conception. We agree, however, with Helen Key, that a general influence from the War will be an increase of woman's self-esteem. Her share in the activities of the War will have made her realize her place as a social unit, and it will lie ill on the lips of those who have utilized woman's labour for every purpose save that of actual fighting, and have only refrained from using it there because of lack of sheer brute strength, that she must not "interfere with things she does not understand."

We agree, also, with this:—

> The first condition of woman's peace movement is, that all talk of the necessity of war, the ennobling influence, the beauty, and the eternity of war, should be silenced on the lips of women; that their lips should never be opened except to proclaim that war belongs to those phases of life that must be conquered if humanity is to be humanized.

Only it seems to us that "men" would read as well as "women" in this paragraph, and "human beings" better than either.

CRITICUS.

Correspondence.

PSYCHISM AND THE SUPERNATURAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As a careful inquirer into the many forms of so-called spirit phenomena, I should like to thank you for the very able and careful articles on this subject which have appeared from the pen of Mr. Walter Mann. I have interviewed, personally, several "mediums," and have been present at the seances in which these folk have acted in the capacity of percipient. I myself have, at telepathic seances, acted both as percipient and as agent. Mr. Mann gives us many examples of fraud and deception, but omits from his essays any reference to cases which have been most carefully inquired into by the Society of Psychological Research, where there is no reason to suppose that any fraud existed. I am as firm a disbeliever in "spirits" as Mr. Mann, but in my own experience have met with certain cases where there can be no doubt that no form of fraud was employed. Mr. Mann may be doing the Rationalist cause a great deal of harm by implying that all forms of psychic phenomena are fraudulent. It is unquestionably established that certain persons are born with a highly developed "percipient" sense in being able to record thought transference. The pity is that such persons at once believe that their powers are supernatural instead of natural, and begin to demonstrate their faculty in public and for money. Directly they become servants of the public they are obliged to take precautions that they will not fail, and here is where fraud creeps in. Fraud

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is easy to expose where scientific tests are used, but the genuine cases are very difficult to account for unless we are fully prepared to accept the now proven theories of telepathy and thought-transference. The numerous cases of psychic phenomena which came under the observation of Mr. Podmore, Professor Richet, and others, and even under my own observation on a more limited scale, cannot be accounted for by fraud, and we are doing the scientific cause a great disservice if we claim that they are. Most public "mediums" have been exposed for the reason above mentioned, although this cannot, I think, be said of Mrs. Piper, with whose case Mr. Mann is no doubt familiar. The full account will be found in the Proceedings of the S.P.R. (vol. vi., pp. 436-660), and also in Mr. Podmore's *Apparitions and Thought Transference* (pp. 326-338). Surely it is better to look for scientific explanations than to attribute phenomena to fraud? I hope Mr. Mann will make his views on this most important scientific problem clear.

EDWIN GREENWOOD.

FREETHINKERS AND ADULT SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—If you consider the subject a suitable one, I should like to raise the question as to the desirability or otherwise of Freethinkers attending such institutions as Adult Schools. My experience may be of interest to some of your readers.

I joined the local Adult School some five years ago, it being the only gathering in the village where full and free discussion are allowed. I have never disguised my views as an Agnostic, and have been instrumental in getting the following subjects discussed (amongst others of same type): "Christianity or Secularism: Which is the Better?" "Pagan and Christian Morality" (based on W. Mann's articles); "Civilization and War" (based on Chapman Cohen's pamphlet).

I have always expressed the Freethought point of view without restraint, and am accorded a respectful hearing; and it seems to me that it is better to do this than to hold aloof from such gatherings. What say you?

FRED HOBDAY.

ATHEISM IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—To deal fully with Mr. Farmer's last letter, it would be necessary to enter on an æsthetic discussion on the use of expletives in literature, legitimate and otherwise, which I have no intention of doing, especially as I no longer have Aulard before me, and cannot reproduce the quotations from Hebert which, in my opinion, justified my description of him and his journal as of the "gutter" variety. Even if I could, I should have to use dashes and asterisks to a degree sufficient to deprive the quotations of any value. I must simply, then, so far as the quality of Hebert's journalism is concerned, state my opinion that, while a writer may be "broad" and even "purple," and yet justify himself by his abundance of wit, humour, and sympathetic insight into life, there are limits to the permissible use of low expressions, which one need not be a Puritan to appreciate, especially when used simply to sell a paper.

But in answering my contentions, Mr. Farmer has inadvertently done me an injustice. In my eighth article, which appeared in your issue of April 1, I summed up my opinion of Hebert and his associates, and made it plain that my adverse judgment on this group, including their leader, was based much more on their inordinate bloodthirstiness than on the eccentricities of *Pere Duchesne*. When, therefore, in restating the case against Hebert in reply to Mr. Farmer, I gave proof of his sanguinary incitements by quotations from Kropotkin, I was not introducing a fresh charge, but sustaining my original indictment. Mr. Farmer declines a brief for Hebert on this count. I am disappointed; for I had hoped that this, my one and only encounter with a live Hebertist, might disclose a real case for the editor of *Pere Duchesne*, and add materially to my historical information. It has not done so.

May I add that, so far from being influenced by M. Aulard's "unscrupulous" translator, I entirely forget what that gentleman said on the subject, and should certainly not have treated him as an authority.

ROBERT ARCH.

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 INSTITUTE (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 7, Harry Snell, "The Faith-Healing Imposture."

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, May 17, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, E. C. Saphin, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, R. Miller, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, R. Miller, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Percy S. Wilde, a Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, George Rule, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, P. S. Wilde, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Burke, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Hyatt and Dales; 6.30, Messrs. Kells, Yates, and Saphin.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, Annual Meeting.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE (Collingwood Hall, Clayton Street): 3, L. J. Watson, "Omar Khayyam."

W. D. SATAN.—Send present address to F. D., care N. S. S. SEC., 62 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

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Books Every Freethinker should Possess.

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Views and Opinions.

The War and a Future Life.

If it be true that the War has turned the thoughts of many men towards the question of a future life, it is certain that it has brought no new light, and generated no new conviction. How could it? Death, even in a violent form, is nothing new in the world. Death comes to all sooner or later. To many it comes in the form of loathsome or painful disease, and deaths by violence occur daily to hundreds, if not thousands. Death is of necessity as regular as birth, and the same questions about death front us in a time of peace as in a time of war. And size matters little. It is only the unimaginative and the unreflective who are impressed by the size of things. The wickedness of war on a large scale is really no greater than war on a small one; although many who are aghast at the former accept the latter without demur. Therefore, the War *may* have directed attention towards the question of a future life—although no very clear proof of that has been offered. And, on the whole, one is inclined to regard the alleged growth of interest as due to the activity of professional pleaders who see in the War an occasion suitable to the end of urging their views upon the public.

* * *

For and Against.

Since the War began there certainly appears to have been a larger proportion of books issued on this subject than is usual. Two of this class are before us as we write, and they may be taken together because they are so entirely different in tone, in method, in purpose, and in conclusion.[1] Of Mr. Waddington's work we can offer, so far as it goes, nothing but praise. The case against the belief in survival is well and temperately put, although more detail would prove its strength to be much greater than is here shown. But all the elements of the attack are here, and they are brought out in a survey of the opinions of leading minds from Buddha to Maeterlinck, with a running commentary by the author. Mr. Waddington's work is essentially an appeal to all that is highest and best in man against yielding to an illusion because of sustained appeals to emotion, and the authority of a traditional belief. Daintily printed and bound, we can think of no more suitable work that would serve as a gift-book from Freethinker to Freethinker, or better still, from a Freethinker to an enquiring Christian.

* * *

Question Begging by Definition.

Mr. Griffith-Jones's work is of a quite different character. We are told frankly that it is written "not for Agnostics or Materialists, but for perplexed believers." Its business is not to investigate origins, trace developments, and balance evidence, but to say what can be said in favour of the belief in survival in face of what, we believe, are the damning presumptions against it. So far as that be, Mr. Griffith-Jones makes out as good a case as is possible. If he leaves the matter where he found it, his excuse might be that he cannot make something out of nothing. But he does his best. Mr. Waddington cites Confucius as saying to an enquirer: "While you do not know what Life is, what can you know about Death?" That is the caution of a wise man. Mr. Jones defines death—like a theologian. Death is, he says, physiologically "the dissolution of the vital bond between the soul as the living principle, and the body which is its organism," and, psychologically, it is "the end of our conscious life on earth." Well, if that is correct, no more is to be said. We know all about it, and survival is demonstrated. Only we venture to suggest that so long as we keep within the bounds of knowledge, or of even legitimate assumption, death is *not* the separation of soul and body, it is the cessation of a phenomenon which we call life. That it is continued elsewhere is pure assumption. Dr. Jones begs the whole question in his definition.

* * *

Evading the Facts.

Dr. Jones cannot be said to deal with the case against survival as presented by modern science. He sketches some of the arguments but refutes none. Sometimes, as in his dealing with the anthropological argument—to our mind the most convincing of all, he reminds one of the preacher who exhorted his audience to look their difficulties in the face and pass on. And this shows wisdom. For there is no adequate reply to the scientific case. All analogy forbids our assuming human life to be more permanent than other forms of existence. The primitive illusion of a "double" or "ghost," in which the belief in survival undoubtedly took its origin, is conclusive in itself. All scientific knowledge is in the one direction. We know nothing of mind or "soul" apart from organization. We cannot even conceive it apart from organization, and it is only believed in because so few people ever try to visualize their beliefs or their thoughts. Mr. Waddington puts the matter plainly when he says: "We have

[1] *Some Views Respecting a Future Life*, by S. Waddington (John Lane, 3s. 6d., net); *Faith and Immortality*, by the Rev. E. Griffith-Jones (Duckworth, 5s.).

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no knowledge, nor are we able to imagine, any mind or thought apart from common matter—that is to say, apart from a material organism. History fails to record and imagination is unable to depict, the existence of a great mathematician without a brain, and until we meet a senior wrangler walking down Piccadilly without a head, we shall not believe in the possibility of thought without some corporeal accompaniment."

* * *

From Absurdity to Slander.

Many people are far more impressed by what they consider the moral value of the belief in a future life than by anything else, although this is an appeal to cupidity rather than to reason. Dr. Jones lays considerable stress upon this, and promises dreadful consequences to society if the belief dies out. But, of course, against this is the awkward fact that people without the belief in a future life are at least as worthy as those who believe in it, and not infrequently more so. To this Dr. Jones replies that the springs of conduct had been fixed "before they became Agnostic," and such a position "is not likely to be repeated in the second and third generations, as the history of families who have departed from the Faith abundantly proves." So slander is added to absurdity. Starting with the ridiculous statement that morality, which is a social product or nothing, is born of the Christian faith, Dr. Jones proceeds to the slander that those who have left Christianity show a moral deterioration in the third and fourth generation. One would like to get the names of these cases. Until they are forthcoming, we can only characterize such a statement as a cowardly falsehood. Dr. Jones is trading on the fears of the unthinking to bolster up a belief which he sees cannot depend upon reason for its justification.

* * *

The Slump in Belief.

The absurdity of it all is shown by Dr. Jones's own admission that "the belief in immortality has unquestionably been losing its hold on all classes of society during the past half-century"; that on speaking to soldiers from the Front, he discovers "the majority do not seem to think about it at all"; that "the trend of scientific thought on its broader and more philosophic side during the last half-century has been distinctly, and, till quite recently, increasingly hostile to faith in a future life." What, then, can be the moral value of a belief about which the majority do not trouble, which is losing its hold on all classes, and to which exact thought is increasingly hostile? The truth is, that next to the illusion of the belief itself, is the illusion that it is of some social or moral value. It has not, and never has had, any such value. Some of the greatest scoundrels in the world have been firm believers in a future life. Our prisons are filled with people who believe in it. And even in the pulpit it clearly cannot keep its professors faithful to the truth, nor save them from slandering those who disagree with them.

* * *

A Doomed Belief.

People who are not theologians are, however, not concerned with whether the belief in a future life is useful; they are more concerned with whether it is true. And that is far healthier. For, as one of Mr. Waddington's authors says, "A man can be good without being clever, but he cannot be good unless he desires the truth for its own sake, and uses his intellect to discover it." The truth about this belief in a future life is known, and is permeating the people, despite the efforts of the pulpit to prevent it. We know the belief began in an illusion, and we know you can no more reach truth by refining an illusion than thirst-stricken travellers in a desert can slake their parched throats by following a mirage. From the dreams and crude guesses of the primitive savage this belief came. It was developed into a philosophy before positive science came into its own, since when it has been steadily losing ground, in spite of the millions of pounds spent to secure its perpetuation. For every one to whom the belief has brought solace, it has made life for a hundred a veritable nightmare. Poets, philosophers, and theologians have done their best to give this belief an air of reality; still it remains true to itself—a legacy from the primitive savage, and with no greater warranty in our day than it had in his.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christianity and the Churches.

THERE are Christian divines not a few who sorrowfully confess that the Churches are in a state of bankruptcy, and that, as at present constituted, they can have no brilliant future. No unbeliever ever judged them with greater severity than the Rev. Bernard Snell did in his pungent address from the chair of the Congregational Union a few days ago. Mr. Snell is described as "a powerful and original speaker, whose theological viewpoint is broad and advanced." Even in his Newcastle days, upwards of thirty years ago, he was distinguished for the courage with which he expressed his convictions, which, at that time, were anything but popular. He may not be quite so heterodox to-day as he was supposed to be then; but he still displays the same bravery in all his public utterances. The following extract from the *Christian World's* report of his Chairman's Address illustrates the accuracy of our estimate of him:—

> Principles were cheerfully accepted they had never dreamed of seeing in their time. The comradeship of officers and men was full of hope. The spirit of brotherhood was prevailing everywhere except in the Churches, which were created to promote it. That was the scandal. The Churches were the greatest laggards, the homes of hesitances—they were too largely an apparatus for keeping the people apart

According to the report in the *British Weekly*, Mr. Snell reminded the assembled delegates that "the Churches have become reduced to the necessity of defending the religion of Christ from the indictment that it has failed by saying that it has not been tried." "Then why not try it"? he exclaimed amid a wild outburst of approving applause. In that question lies the crux of the problem. Dr. Frank Ballard and others have repeatedly assured us that Christianity cannot honestly be said to have failed because it has never yet had its innings; but the question forces itself upon us, Why has she not had them? According to all accounts, the Church was divinely organized for the one purpose of putting the religion of Christ into practice, for the fulfilment of which she was promised the perpetual presence, guidance, and power of the Holy Ghost. That purpose she has flagrantly failed to execute, and this is a fact recognized by all alike.

Dr. Ballard raised a larger issue than he was prepared to face. It is easy enough to perceive that the Church has failed in her mission; but her admitted failure is quite as difficult to explain as the alleged failure of Christianity, and certainly no less serious. What is the Church? Christ's body, the Holy Spirit's temple, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Jesus is reported to have said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." To his Church, so built, he said: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Now, surely, such men as Dr. Ballard and Mr. Snell must regard

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the New Testament description of the Church as at once inspired and authoritative, in which case it is impossible to understand on what ground they acknowledge her impotence and deny that of the religion she embodies, or how they can say that the gates of hell have prevailed against the former and left the latter unharmed. As a matter of fact, if the teaching of Christ and his apostles, as recorded in the Gospels and Epistles, is to be accepted as divinely inspired and essentially true, there is positively no escape from the conclusion that the Church and Christianity are equally divine and infallible, and that it is equally impossible for either the one or the other to fail; but, on the other hand, if that teaching is not true, both are equally human and fallible, and their failure should occasion no surprise to anybody. Our contention is that the high claims set forth on behalf of both have been completely falsified by the events of the last nineteen centuries, and that the prospects of neither are calculated to hearten their professional champions. And incontrovertibly the failure of the Church *is* the failure of Christianity, because, apart from the Church, Christianity is non-existent. Those who distinguish between traditional and essential Christianity, alleging that the one is a waning belief and the other a waxing force, forget that the traditional species is the only one known to us, the brand called "essential" being, as yet, at any rate, entirely unhistorical. There are two types of the Christian religion in the world, namely, the natural and the supernatural. Those who affect the former call themselves Liberal Christians, while the representatives of the latter glory in the adjective "orthodox"; but both schools profess what they believe to be "essential" Christianity, the only difference between them being that they do not agree as to what the essence of Christianity is. According to the one school it is obedience or conformity to the teaching of Jesus, while, in the opinion of the other, it is the acceptance by faith of the finished work of Christ as the objective ground of salvation; but the one school is as certain as the other that it possesses and strives to exemplify the very essence of the Christian religion. Those two types we know as actually existent, but what "essential" Christianity, as distinguished from those traditional types, is we have not the remotest idea.

Orthodox Christianity is the Church's creation. It has gone through a long process of evolution, and there still await it, no doubt, many further modifications; but in essence it will always remain either a natural or a supernatural system of thought, accentuating either obedience or trust. The present point is, however, that Christianity, in any intelligible sense, is as colossal a failure as the Church. In point of fact, as a religion, it never was a success. Even when the Church dominated all departments of life, Christianity as a factor of social reform was a dead letter. When supernatural belief flourished throughout Christendom the morals of both clergy and laity were shockingly low. The Bishop of London asserted recently that London is to-day "less godly" than it was a hundred years ago, but he omitted to add that it is morally and socially considerably higher. In his excellent new book, *The Bankruptcy of Religion* (Messrs. Watts & Co.), Mr. Joseph McCabe says:—

> If the bishop had a spare hour in which to study the London of a century ago he would discover that its godliness was allied with a comprehensive corruption which might surprise him. Prostitutes were then, in proportion to population, and according to the statements of the police (given by a writer of the time, the magistrate Colquhoun), *twenty times* as numerous as they are to-day, and general looseness of conduct was much greater than now. Gambling was permitted on the streets and encouraged by the State-lotteries. Drunkenness was immeasurably worse than it now is. Pleasure was brutal and revolting. Wives were sold in public. Children were worked or beaten to death. Crime was so flagrant that one hardly ventured out after dark. Industrial oppression was absolutely unchecked. The political system was infamous. And the Bishop of London of that day and his colleagues did not know what social idealism meant (pp. 276-7).

We agree with Mr. Snell when he says that "for all who read the signs of the times a new spirit is moving such as men have never known"; but this new spirit was born and is being nurtured outside the Churches. While it was growing up the Churches were busily defending their doctrinal standards and their orthodoxies, their voice thus ringing false and their members largely ignoring its very existence. As soon as it had arrived at a certain stage of development and become influential, many of the Churches took it into their bosoms and called it their own fondly cherished child; but it was too late. As Mr. Snell himself declares, that spirit of brotherhood and progress is "prevailing everywhere except in the Churches." When Mr. Snell and others first realized what had happened, it was too late to remedy the evils that had persisted for many centuries. The outside world had found out how extremely false the voice of the Churches had rung throughout the ages, and under what absolutely false colours they had always sailed. Their Divine origin, the alleged presence and activities within them of an eternal, omnipotent, and all-loving Redeemer and Lord, the mighty miracles which they claimed to have been performed by the outpouring of the Spirit, all such pretensions are now seen to be but baseless myths, doomed to disappear wholly discredited. Natural knowledge is eliminating supernatural beliefs, the spread of Humanism is banishing all forms of religious magic, all theories of personal redemption by mystic union with a slain and resurrected Saviour-God, and the new spirit is enunciating ever more clearly the great principle that every vital problem "concerns us as human beings striving to comprehend a world of human experience by the resources of human minds" alone.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Voltaire of America.

> We think our civilization near its meridian, but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star.—*Emerson.*
>
> The infidels of one age have been the aureole saints of the next.—*Ingersoll.*

AN advanced movement like our own can have no better champion than a humourist. No human emotion is so readily awakened as that of which laughter is the sign. And if the cause be a great one, and if the arguments, barbed by wit and winged by laughter, have any intrinsic worth, they strike the deeper and take the stouter hold because of the humorous nature of their presentation.

In a theological discussion a laugh is a blessing, and a laugh-maker like Colonel Robert Ingersoll was genuinely our benefactor. The artificial solemnity of the subject make a joke more jocund, as the arms of a dusky maid give a double beauty to her pearls. The defenders of that transcendent imposture known as Christianity have lost themselves in trackless deserts of so-called evidence, and almost drowned the subject in oceans of verbiage. But Colonel Bob, the Voltaire of our day, challenged the defenders of orthodoxy with smiles. There was no point of real importance upon which the Colonel did not touch wittily. There were few fallacies in that enormous tissue of falsehoods which he did not laughingly expose. Nowhere is he so happy as

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when he describes smilingly how religions grew out of the hot-beds of ignorance, fraud, and mystification. Although a master of the lash, he uses his whip caressingly. He does not cut his subject to ribbons like Jonathan Swift, nor, like Voltaire, sting like a thousand wasps. Rather is he a Voltaire into whom has passed the geniality and suavity of Renan. It is a mellowed and transformed Voltaire, looking upon a sadder and busier world with the laughing eyes we know so well. That was one of the many reasons why the Colonel had such bitter enemies among the long-necked geese of orthodoxy, who sought for many years to hiss him down. The defenders of the religion of the Man of Sorrows realized that it is ridicule that kills. Gravity was what they wanted, for they knew full well that opponents who treat religion too seriously play their game for them.

Robert Ingersoll occupied the position as a militant Freethought orator and writer which Charles Bradlaugh filled here. Both were big men physically and intellectually; both could sway popular audiences; but here the resemblance ends. Bradlaugh sought to beat down Christianity by sheer force of logic and law. His speeches read like judicial utterances by the side of the brilliant, sparkling orations of Colonel Ingersoll. America dearly loves rhetoric, and Pagan Bob as an orator had no equal in the States. He dealt rhetorically with elemental emotions, and he enjoyed the fame of being an apostle of liberty. Expressing the simple feelings of men, he made a universal appeal. "Give me liberty, or give me death!" That was the kind of thing; a sonorous and impassioned phrase flung out to thrill the hearts and flush the cheeks of thousands. Phrase after phrase has this special quality, and reads like prose-poetry, grandiose and sweeping:—

> Liberty, a word without which all other words are vain.

You can almost see the outstretched arm, hear the thrilling, resonant voice. There is music in it; the trumpets sing to battle.

Colonel Ingersoll wrote, too, quite as brilliant and delightful a style as his spoken words. He was "answered" over and over again by ministers of all denominations, and even drew Cardinal Newman and Gladstone into the controversial arena. Taunted by the English politician with riding a horse without a bridle, Ingersoll retorted crushingly that this was better than "riding a dead horse in a reverential calm." Professor Huxley, indeed, claimed the victory for Ingersoll. "Gladstone's attack on you," he wrote, "is one of the best things he has written. I don't think there is more than fifty per cent. more verbiage than is necessary, nor any sentence with more than two meanings."

Ingersoll's masterpiece, *The Mistakes of Moses*, is a Freethought "classic," and still commands a huge circulation wherever the English language is spoken. A generation after his death his lectures are as widely read and discussed as during his lifetime. Such literary vitality is the surest test of his power, for it is rare that controversial matter is endorsed so richly as to survive the purposes of the moment.

It is good to find that Ingersoll is still discussed so many years after his death, for there are few Freethinkers whom it is more necessary to remember. He was of the race of the Sun-Treader, whom Browning once worshipped this side of idolatry. He was the mouthpiece of liberty and fraternity, believing, as he did, that freedom was the very breath of brotherhood. He was the orator of Freethought, with that all-embracing appeal which the mere rhetorician never succeeds in attaining.

His was a genius in which intellectual liberty appeared as beautiful a thing as a flower, a bird, or a star. At heart a poet, he found the world a place of ethical ideals, and he was no less exalted when he spoke of the golden hopes of humanity than when he described the exquisite beauty of a little child's laugh:—

> Strike with hand of fire, O weird musician, thy harp strung with Apollo's golden hair, fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim, deft toucher of the organ-keys; blow, bugler, blow, till thy silver notes touch and kiss the moonlit waves, and charm the lovers wandering amid the vineclad hills. But know your sweetest strains are discords all, compared with childhood's happy laugh—the laugh that fills the eyes with light, and every heart with joy. O rippling river of laughter, thou art the blessed boundary-line between beasts and men; and every wayward wave of thine doth drown some fiend of care. O laughter! rose-lipped daughter of joy, there are dimples enough in thy cheeks to catch and hold and glorify all the tears of grief.

Imagination and humour were the qualities in which Ingersoll surpassed the orators of his time; but his humour was most unassailable work. A handful of his jests are, perhaps, the finest contribution to Freethought literature since Voltaire. How good is his jest that "with soap, baptism is a good thing." Being asked if it were true that he feared to meet certain of the clergy, he replied cheerfully that he was willing to meet them all together. While he had his law-office at Washington, lightning struck and burnt a church close to his office. Ingersoll said: "An offended deity may have intended that bolt for my office, but what marksmanship!" In response to an inquiry about Robert Collyer, he said: "Had such men as Collyer and John Stuart Mill been present at the burning of Servetus, they would have extinguished the flames with their tears. Had the Presbytery of Chicago been there, they would have quietly turned their backs, solemnly divided their coat-tails, and warmed themselves."

A thorough humanitarian, Ingersoll's work is full of a fine and noble indignation, directed against all that is cruel and despicable in religion. From thousands of minds he lifted the awful belief in eternal torment, and banished those degrading conceptions of deity which oppressed his countrymen.

Ingersoll's enormous influence and personal qualities are undisputed. The Rev. J. M. Savage, one of the most scholarly of Transatlantic ministers, said that Ingersoll was "the most remarkable orator and a master over a popular audience." Frederick Douglass, the ex-slave, himself a Christian, has borne testimony to the welcome he met on Ingersoll's threshold when no one else in Illinois would take the negro in. His old antagonist, Gladstone, admitted that the Colonel wrote with "a rare and enviable brilliancy." One may not unfairly sum up Ingersoll's life in the words of Marshall Wilder, who wrote: "People may say all they like of his infidelity, but I wish a good many people I know had some of his religion." One thing, at least, quotations like this prove, they help to refute the absurdities of those persons who pretend that Robert Ingersoll was a commonplace antagonist. The Ingersoll we treasure in our hearts was a keen-eyed warrior, as well as a very noble man, who fought in the Army of Human Liberation, and who never wavered in holding aloft the standard of Freethought against all the gods in the Pantheon.

MIMNERMUS.

Religious revivalism is a social bane, it is far more dangerous to the life of society than drunkenness. As a sot, man falls below the brute; as a revivalist, he sinks lower than the sot.—*G. Boris Sidis, M.A., Ph.D., "The Psychology of Suggestion."*

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Woman and Christianity.

II.

(Concluded from p. 284).

The ascetic doctrines of Christianity cannot be wholly attributed to Paul. Jesus was a celibate, and encouraged the leaving of home, wife, and children, "for my name's sake" (Matthew xix. 29). See also Matthew xix. 12. A perusal of the New Testament yields no ideal conception of woman to compare with the best women in Pagan antiquity. Most Christian women are densely ignorant of the history of their faith, and seldom read the Bible with critical eyes. Their conceptions of Jesus are usually taken from pious tracts and parson's sermons in which a Christ of purely imaginary qualities is portrayed, having no sort of resemblance to the Gospel model. The Christian Church was not long in bringing back the worship of the Mother Goddess, for a woman can only satisfy her highest feelings in ideal womanhood. "When Cyril (d. 444) announced to the Ephesian that the Council of that place had decreed that the Virgin should be called the 'Mother of God' with tears of joy they embraced the knees of their Bishop: it was the old instinct peeping out: their ancestors would have done the same for Diana." And no one who has had any experience of Roman Catholic women will deny that Mary is loved quite as much as Jesus, for there is an instinctive feeling that only a woman can really understand and sympathize with a woman.

Madonna worship is an evolution from Paganism, and has no connection whatever with the mythic Mary of the Gospels, about whose character no authentic historic details are known. Like Pallas, Athene, and Aphrodite, she is the invention of man's soul. For God and Goddesses are abstractions endowed with the qualities which man, in the course of evolution, has come to revere himself. The little child Jesus appears on the arm of his mother Mary, as Horus did upon the arm of Isis. In the course of human evolution, the more sensitive masculine souls conceive woman as holy, and set the vessel of human life up above themselves. But this is not the work of Jesus or Paul. It is a return to Nature, to mother earth, to the natural feelings and instincts, something in which woman has a share.

At the Reformation, image worship was abolished, the mother and her son disappeared from the altar. Luther stresses the old ideals of the New Testament for women: "We have by nature a tainted sinful conception and birth" (Thesis xvi.). The Renaissance, through poetry and art, continued to elevate woman, and every movement for her emancipation, since Luther's day, has been made in spite of the Christian Churches. The Christian religion is the work of man not of woman. Every system of metaphysics and religious belief yet developed has primarily received its elements and proportions from the reasoning intellect of man, rather than from an intuitive perception of what actually exists in the human spirit claiming recognition and development. As man gains in moral sentiment and conception, so he revises his ethics and theology. Each system is logical enough, but the premises are continually changing as he evolves.

The freethinking woman refuses to believe that love, purity, beauty, goodness, are the monopoly of the Christian creed. The priest persuades the ignorant and credulous women that holiest emotions were discovered and preserved by Christianity, whereas the divine feelings are in reality Nature's fundamental impulses towards motherhood in every unspoilt woman's heart, arrived at a certain stage of consciousness in human progress. They are the free gifts of Nature to every woman-soul who is conscious of the broad permanent elements of her being.

A free woman has no need of a father-confessor, knowing full well that even the best of men cannot hold a candle to a really good, natural woman. Her soul revolts from the preposterous notion that a man can absolve her from sin, which, in itself, is a theological invention. Some day it will be realized that woman produces and includes man, and, as his creator, sometimes knows him as he can never know himself. Nearly all the women pioneers are Freethinkers—Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Martineau, Eliza Farnham, Emily Bronte, Ellen Key, Clara Zetkin. Life for these women was not something devised to disappoint the human soul, but to afford it the fullest measure of satisfaction. It is impossible to see it otherwise, the moment we shake off the thraldom of systems and creeds, and find a living and sufficient faith in an ideal of Goodness and in human nature.

Herbert Spencer says:—

> In the history of humanity, the saddest part concerns the treatment of women. The amount of suffering which has been and is borne by women is utterly beyond imagination. We may safely assume that multitudes of tribes disappeared, because the women were so ill-treated as to render them incapable of rearing a due number of children.

At the beginning of the historical period, woman was under complete subjection to man. Though women gained a certain amount of freedom in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, they fell victims to the social and political decadence in the Mediterranean world, of which the advent of Christianity was one of the chief expressions. Christianity lowered the position of woman. Modern humanism attempts to free the wife and mother and destroy the slavery to creeds. It has been said by a woman genius that "Woman does not dispute about the soul and its destiny because her inner consciousness testifies without dispute much that the masculine intellect attempts to prove or disprove."

The woman-soul breathes freely in love, purity, beauty, and goodness. All the priesthoods have taken advantage of this fact, and instilled the poison into woman's brain that *they* are the only custodians of these flowers of human sanctities. As the late Mr. Foote said, the balance between the intellect and the affections is not equal in the sexes. Most women have not the power to think into discipline the emotions of their hearts, and thus to work out their own salvation in this life. In their ignorance and credulity they lean upon the great ecclesiastical organization for emotional support, untroubled by the intellectual doubts which beset most thinking men. Freethought will make great headway only when more women have developed a love of truth. In the words of Lecky:—

> Women rarely love Truth, though they love passionately what they call "the truth" or opinions they have received from others, and hate vehemently those who differ from them. They value belief rather as a source of consolation than as a faithful expression of the reality of things.

Men must help to free woman from the shackles of superstition, so that their energies may be devoted to the service of humanity, thus helping to free the race from its slavedom under the self-constituted authority of the priest. "Can man be free, if woman be a slave?" asked Shelley.

Woman's real religion lies much nearer her heart than the Churches have yet discovered. In the course of human evolution there has developed, during the last century, in some women a clearsightedness into the

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essential nature of woman which is the charter of freedom for the mothers of the human race. Among these pioneer women are many who, like Eliza Farnham, "reject the dust of systems and creeds." Her philosophy centres round the idea that "a free, glad, spiritual (psychic) maternity is woman's highest religion, as a pure earnest searching love is that of man's." Woman is most divine in so far as her motherhood approaches the highest ideal she can conceive. In the lower civilizations woman's finer nature could not assert itself in the tough conflicts on the physical plane. Savages and barbarians are too low in the scale of consciousness to feel woman as a psychic power. The ideal begins to dawn on the mind in later civilizations. In more advanced civilizations woman is reverentially treated, love dominating the human relations. Honour to womanhood, reverence to maternity are dimly seen to be conditions of permanency in any people nation or race.

The humanistic mother finds in motherhood a higher ideal than obtains in any existing religion. She feels that all else in the world is for the best maternity, since where the most perfect humanity is produced, the highest end of human effort is attained. Woman is now beginning to conceive ideals for herself, out of her own nature, instead of meekly conforming to those of man. As it is, she has never burnt the martyrs or slain the prophets. It is the serio-comic man who thinks he has caught and exhausted truth in the institutions and organizations he has created, and is horrified at the thought of cutting through or breaking away from them. It is man who is capable of dying for the grossest error that age has made respectable. It is he and not the mother-soul who persuades himself that he is the heir to eternal misery, who believes in theories of total depravity, original sin, and eternal damnation. The mother-love in a woman's heart recognizes happiness as the consequence of existence, ultimate, if not immediate happiness. She is certain that no child of hers is pre-destined to eternal damnation. The more conscious woman feels that Nature demands perfection of woman as wife and mother. This love of perfection for herself, her children, and human society, has a natural basis and needs no supernatural sanctions. Many of the most vital moral truths essential to human welfare are self-evident to most women. No mother needs persuasion towards love, purity, and goodness on pain of punishment in the next world.

It is impossible that the world should remain for ever at the culture level and evolutionary stage of the early Christians. Freethinking women feel that Nature's wisdom is above that of the New Testament, whose doctrines have long ceased to be a spur and incentive to the times. These thinking women recognize the pious zeal of women working in the Christian cause; but they also recognize how the priests, all through the centuries, have exploited women in the interests of the Church, and they regret the ignorance and superstition which divert the holiest emotions in a woman's heart from the chief sphere in which they can be of lasting benefit to mankind, viz., a free and intelligent motherhood. In that office a fully conscious woman reaches her highest and purest self-hood. Nature, truth, and love are the grand Trinity. "Creeds may die, rites and ceremonies become matters of archæological interest," as Mr. Clodd says; but humanity, with its ideals, remains. Truth, beauty, and goodness still draws the human soul onwards. Nature is all that we know, for we can only know the universe to the measure of ourselves. There are souls whose larger consciousness and wealth of sentiment are the high blooming land of promise to mankind. Hitherto, the world has been led by the more gifted men; but side by side in the future will be ranked the women thinkers with feminine ideals to match the masculine ones. The woman of the future will be intelligent enough to love truth for its own sake as the only means to the end of human development.

Then there will be an end for ever to the venerable falsehoods which bar the progress of humanity towards its ultimate bounds, and love and reason will be the only dogmas upon which the foundation of human society will be based.

FRANCES IVOR.

Correspondence.

A QUESTION OF STYLE: HEBERT AND THE *FREETHINKER*.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I hope Mr. Farmer will not think me discourteous if I venture to remind him of the old proverb: More haste, less speed. To those of us who happen to have a recent and vivid recollection of Hebert's notorious journal, it must seem that he has tumbled over himself in his haste to correct Mr. Arch, whose articles in the *Freethinker* we have all been reading with as much pleasure as profit.

To me both these gentlemen seem to be pretty much in the same position. Mr. Arch admits ingenuously that he has not seen a copy of *Pere Duchesne*, forgetting, I suppose, for the moment, that there is such a place as the Reading Room of the British Museum, and that an hour or two spent there would have put him in the way of reproving the temerity of his critic.

I cannot, of course, commend Mr. Arch for his absolute dependence upon authorities; but, in this case, I am afraid Mr. Farmer has nothing to boast of on the score of accuracy. He claims to have examined the journal carefully, but it must have been so long ago that he has either lost his notes or forgotten what he read. However, that may be, Mr. Arch is emphatically right—at least as regards the wanton obscenities with which the Atheist and Republican journalist besmirched his curious and usually intelligent articles—while Mr. Farmer is, I am sorry to say, as emphatically wrong. I am not in a position to contradict him as to the sort of language likely to shock a Methodist mothers' meeting. But to suggest even the faintest comparison between Hebert's *style des mauvais lieux*—to use the expression of one of his French admirers—and that of the *Freethinker* is to offer an insult to the editor of the paper for which I have the honour to write. It is to ask the reader to believe that the *Freethinker* habitually uses language, the grossness of which would bring a blush to the cheek of an inebriated racing-tout.

What I suggest to Mr. Farmer is, that he should make a faithful English version of, say No. 102 of Hebert's journal, or, indeed, of any one of the articles, and then ask the editor of this paper to print it. I have no doubt of what the answer would be.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

TELEPATHY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The following extracts are from Mr. Edwin Greenwood's letter, which appeared in your issue of May 13, on "Psychism and the Supernatural":—

> It is unquestionably established that certain persons are born with a highly developed "percipient" sense in being able to record thought-transference.....Fraud is easy to expose, where scientific tests are used, but the genuine cases are very difficult to account for, unless we are fully prepared to accept the now proven theories of telepathy and thought-transference.

I would therefore remind Mr. Greenwood that Mr. W. H. Massey, in March, 1911, advertised in the *Literary Guide* that £100 would be given to anyone who would produce evidence regarding the truth of telepathy that would stand cross-examination.

He wrote again in the *Literary Guide* for May, 1911, to say that the advertisement had "brought him nothing in the shape of evidence or proof," and he added "that the offers of £1,000 to three of the highest living authorities on tele-

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pathy have, so far, not led to the production of any evidence that will stand cross-examination, and I think we may conclude that none exists."

That was six years ago, and as Mr. Greenwood now asserts that "it is *unquestionably established* that percipient telepathists exist," we "ought to accept the *now proven* theories of telepathy and thought transference," I would suggest that Mr. W. H. Massey's sporting offer should be claimed, and won, by the specially gifted individuals.

To the best of my belief the offers are still open.

E. B.

Acid Drops.

A correspondent asks us whether we really think that the desire of the clergy for exemption from military service is due to their being more cowardly than others. Well, we have never said so, and we do not believe it to be true. We quite believe that clergymen as a whole are as well endowed as others with physical courage. Had the clergy demanded exemption because they did not believe in warfare, one could at least have respected their attitude; but exemption was demanded in the interests of an order, and that is a quite different thing. At the bottom of the clerical attitude is the feeling that unless the "Black Army" is maintained at full war strength, the interests of the Church will suffer. To have enrolled the clergy with other citizens would have meant the closing of many churches, and that would have taught the people of what little consequence the clergy are. It would have been a great experiment, and one fatal to religious pretensions.

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And, after all, most people are inclined—particularly in war-time—to overestimate the value and rarity of physical courage. The ease with which armies are raised, the readiness with which nations fight, proves that physical courage cannot be a rarity. All over the world we see that, with all sorts of races and peoples, a few months' training and discipline turns out an army of men prepared to face all sorts of discomforts and every kind of death. If physical courage were rare, wars would be rare also. The commonness of the one proves the commonness of the other. The rare thing in the world still is moral courage. More of that might make wars next to impossible. If the clergy had, then, resisted enrolment on any moral ground, we should have thought more of them, and so, we believe, would thousands of their one-time followers. But to stand out against war, when one's stand is based on conviction, requires the exercise of a higher courage than is needed to send one into the ranks at the urging of a "patriotic" impulse, which, however justifiable in operation, is quite unreasoning in origin. No difference of opinion as to the justifiability of this or that war, or of the soundness of the conviction on behalf of which a stand is made, ought to be able to obscure that truth.

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At Sheffield the Chief Constable has issued an edict against Sunday opening of shops. Perhaps he thinks that, with so many edicts being issued, this one may escape criticism, and a little "authority" more or less won't matter. There is something to be said for that assumption. But the small traders are up in arms. They say it is a move on the part of Puritans and the large stores that want to crush the small traders altogether. And they are going to fight. As a start, numbers intend to board the City trams on Sunday, and decline to pay their fare, as it is Sunday trading. We hope the resolution will be carried out, and the officious Chief Constable taught a lesson he will not be likely to forget. It is high time that these Sunday laws were abolished altogether.

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The clerical boast that Christianity and civilization are synonymous has little to do with facts. During the past month the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children dealt with nearly 4,000 cases of neglect and cruelty in England, Wales, and Ireland.

—

The President of the Baptist Union says that for the first time in the history of our land the Prime Minister was a Baptist. He might have added that he also has the power of selecting the bishops of the Established Church.

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A correspondent informs us that at Fort Matilda Camp, Greenock, the Y.M.C.A. is selling cigarettes to the soldiers at a halfpenny per packet more than they can be purchased outside the camp. More appeals for sacrifice, we presume.

—

The Young Men's Christian Association is extending its commercialism still further, and has opened hostels for officers in Grosvenor Gardens, Belgrave Square, Eaton Square, and other similarly dangerous parts of the fighting lines. They contain lounges, dining-rooms, billiard-rooms, bedrooms, baths, and kitchens. The Church Army officials will be lost in admiration at the business activities of their Unsectarian rivals.

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The Rev. T. A. Lacey, M.A., contributes to the *Church Times* for May 11 a most remarkable sermon, entitled "Peril of Idolatry," being "The University Sermon Preached at St. Mary's, Oxford." It is one of the ablest, most original, and ingenious discourses we have read for a long time. The text is, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John v. 21). The preacher begins thus:—

> What is an idol? It is a fiction of the imagination substituted for the truth of God. If you would know God, you must keep yourselves from idols

St. John would probably be startled, if not shocked, could he but see that extremely clever definition. We confess that it has completely fascinated us, especially in its practical applications.

—

What strikes us most is Mr. Lacey's exceeding frankness. He says:—

> We try to make an image of God by art and man's device; whether we use gold and silver, or such stuff as dreams are made of, matters nothing; we can hardly help doing this, but we can hold ourselves from thinking that the Godhead is like the image that we have made.

Capital! If God does not resemble the images believers make of him, what in heaven or on earth is he like, then? If the images are but idols, or fictions of the imagination, how can anybody *know* anything at all about God? We believe that all worship is idolatry, and Mr. Lacey says nothing that even tends to prove the contrary.

—

The most remarkable portion of this extraordinary sermon is that which deals with doctrine of God. Mr. Lacey speaks of the physical or cosmic side of this dogma, portraying God "as framing the universe in such sort that all proceeds according to a fixed order, unswerving, determinate, or inexorable necessity; and as framing ourselves in such sort that we can more or less accurately ascertain the course that is prescribed," that, in fact, "we shall be a part of the fixed order." Such is the scheme, and it is delightfully simple. "It affords a fairly consistent account of most phenomena, and can be squared with most theories of the universe." There is here a slight suggestion of what some scientists call natural knowledge; and it is barely possible that the preacher may have heard that there is such a thing as science.

—

Yes, the scheme is delightfully simple and wonderfully flexible; but with all its simplicity and flexibility, "will it fit in with Christian doctrine? Is it permissible so to image God? Or is this an idol?" Alas, it is but an idol, it does not fit in with "the phenomenon of sin." The scientific conception of the universe must be abandoned, the so-called facts of revelation and experience being in direct conflict with it. Mr. Lacey's conclusion, however intellectually absurd, is at least courageous and consistent with his creed. It is as follows:—

> I am looking for the moment only at the fundamental doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the free sonship of man. Accept this, and that beautiful cosmic scheme of indefensible law falls to pieces.

No one *can* be at one and the same time a thorough-going scientist and a whole-hearted Christian believer.

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In a leading article on "A Shakespeare Day," the *Daily Telegraph* points out that Shakespeare "belongs to all schools, except that of the Puritans and Philistines. With these he has nothing in common, and as they were his enemies in his lifetime, so are they his enemies still." There is a refreshing frankness in these remarks, but, it must be remembered, Shakespeare has been dead three hundred years, and newspaper writers find everything out in time.

Llanfairfechan Council have decided to ask all vendors of comic postcards in the town to cover them over on Sundays. Evidently, smiles are sinful to the followers of the Man of Sorrows.

A daily paper points out that "John Brown's Body" is an example of a song tune fitted to a hymn, and that a few years ago the air of "Poor Mary Ann" was used similarly. Why does the paper omit reference to the Salvation Army, which has adopted music-hall tunes for hymns for the past forty years?

Here is an amusing experience from a correspondent, home on leave, concerning "War Shrines":—

> I arrived home late on a Saturday night, and on Sunday morning heard that a "War Shrine," given by a local lady to the village, was to be dedicated the same evening. I inspected same, to find my name thereon, and as it had plenty of religious references, I determined to be in at the kill. I arrived when the ceremony was in progress.
>
> Scene: The vicar, the donor, and her husband surrounded by the villagers. I approached the husband, who was nearest, and voiced my objections. Hurried consultation with his wife, which seemed to upset the good lady, and I was assured it was all right. However, as the parson was still "carrying on," I again waded in and gave them to understand that I would speak out unless something was done. Here the vicar was called in to the conference, and I was informed my name would be taken off.
>
> When the time came for the names to be read out I stepped in and told the parson I strongly objected to my name being connected with it.
>
> My name was not given out, and at the close of the meeting the vicar announced that my name would be erased from the memorial owing to my objections to have it associated with religion. Caused quite a buzz in the congregation. Had the usual discussion with the vicar, who assured me that I could not be an Atheist. There is no such thing, he said, but declined to argue.
>
> Where my name was is now a black mark. Quite an honour, eh!

We wonder how many Freethinkers have been pilloried as Christians on these War Shrines?

The Pope, who is making further efforts for peace, has given orders to all Catholic bishops to pray for peace, and has also written a new prayer to the Virgin, "Queen of Peace, pray for us." As the son has long been styled the Prince of Peace, there will soon be a Pacifist Royal Family in the Celestial regions.

The boycotting of Freethinkers is not often admitted by Christians, but Canon Maclean said at Church House, Westminster, that in a University calendar there was an entry, "Charles Bradlaugh died." When their attention was called to it, they substituted the name of King Charles the First.

The newspaper stories of the German body-boiling factories, which surely touches the high water-mark of war-time credulity, and the use of the products for—among other things—margarine, reminds us that in another "Holy War," the Crusades, human flesh was eaten when other food fell short. This is asserted by Christian, not Mohammedan, writers. Ansa Connena says that the Crusaders, who were led by Peter the Hermit, roasted young children and ate them; and, among others, the Abbot Guibert and Raoul de Cæn admit the practice. Von Sybel, in his history, cites an old French ballad which gives a circumstantial account of the practice. When the Crusaders were before Antioch, there was a popular leader nicknamed King Tafur, and:—

> In evil case the army stood, their stores of food were spent;
> Peter, the Holy Hermit, he sat before his tent.
> Then came to him the King Tafur, and with him fifty score
> Of men at arms, not one of them but hunger gnawed him sore.
> "Thou Holy Hermit, counsel us, and help us at our need;
> Help, for God's grace, these starving men with wherewithal to feed."
> But Peter answered, "Out, ye drones; a helpless pack that cry,
> While all unburied round about the slaughtered Paynim lie;
> A dainty dish is Paynim flesh, with salt and roasting due."
> "Now by my fay," quoth King Tafur, "the Hermit sayeth true."
> Then fared he forth the Hermit's tent, and sent his menye out
> More than ten thousand, where in heaps the Paynim lay about.

And the ballad goes on to relate full details of this pious cannibalistic feast. Quite nice and elevating things are these "Holy Wars," from the Crusades down to the War of 1914 ——?

Owing to the paper shortage, the discontinuance of the weekly publication of a sermon by Charles Spurgeon is announced. There *are* some benefits from war, after all. These sermons have been appearing for sixty-two years, so the world will be none the worse for a rest.

The wife of "General" Booth expresses her alarm over "the inability of the masses to understand God." We do not know that this difficulty is confined to the "masses." It is pretty general. And how *can* one understand a God who manages the world in the way this one is managed? With millions of his children butchering one another in his name, and he all the time taking not the slightest notice, one does feel like asking what the devil God is after, anyway? Mrs. Booth doesn't know, evidently. All she does is to shake her head and say that God cannot be understood by the intellect, only the heart. Why not the liver? At any rate, we agree that the less one applies one's intellect to God, the better—for God.

The London County Council are making arrangements to employ "suitable clergymen" as teachers in their schools for the duration of the War. Eighteen have offered themselves, and fourteen have been accepted. Meanwhile, the London Teachers' Association have protested against the employment of ministers of religion as teachers in schools. It does, indeed, throw a strong light upon the value of the professed interest in education that, for the sake of the addition to the Army of a quite insignificant number of soldiers, the schools should be emptied of many of their trained men. We have no hesitation in saying that, of all our institutions, the schools should have been kept at their utmost level of efficiency. But we have had deliberate statements from Tribunals that education is not a work of national importance. And we are afraid that this is the attitude of large numbers of the public. The only profession wholly exempt remains that of the clergy. Were Carlyle still alive, he would have found no cause for modifying his famous description of the mental character of the British public.

Worth Consideration.

IT is a fact that well within the reach of every one of our readers there is another person—a man or a woman—who would gladly become a subscriber to the *Freethinker* if he, or she, only knew of its existence. There is only one way in which these people can know of its existence, and that is by *you* introducing it to them.

This is a plan by which much help can be given the cause at a minimum expenditure of trouble.

The *Freethinker* is not a commercial concern. It does not make money, it does not exist to make money. It exists to promote the interests of a great cause, and to that end editor, contributors, and readers, are members of a "Great Company." The above suggestion indicates a way in which *everyone* may lend a hand.

We want to secure that neglected neighbour. The sooner his name is on the subscriber's list—either at this office, or at some local newsagents—the better.

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The Bowman Case—A Final Triumph.

At last we are able to say something definite about the Bowman Case, and it is worth the saying. On Monday, May 14—we are writing this on the 15th—the House of Lords followed the judgments of the Courts of Appeal, the Chancery Court, and the hearing in Chambers by deciding in favour of the Secular Society, Limited. There were five Law Lords, each delivering an independent, a lengthy, and an important judgment. Four of the judgments—those of Lords Buckmaster, Parker, Sumner, and Dunedin—were strongly in favour of the Society, that of the Lord Chancellor was against. Of the nature and quality of that judgment our readers are in a position to form an opinion as we reprint it in another part of this issue. The other judgments—the favourable ones—will be published next week. We have still to get judgment as to costs, but the great decision is given.

We have neither space nor time to deal at length with the subject this week. There are many important issues opened by this judgment, and we prefer to write upon it more deliberately later. The fight has been a long and costly one. Personally, we have never had much doubt as to the result of the fight, but the law is an uncertain quantity, and it would be idle to pretend that we did not breathe a sigh of relief when that part of the affair was ended. Probably our opponents thought that we could be worn out, or that the case would break down for want of funds. Well, we are not easy folk to wear out, and we found friends who were quite ready to provide the necessary sinews of war.

So we conclude for the moment by congratulating the Freethought movement on a splendid ending to a great fight, and with a word of regret that the one who planned and established the Secular Society, Limited, was not present to share in the crowning triumph.

Chapman Cohen.

To Correspondents.

F. Rose (Bloemfontein).—Your letter safely to hand with remittance, which has been attended to We are greatly pleased by your securing us the two new subscribers. That is a very practical form of assistance.

R. F. Mackenzie.—Instructions given to Shop Manager as requested. Thanks for compliments to the "Man at the Wheel." We do honestly think that ours is the "better job," but why call it thankless? We know that our work is appreciated by thousands, and if it were not, that would be an extra inducement until they appreciated the necessity of Freethought. And unless one works for that end in our movement, one soon ceases to work altogether.

Will the gentleman who left at this office a volume of the *N. R.* please send on his address?

G. W. Whitfield (Prescot).—We have sent on the papers, but please write more fully on what it is you desire our help.

J. W. Hugh.—The *Two Worlds*, a weekly paper, will give you full accounts of where such meetings are held. They are open to the public.

S. A.—Yes, we are pleased to say that many of our readers are joining heartily in the work of getting new subscribers. It is the kind of help we like most, if only because it is a permanent help.

Shaw Maxwell.—Received. Will appear as soon as possible, but we are much pressed for space for a few weeks.

F. H. Curtice.—Quite a good story.

F. Dorrington.—Letter received, and handed on.

G. Grove.—Pleased to have your appreciation of the "three glorious lectures" at South Place. It is good of you to undertake the responsibility for the extra copies of the paper.

Sugar Plums.

Owing to the sudden demands on our space due to the report of the Bowman Judgment, we are obliged to delete a deal of paragraphic matter this week, and to leave a number of letters unanswered. We beg the indulgence of our readers for the latter. We have received a number of letters and telegrams congratulating us on the result of the Bowman case, which we can only acknowledge this week in this way. Something of importance on the matter, and in connection with its effects on the future of our movement may be said at the Whit-Sunday Conference by Mr. Cohen.

In spite of the sudden burst of summer weather, there was a good audience at South Place on Sunday last to listen to Mr. Harry Snell. The lecturer was in first-class form, and his address received, as it deserved, the closest attention and the heartiest applause. Mr. Snell, we regret to say, is suffering from an accident experienced some time ago, and is arranging to leave London for awhile. Otherwise we had hoped to have him as one of the speakers at the Conference evening meeting.

On the Conference Agenda, published last week, there was a motion in favour of Secular Education in State Schools. That is of old standing, and generally may be taken as a reaffirmation of one of the Society's principles. But it is more than this. The new Minister of Education is a little different from those who have previously occupied that position, and there are special reasons why as many resolutions as are possible should reach him in favour of a policy of Secular Education. We cannot say more now, but we strongly urge upon Secular Societies all over the country, and all other Societies that believe in the policy of Secular Education, to send resolutions in its favour to Mr. Fisher as speedily as possible. Freethinkers who are on the councils of trade organizations might help considerably in this matter.

We warned Mr. Fisher, the Minister for Education, that the religious question in schools could not be overcome by saying nothing about it. It is there and must be faced. A sub-committee of the National Society is now about to issue a report demanding a more careful and more elaborate training of teachers in religious knowledge. The point of view taken up is, apparently, that "At present it is easy for young men and women to become certificated and trained teachers without any effective religious instruction as a part of their regular course, and we are thus in danger of finding our elementary education more or less secularized." This should be quite enough to show that our warning was justified, and against the constant interventions of sectarian interests in education there is only one defence. Leave religion to the Churches, and let the State keep to its own legitimate business.

The Conway Memorial Lecture for this year was delivered by Mr. Israel Zangwill, and the South Place Institute was crowded to its utmost capacity by people eager to hear it. It was an exceptionally brilliant performance, punctuated by frequent applause from an audience thrilled by its dazzling witticisms and sparkling epigrams. It is now published in a handsome little volume by Messrs. Watts & Co., and will amply repay careful perusal. It is entitled *The Principle of Nationality*. We can heartily recommend it, and promise a rare treat to those who read it.

The London County Council has not yet decided to withdraw its prohibition of the sale of literature in the public parks—but that sale still goes on. The *Freethinker* and various pamphlets were again sold on Sunday last—but nothing happened. No names and addresses were taken. We hope this is an indication that the Parks Committee is realizing the unreasonable and unwarrantable nature of its interference with a long-standing public right.

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The Musical Scale in Primitive Culture.

There was no power more calculated to work in the region of divinity than the idealizing power which music must have possessed over rude minds.—*J. Donovan, "Lyre to Muse."*

MUSICAL scales, as we know, are purely factitious things, since there is, generally speaking, no reason, either musical or mathematical, why scales (*per se*) should contain just a certain number of notes. I do not intend to burden the reader with the various fanciful *theses* as to how our modern scale grew, from a one-note scale to a two-note scale, and so on, until it arrived at the *pentatonic* and the *heptatonic*. Indeed, what notes primitive man chose at the outset, as Sir Hubert Parry has said, were, probably, "very much a matter of accident," and, naturally, they were only approximate. It was only in the course of ages, when the social pact became more definite, that the consensus of opinion, possibly with the help of some primitive instrument, regulated the actual pitch of the notes. As to the actual number of the notes within the octave, which comprised the scale, it has often occurred to me, that primitive religious cults played no unimportant part in this, since in the early stages of culture the one factor which determined, or more properly we should say, consecrated everything, was the tribal or national cult.

Whether the *pentatonic* (or five-note scale) passed to the *heptatonic* (or seven-note scale), or whether they were of independent development, need not concern us. We know almost positively that the *pentatonic* scale belongs to the Eastern Asiatics, the Chinese, Japanese, Javese, Siamese, etc., whilst the *heptatonic* is to be found with the Western Asiatics, the Arameans, Egyptians, Arabs, etc. China was, probably, the cradle of the *pentatonic* scale, and I would like to point out that the number *five* was also the sacred or mystic number of the primitive cultus of the Chinese. They believed in *five* primordial elements, *five* antedeluvian emperors, *five* human relations, *five* virtues, *five* ranks of nobility, *five* points of the earth, *five* household gods, *five* colours, *five* viscera, etc. I think, therefore, that it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the *pentatonic* scale had its origin in, or was intimately connected with, this cult of a sacred *five*.

The music of modern Europe, however, is based upon the *heptatonic* or *seven*-note scale. This was borrowed from Greece, who received it, no doubt, from the Western Asiatics. With the latter, as I will endeavour to show, this *heptatonic* scale would appear to have had a similar origin, being bound up with the cultus idea of a "sacred seven." Gerald Massey tells us that *seven* was the primordial figure, the perfect number. J. M. Wheeler is of opinion that the idea of the "sacred seven" arose out of nature-worship. With three groups of the Western Asiatics, the Arameans, Hebrews, and Arabs, a decidedly common likeness is reflected in their religious beliefs. At certain stages, all the Semites adored various phases of nature, and sun-gods were common to the Arameans, Hebrews, and Arabs. Now, this nature-worship, which gave rise to the sacred periodic number *seven*, possibly played, as we have said, no unimportant part in the fixing of the *heptatonic* scale. With the Arameans this scale was closely related to the cultus. They associated the various intervals with the seasons, symbolizing the relation of spring to autumn by the fourth, and of spring to winter by a fifth and an octave. The Egyptians worshipped *seven* planets, and Herodotus tells us that they had *seven* castes, etc. They also associated their *seven*-note scale with the cultus, and the priests, says Plato, would not allow the slightest deviation from the system. With the Hebraic group the number *seven* was equally sacred. The *Kabbalistic Sepher Yesirah* says that there were *seven* planets, *seven* gates in man, *seven* double consonants, *seven* worlds, *seven* heavens, *seven* lands, *seven* seas, *seven* rivers, *seven* deserts, *seven* days in the week, *seven* weeks from Passover to Pentecost, etc., "hence God," we are told, "loves the number *seven*." The Bible is full of the powers and significance of the number *seven*, and J. M. Wheeler, who has a chapter on "sacred sevens" in his *Bible Studies*, says very aptly, that the Holy Writ begins in Genesis with a *seven* and ends in the Apocalypse with a series of *sevens*.[1] What the actual scale was of the Hebrews, we have no precise information, but it is generally accepted that it was identical with that of the Arameans and Egyptians, *i.e.*, the *seven*-note scale.

With the Arabs of pre-Islamic and early Islamic days, the sacred and mystic *seven* was just as potent a factor as with the Arameans and Hebrews. They swore by *seven* bloody stones. When Umar went to Mecca to pay homage to Mahomet he was accompanied by *seventy* of the faithful. After the battle of Mount Uhud, which settled the fortunes of Islam, *seven* prayers were said over Hamza's body. Mahomet dreamt that he was conducted by the angel Gabriel to *seven* heavens. Here he saw the extraordinary angel with *seventy* thousand heads, each head having *seventy* thousand mouths, each mouth with *seventy* thousand tongues, and each tongue uttering *seventy* thousand different voices. When Mahomet approached the throne of grace, *seventy* thousand veils separated him from God. The prophet saw *seventy* thousand angels, with *seventy* thousand veils, and when the last veil was lifted *seventy* million more angels were revealed, besides *seventy* thousand others who looked after the veils. When Mahomet dreamt that he possessed the keys of the Kaaba, and set out for Mecca, he took with him *seventy* camels, which were attended by *seven* hundred servants. The Arabs, too, had a *seven*-note scale.

From this evidence of the prevalence of the extreme veneration for the number *seven*, it is not at all unlikely that the *heptatonic* scale arose out of nature-worship and the consecration of this periodic number. In primitive times, perhaps, none of the arts existed apart from the tribal or national cult, and music certainly did not. The latter formed the most essential part of ritual, and the slightest deviation from its rule and custom was sternly forbidden. The "hedging" of the notes of the scale with a certain "divinity," as we have mentioned with the ancients, has its survival in the Christian Church to-day. In the East they still consecrate certain notes of the scale to special church periods, and the Syrians devote a note of the scale to each day of the week. In the early days of Christianity the third note of the scale was looked upon with extreme veneration if not awe, as being symbolical of the Triune God, and its use as a consonance was tabooed. This opposition of the Church to the consonance of the third was, indeed, a stumbling-block to the development of harmony.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

[1] *En passant*, I would like to call the attention of those interested in the subject dealt with by Wheeler in the first chapter of his *Bible Studies: Phallic Worship*, etc., to a passage in the Bible which I have not seen alluded to by any other writers. It occurs in 1 Chron. xxv. 5 and 6, as follows: "And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.....all these were under the hands of their father for *song* in the house of the Lord." I suggest, that since females were not allowed in sacred precincts for this purpose, as we know from the *Talmud*, that *singer* is merely a euphemism for *kadeshah*.

In an article on the food question, a daily paper remarks: "Of course, corn-grinding is as old as history itself." Just so! And so is "grinding the face of the poor."

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Science and Spiritualism.

X.

(*Continued from p. 294.*)

I say, advisedly, that scientists, however eminent, are emphatically *not* the people to investigate these matters. If Lombroso and Zollner could return again from the dead, and sit, with Sir William Crookes, as a committee to investigate, say the mysteries worked by Mr. Maskelyne, either on his own ground or on theirs, does anyone suppose that they would detect a single one of his secrets? Spiritualists may think so, but conjurers know better. The scientist who sits where he is told to sit and looks where he is told to look is the ideal subject for the wiles of the conjurer or the medium, and before him effects can be brought off that would be impossible before an audience of schoolboys.—*William Marriott*, "*On the Edge of the Unknown*," "*Pearson's Magazine*" (June, 1910), pp. 607-8.

All depends, not upon what is done, but upon the mental disposition of the spectator. Little by little, through neglect, through mal-observation and lapses of memory, through an unwillingness to mistrust the reports of an excited consciousness, caution is abandoned and credulity enters. Mediums are actually seen flying out of one window and in through another. The wildest and most far-fetched fantastic explanation is preferred above a simple one; the bounds of the normal are passed; real hallucinations set in; conduct becomes irrational, and a state hardly distinguishable from insanity ensues. .....Error, like truth, flourishes in crowds. At the hearth of sympathy each finds a home. The fanatical lead, the saner follow. When a person of nervous temperament, not strongly independent in thought and action, enters a spiritualistic circle, where he is constantly surrounded by confident believers, all eager to have him share their sacred visions and profound revelations, where the atmosphere is replete with miracles, and every chair and table may at any time be transformed into a proof of the supernatural, is it strange that he soon becomes affected by the contagion of belief that surrounds him?—*Professor J. Jastrow*, "*Fact and Fable in Psychology*," p. 132.

TABLE-RAPPING is one of the commonest phenomena of the Spiritualist seance. Once the knack of producing the raps has been acquired, it is the most mystifying, the easiest, and the safest of all the medium's bag of tricks. It requires no apparatus, and there is no danger of discovery; hence its popularity among mediums. Table-turning and table-rapping generally form the introduction to the greater marvels of Spiritualism. Once the beginner is firmly grounded in a belief in these phenomena as the work of spirits, the rest is easy; he abandons his critical attitude, and is ready to accept any tricks the medium cares to play.

Although the phenomena is known as table-rapping, the raps are in fact not produced on the table. The name itself is a fraud, for it leads the sitters to concentrate their attention upon the table and upon the medium's hands, neither of which are concerned with the production of the raps, which can be produced quite as well without a table. As a matter of fact, the inventors of this fraud —the Fox sisters, in America—first produced the mysterious raps while lying in bed. It is to these two sisters, aged respectively twelve and fifteen, that we may ascribe the birth of modern Spiritualism—not that they were the first to profess to communicate with spirits; but the interest created by the phenomena produced by these two children spread like a prairie fire. Professional mediums sprung up in all directions. It was, as we have seen, the performance of the Fox girls that first attracted Daniel Dunglas Home to Spiritualism. In fact, the movement started by these two skittish girls became world-wide.

It was in America, in a small farmhouse—about the size of an English labourer's cottage—in Hydesville, a little village in the township of Arcadia, in Wayne County of the State of New York, that the mysterious rappings were first heard in March, 1848. The house was then in the occupation of a farmer, one John D. Fox, a Methodist by religious conviction, who had entered upon the tenancy during the previous year. The household consisted of the farmer, his wife Margaret, and two unmarried daughters, Margaretta and Katie. There was also a married son, living about two miles away, who plays no part in this history, and a married daughter, Mrs. Fish, afterwards successively Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Underhill, living in Rochester, N.Y., who appear to have been the real author of all the mischief, although it was through the two girls that the public first became acquainted with the rappings. According to Podmore: "On the evening of the 31st of March, 1848, the Fox family, who, by their own account, had passed several disturbed nights previously by reason of the raps and other noises in the house, went to bed early, in order to make up their arrears of sleep. What follows is based upon the testimony of the Foxes. The girls were already in bed, and their parents—who occupied another bed in the same room—were about to follow, when the raps were again heard. On this occasion, in reply to a challenge given by one of the girls, the raps repeated, sound for sound, the noises which she made by snapping her fingers, and again and again gave the number of raps asked for. At this proof of an intelligent cause for the raps, Mrs. Fox, prescient that the matter was one of no ordinary moment, resolved to call in her friends and neighbours, that they also might bear witness."[1]

On the two following days hundreds of people came to witness the marvel, and in the course of the next two or three years the rappings spread throughout the greater part of the Eastern States. In 1851 it was estimated that there were a hundred mediums in New York City, and fifty or sixty private circles in Philadelphia. "The Fox family—the mother and the three daughters"—says Podmore, "practised no unwise parsimony of their spiritual gifts. In the course of the years 1849 and 1850 they appear to have given demonstrations of their power in several large towns before considerable audiences. Their claims to supernormal power did not, of course, escape challenge. Again and again committees were appointed to examine the subject and report. But for some time the source of the rappings remained inexplicable."[2]

Horace Greeley publicly testified to the genuineness of the Fox girls' performance. Commenting on a visit they paid to New York, in his paper, the *New York Tribune*, in August, 1850, he says that during a stay of several weeks in New York, they were subjected to every reasonable test; their rooms at the hotel had been repeatedly searched; "They have been all unconsciously placed on a glass surface concealed under the carpet, in order to interrupt electric vibrations; they have been disrobed by a committee of ladies appointed without notice, and insisting that neither of them should leave the room until the investigation had been made, etc.; yet we believe no one to this moment pretends that he has detected either of them in producing or causing the Rappings"; and concludes: "Whatever may be the origin or the cause of the 'Rappings,' the ladies in whose presence they occur do not make them. We tested this thoroughly, and to our entire satisfaction."[3]

But the day of detection was at hand. A fraud cannot be publicly exploited for ever. The very success which attends their career, which at the beginning carries everything before them, contains the seeds of their ultimate defeat; for a small circle who have been trained into implicit belief in the supernormal phenomena may be kept permanently at that stage of belief. But when the medium appears before the world and challenges

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. i., p. 180.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 183.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 183.

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public inquiry, the rational-minded begin to apply the scientific method to these marvels, and they melt like ice before the fire.

In December of the same year, the Fox girls came to Buffalo, N.Y., where they stayed for some weeks, giving public exhibitions of their marvellous powers. Among those who visited them were three doctors—Flint, Lee, and Coventry. These gentlemen wrote a joint letter to a local newspaper, pointing out that the rappings could be explained by movements of the knee-joints, and stating that a lady of their acquaintance had actually produced similar sounds by that means. Mrs. Fish, the married sister of the Fox girls, promptly challenged the doctors to prove the truth of their theory at a personal interview, confident that nothing could prevent the raps from being heard, and trusting in the well-known difficulty always experienced in locating a sound unless the object causing it can be seen in motion. In the matter of preventing the rapping, they utterly deceived themselves; the three doctors were skilled anatomists, and came prepared with a very definite and, as it proved, successful test. The two Fox girls were seated on a sofa, and immediately commenced business with a series of loud raps in rapid succession. The spirits were then asked whether they would respond to questions; to which they rapped out an assent. The report continues as follows: "The two females were then seated upon two chairs placed near together, their heels resting on cushions, their lower limbs extended, with the toes elevated, and the feet separated from each other. The object of this experiment was to secure a position in which the ligaments of the knee-joints should be made tense, and no opportunity offered to make pressure with the foot. We were pretty well satisfied that the displacement of the bones requisite for the sounds could not be effected unless a fulcrum were obtained by resting one foot upon the other, or on some resisting body. The company, seated in a semicircle, quietly waited for the '*manifestations*' for more than half an hour, but the 'spirits,' generally so noisy, were now dumb.....On resuming the usual position on the sofa, the feet resting on the floor, *knockings* very soon began to be heard. It was then suggested that some other experiment be made. This was assented to, notwithstanding the first was, in our minds, amply conclusive. The experiment selected was, that the knees of the two females should be firmly grasped, with the hands so applied that any lateral movement of the bones was made perceptible to the touch. The pressure was made through the dress.....The hands were kept in apposition for several minutes at a time, and the experiment repeated frequently for the course of an hour or more with negative results; that is to say, there were plenty of *raps* when the knees were not held and none when the hands were applied save once. As the pressure was intentionally relaxed (Dr. Lee being the holder), two or three faint, single *raps* were heard, and Dr. Lee immediately averred that the motion of the bone was plainly perceptible to him. The experiment of seizing the knees as quickly as possible when the knockings first commenced was tried several times, but always with the effect of putting an immediate *quietus* upon the *manifestations*."[1] Thus, by a couple of simple scientific tests, the secret was revealed. "One Chauncey Burr," says Podmore, "earned some fame at this time by giving lectures on Spiritualism, in which he demonstrated that the raps could be produced by the toe-joints."

W. MANN.

(*To be continued.*)

[1] Cited by Podmore, vol. ii., pp. 184-5.

Conference Notes.

THE appearance of the Conference Agenda in last week's issue is the final signal to our Branches to call their meetings for the discussions of the resolution, and the giving of the necessary instructions to the delegates who are to represent them at the Business meetings on Whit Sunday.

Individual members are reminded that their subscriptions became due on January 1, 1917, and only cards of membership covering this year will entitle them to be present at the Conference proper, and to speak and vote. These are obtained from me direct. Branch cards through their secretaries. The Conference meetings will be held this year at South Place Institute. This well known and somewhat historic building is most accessible from all parts of London, being bounded by Moorgate Street Tube and Electric Railway on one side, and Liverpool and Broad Street stations on the other. Just the proverbial "stone's throw" from all of them. Apart from the business transactions, this gathering gives London, as well as Provincial members, an opportunity of meeting the officials and becoming acquainted with each other. Lady members are specially welcomed.

Once upon a time, before the War, these reunions were most pleasurable and well attended, and the Conference luncheon and Monday excursion were functions eagerly looked forward to. But, alas! the difficulties of transit and the chameleon-like antics of the Food Controller have placed an embargo on the two latter, but such arrangements as are possible will be made. Still, we shall take our pleasures and food, like our medicine, in tabloid form, and cheered by the splendid victory achieved by the Secular Society, Limited, in the Bowman Case, confirming the legality of bequests to Secular Societies for all time, make no wry faces.

Attendance from the Provinces may not be great in the circumstances, but the quantity will be counterbalanced by the quality, and the success of our evening meeting is assured by reference to the list of speakers. In the matter of platform the N. S. S. has always maintained its traditions.

Friends who have not yet made their hotel arrangements can rely upon the best efforts of the office if they will state the length of their stay and the class of accommodation required, but this notice should be given immediately.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary, N.S.S.*

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON MAY 3.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Brandes, Gorniot, Leat, Neate, Nearey, Roger, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough, Miss Pankhurst, Miss Stanley, and the Secretary.

Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.

New members were admitted for Falkirk, Newcastle, Manchester, South London, Swansea, and the Parent Society.

Permission was granted for the formation of "The Swansea and District" Branch of the Society.

Final arrangements for outdoor propaganda were reported.

The President reported the decision arrived at by the last meeting of the L.C.C. Protest Committee, and the Executive reaffirmed their decision to continue the sale of the *Freethinker* at all outdoor meetings on May 6.

The President and Secretary reported upon the case at Clydebank in which Police Court officials had deprived a witness of his legal right to affirm on March 12 last. Letters written to the Secretary for Scotland had received formal acknowledgment only. Failing some definite reply, arrangements were being made to publicly ventilate the matter.

Various notices of motion for the Conference Agenda were discussed, and remitted to the Agenda Committee.

Arrangements were also made for the Conference evening meeting.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

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Bowman and Others
V.
Secular Society, Limited.

HOUSE OF LORDS, MONDAY, MAY 14, 1917.

Lords Present:

THE LORD CHANCELLOR, LORD DUNEDIN, LORD SUMNER, LORD PARKER OF WADDINGTON, LORD BUCKMASTER.

JUDGMENT.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, the question in this case is as to the validity of a bequest of residue to the Respondents, The Secular Society, Limited. The right of the Respondents to payment was attacked by the present Appellants, the next of kin of the Testator, upon the ground that the objects of the Respondent Society were such that the bequest was not enforceable. The Respondents took out an Originating Summons, dated November 25, 1914, for the payment over of the residue to them. Mr. Justice Joyce decided in their favour, and his decision was upheld by the Court of Appeal. The decision of the case must turn upon the proper construction of the Memorandum of Association of the Respondent Society, and the view to be taken of the law of England with regard to bequests for such purposes as are therein enumerated.

The Memorandum of Association so far as material is as follows:—

> (3) The objects for which the Company is formed are—(*a*) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief; and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. (*b*) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries. (*c*) To promote the secularization of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary. (*d*) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favour by the State of any particular form or forms of religion. (*e*) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching in public schools maintained in any way by Municipal rates or Imperial taxation. (*f*) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment. (*g*) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens. (*h*) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interests of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.

In my opinion the governing object of the Society is that which is stated in paragraph 3 (*a*) of the Memorandum of Association, and the other objects stated in the Memorandum under heads (*b*) to (*c*) of the third paragraph are subsidiary. I agree with what is said by the Founder of the Respondent Society in an article from the *Freethinker*, June 19, 1898, which is in evidence, "Clause A is of the highest importance and governs everything else." It was argued on behalf of the Respondents that some, at all events, of the objects of the Society are not affected by any taint of illegality, *e.g.*, 3 (*d*) and (*e*), which state Disestablishment and Universal Secular Education as objects to be promoted, are in themselves harmless. It is, of course, the fact that either of these two objects may be advocated from motives which are entirely friendly to religion. But if (*a*) is the governing object, then these and all the other clauses in the Memorandum must be read by its light; in other words, all the other clauses in the third paragraph are so many ways of carrying into practical application the principle enunciated in the first paragraph of Clause 3. That clause, in my opinion, lays down quite clearly that human conduct should not be based upon supernatural belief. This amounts to a negation of all religion, including of course the Christian religion, as governing human conduct. If the influence of supernatural motives is to be eliminated, the Christian religion is discarded in common with all forms of religion in the ordinary sense of the term. I think, therefore, that the Memorandum shows that the object of the Society was to promote in various ways the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge only, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. Is a legacy in favour of a Society which exists for such a purpose enforceable by English law?

Two preliminary points were taken on behalf of the Respondents. They contended, *firstly*, that the Certificate of Incorporation is conclusive to show that the objects of the Society are not unlawful, and, *secondly*, that some of the objects were not unlawful, and that it cannot be presumed that the legacy in question would be applied to any but lawful objects. We were informed that these points were argued on behalf of the Respondents in the Court of Appeal. No notice is taken of either of them in any of the Judgments, and the Court must have considered that they had been disposed of in the course of the argument. In my opinion neither is tenable. The Society was registered on May 27, 1898, as a Company limited by guarantee under the Companies Acts. The Statute then in force was the Companies Act, 1862 (25 and 26 Victoria, chapter 89). The 18th section deals with the effect of registration, and enacts that the Certificate of Incorporation shall be conclusive evidence that all the requisitions of the Act in respect of registration have been complied with, and Section 192 repeats this provision and adds that the certificate is to be conclusive evidence that the Company is authorized to be registered under the Acts. The amending Act of 1900 (63 and 64 Victoria, chapter 148) enacts by its first section that the certificate shall be conclusive evidence that all the requisitions of the Companies Acts in respect of registration and in matters precedent and incidental thereto have been complied with, and that the association is a company authorized to be registered and duly registered under the Companies Act. This provision appears to have been introduced into the Act of 1900 to get rid of some doubts which had been raised by what was said in the case of The National Debenture Corporation (1891) 2 Chancery, 505, to the effect that if, in fact, only six persons had subscribed the memorandum, incorporation would not have been validly effected, and it is repeated in the 17th Section of the Companies Consolidation Act, 1908 (8 Edward VII, chapter 69). It was argued before us that the Society could not have been properly incorporated if its objects were illegal, and that as the certificate is conclusive to show that the Company is one authorized to be registered and duly registered, it follows that it cannot for any purpose be contended that the objects are illegal. In my opinion this argument is an attempt to extend the effect of these enactments beyond their fair meaning and manifest object. What the Legislature was dealing with was the validity of the incorporation, and it is for the purpose of incorporation, and for this purpose only, that the certificate is made conclusive. This first preliminary point, in my opinion, fails. The second point also fails on the true construction of the memorandum with which I have dealt above. Taken in themselves, some of the objects, as stated in the memorandum, may be harmless, but they cannot be taken by themselves. They are mere applications of the governing principle stated in 3 (*a*), and we are driven back upon the question whether that object is legal.

Mr. Talbot, on behalf of the Appellants, contended that it was illegal on two grounds: *First*, that it is criminal to attack the Christian religion, however decent and temperate may be the form of attack. *Second*, that a Court of law will not assist in the promotion of such objects as that for which this Society is formed, whether they are criminal or not.

In support of the first of these propositions, it was contended that to attack the Christian religion is blasphemy by the Common Law of England, and that the view put forward upon this subject by the late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge is erroneous. Lord Coleridge laid it down in the case of Rex *v.* Ramsey and Foote (15 Cox C. C. 231) that "if the decencies of controversy are observed, even the fundamentals of religion may be attacked without the writer being guilty of blasphemy." This view was controverted by Sir James Fitzjames Stephens, who, in his *History of the Criminal Law*, vol. ii., pp. 449-476, on a review of the authorities, maintained that blasphemy consisted in the character of the matter published and not in the manner in which it is stated, and that any attack on the Christian religion, in whatever language expressed, constituted the offence of blasphemy at

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Common Law. A reply to the arguments of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen was made by Mr. Aspland, of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law, in a pamphlet, entitled *The Law of Blasphemy*, published in 1884, in which the authorities up to date are collected and examined. If Sir James Fitzjames Stephen's view be right any pamphlet or speech in promotion of the governing object of the Respondent Society would be criminal and in every sense illegal. In my opinion the Appellants have failed to establish that all attacks upon religion are at Common Law punishable as blasphemous. There are, no doubt, to be found in the cases many expresions to the effect that Christianity is part of the law of England, but no decision has been brought to our notice in which a conviction took place for the advocacy of principles at variance with Christianity, apart from circumstances of scurrility or intemperance of language.

The earliest prosecution for blasphemy in the Common Law Courts was in the reign of Charles II.; in earlier times probably such cases were dealt with by the Ecclesiastical Courts. The main cases on this subject prior to Rex *v.* Ramsey and Foote are (1) R. *v.* Taylor (1676) (1 Ventris 293); (2) R. *v.* Woolston (1729) (Fitzgibbon 64, 2 Strange, 834) (1 Barnardiston 162); (3) R. *v.* Paine (1812) 26 Howell's State Trials 654 (in connection with which R. *v.* Carlile 3 Barnwell and Alderson 167 and R. *v.* Eaton, 31 State Trials 927, should be referred to); (4) R. *v.* Waddington (1822) 1 B and C, 26; (5) R. *v.* Hetherington (1841) 5 Jur. 529, and 4 State Trials, New Series, 563). In the cases numbered 1, 3, 4 and 5, it is apparent on the face of the Reports that the language used was scurrilous and offensive. This is less apparent in the Reports of No. 2 (R. *v.* Woolston). But examination of the libels in respect of which Informations in that case were filed, viz., Mr. Woolston's first, second, third, and fourth discourses of the miracles of our Saviour shows that the sacred subjects treated by him were handled with a great deal of irreverence, and in many passages language was used by him that was blasphemous in every sense of the term. It is apparently with reference to this element that in a passage in the Report in 1 Barnardiston, page 143, the Court, in dealing with the second point made on behalf of Mr. Woolston, observed "That as the Christian religion was part of the law of the land, whatever derided that derided the law." The true view of the law of Blasphemy appears to me to be that expressed by Lord Denman in Regina *v.* Hetherington (4 State Trials, New Series, 563), which is substantially in accordance with that taken by Lord Coleridge in Regina *v.* Ramsey and Foote (15 Cox C.C., 231), and followed by Lord (then Mr.) Justice Phillimore in Rex *v.* Boulter (1908) 72 J.P. 188.

We have been referred by Lord Dunedin to the law of Scotland on this subject, as stated in Hume's *Criminal Law* (volume i., page 568), and it appears to be the case that in Scotland scurrility or indecency is an essential element of the crime of Blasphemy at Common Law. Certain Scotch Statutes which made it a crime to contravene certain doctrines have been repealed. The consequences of the view put forward on behalf of the Appellants would be somewhat startling, and in the absence of any actual decision to the contrary I think we must hold that the law of England on this point is the same as that of Scotland, and that the crime of Blasphemy is not constituted by a temperate attack on religion in which the decencies of controversy are maintained.

The Appellants, however, contended that whether criminal or not, the objects for which the Society was formed were such that the law would give no help for the recovery of funds to be applied in their promotion. The principle on which this part of the Appellant's case rested was very clearly stated by Baron Bramwell in Cowan *v.* Milbourn (1867), Law Reports 2 Exchequer 230. In the course of the argument Baron Bramwell said, at page 233, "An act may be illegal in the sense that it will not be recognized by the law as capable of being the foundation of any legal right, or that it may even deprive what it accompanies of that capacity, although it is followed by no penalty," and in the course of his Judgment (page 236) he expressed himself to the same effect. The principle is very familiar, and has been applied in innumerable cases. The question whether the present case falls within it demands a careful examination of the authorities.

(To be continued.)

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: 7, Members' Meeting at the Secretary's residence, to discuss Conference Agenda, etc.

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, May 24, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Percy S. Wilde, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, George Rule, a Lecture; followed by Miss Kough, "The Success of the Secular Society, Ltd."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, Mr. Schaller, "Atheism."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, George Rule, a Lecture; followed by Miss E. M. Vance, "The Lord[s] on Our Side."

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, A. D. Howell Smith, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, E. Burke, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Miller, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales; 6.30, Messrs. Hyatt, Yates, and Saphin.

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A PUBLIC MEETING

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

Annual Conference of the National Secular Society,

ON

Whit—Sunday Evening, May 27, 1917.

SPEAKERS:

Messrs. C. COHEN, J. T. LLOYD, A. B. MOSS, F. WILLIS. A. D. HOWELL SMITH, B.A., and Mrs. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

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THE
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A SECULAR CHARTER.

HISTORY was made in the House of Lords on Monday, May 14. For more than two years the Secular Society, Limited, has been fighting in one court after another, ostensibly to secure a legacy properly bequeathed it, really to establish a principle that will carry us another step along the road of mental emancipation. And the result has been a victory as complete as the limits of the case permitted. In all, nine judges of the highest eminence have dealt with the case. Of this number, eight were emphatically—some of them almost defiantly—in favour of the Society. Better still, the verdict is final. Quite safely it may be said that the position of the Secular Society, Limited, is for the future unchallengable.

Only one thing was wanting, and that has been voiced in most of the very many letters of congratulation we have received. The creator of the Secular Society, the man who planned it and established it, G. W. Foote, is no longer with us. It was one of the ironies of life that the judgment delivered at his own trial for blasphemy should have shown him a way of securing to Freethought the means for conducting a more strenuous warfare against superstition. By the law, Freethought has been hampered in its progress. By the law, not by an evasion of the law, be it noted, but in strict conformity with its provisions—he showed how the aims of bigotry might be defeated. It was a splendid revenge, and in the hour of victory it is well to remember the one who made this victory possible. If we, who have seen the end of the fight, claim the right to wear the laurel, it is fitting to place therewith a sprig of rosemary.

Of the importance of the case there can be no doubt. The judgment is not quite so revolutionary as a well-written and sympathetic article in the *Star* of May 17 asserts; but it is of far-reaching significance. We are publishing in these columns what is practically a verbatim report of all the judgments, and although these will cover a great deal of space, readers will, we are sure, feel that it is well utilized. We are certain that no more exhaustive survey of the subject has ever been made. The judgments are all clear, wide embracing, and decisive. These were good to hear, and they are good to read. Lord Sumner's speech, is particular, contained passages that were delightful in their phrasing.

Before coming to the question of what it is precisely that this (to be) famous judgment does or leaves undone, there are one or two matters on which we may say a word. The first point is the security from attack which it gives the Society. Mr. Foote had always maintained two things. One was that the Secular Society, Limited, could not be successfully attacked on a bequest. There might be other ways in which it could be attacked, but not in that way. The other was that so long as the Secular Society retained its charter no court could, or would, deny it its legal rights. We had often discussed these points with him, and quite agreed with his view of the case. This view of the position was borne out absolutely by the House of Lords. The Society, said Lord Dunedin, is only asking the courts "to compel the executor to do his duty, so that it may receive what is legally due to it." "I think," said Lord Buckmaster, "that the respondents are well founded in arguing that since the Company is a legal entity, there is no ground upon which it is possible to prevent them receiving the money which has been the subject of a bequest in their favour." And, still more emphatically, "even if all the objects of the Company were illegal it would not follow that while the certificate of incorporation remained unrevoked the Company would be unable to receive the money." Lords Parker and Sumner were in substantial agreement. And all that it really comes to is the commonsense-view that as a man cannot be dead and alive at the same time, so a society cannot be legal and illegal at the same moment.

"While the certificate of incorporation remains unrevoked," said Lord Buckmaster. That is a possibility which fronts every registered company or society without exception. But I think any lawyer will agree that there is little or no likelihood of the Secular Society, Limited, providing ground for such action. What court is going to issue such an order? And on what ground? It is absolutely certain that no court would now hold that hostile criticism of Christianity, or of religion in general, could provide such ground. So long as the Society fulfils its statutory obligations, it may rest in perfect security. It cannot forfeit its certificate because of any illegal action that the Board of Directors is likely to perform. That may involve their personal liability; it cannot affect the status of the Society. On this point the judges were most emphatic. In the lower courts, Sir George Cave was told more than once, if the Company does anything illegal, summon it; but the possibility of it doing an illegal action is no ground for setting aside the bequest. So in the House of Lords. Lord Dunedin said the courts were in nowise concerned with the use to which the Society might put the money. Lord Parker said it mattered not whether an absolute gift was given to a man doing legitimate business or to one who acted as a receiver of stolen goods. The courts could not interfere. It was true the Directors might do illegal actions, but that would only mean that they would have to replace the monies spent, and be personally liable in

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other directions. Lord Sumner was emphatic in the same sense.

The matter seems clear, and it is important. No illegal action committed by the Directors would be enough to wreck the Society. It would only make them personally liable. If they published an "obscene" or "blasphemous" book, or if they subsidized a lecturer who delivers a "blasphemous" address, they could be made to pay the cost of such lecture or book, and might be charged with aiding and abetting; but their conduct would not affect the legal status of the Society. There is no possibility of the Society being attacked on the ground of its incorporation being wrong. There is no possibility of its charter being revoked on the ground of ill-advised or illegal action on the part of the Directors. On these points we may rest secure, and we have dealt with them because of the many inquiries as to whether the House of Lord's decision is final, not only as regards this case, but as against future action.

There is one other matter to which we wish to direct attention. In the course of his judgment, Lord Parker remarked that a gift to an unincorporated association "may be upheld as an absolute gift to its members." We were pleased to hear this, because it was the only point in connection with bequests to secular societies on which we differed from Mr. Foote. Members of the N. S. S. Executive are aware that for years we have dissented from the doctrine that the National Secular Society could not claim a legacy because it was not a legal body. Our contention was exactly that expressed by Lord Parker, that a bequest to an unincorporated society was really a bequest to the individuals composing that society, and could be claimed on their behalf. The name of the society was merely a convenient way of distinguishing those to whom the bequest was made. But so long as the gift was an absolute one, the money could be claimed. In this respect the National Secular Society could claim a bequest with perfect safety, and we have no doubt would receive it, so long as it did not come under the head of a trust. What an unincorporated body lacks is security of expenditure, and that is provided by the Memorandum and Articles of the Secular Society, Limited. But it was cheering to find our opinion thus endorsed, and to know that even the N. S. S. is not quite the outlaw that many of its friends have imagined.

When Mr. Foote founded the Secular Society, Limited, he called it the "Financial Charter of Freethought." That expression defined with crystaline clearness the purpose and the scope of the Society. Very many thousands of pounds had been at one time and another lost to the movement, with the consequence that the progress of the work had been hindered to a considerable extent. And as most people have a curious dislike to parting with their possessions before death, the uncertainty of the law hindered them benefiting the movement afterwards. The Secular Society, Limited, was founded to overcome this difficulty. It was founded, first, to test the question whether in the present state of the law a society having for its purpose the promotion of Secularism might be treated by the courts as a legal corporation, capable of exercising all the privileges of a legal entity; and, secondly, to provide funds for the purpose of carrying on a systematic Secular propaganda. Of course, the National Secular Society itself might have been registered right away, but it was thought advisable to test the question by the creation of a distinct Society. The Secular Society, Limited, was thus created as a test. And the only way in which this could be decided was in the courts. Most of us, we think, expected that so soon as a bequest large enough to tempt action matured, action would be taken. There are always people so much under the glamour of the old as to be unable to appreciate the new. The day came, and with it the expected consequences. The Secular Society, Limited, has emerged triumphant from the ordeal. It has achieved the purpose it was created to achieve. It has made a breach in the walls of bigotry and of religious-vested interests, and has thus laid the foundations for what may resolve itself into a complete reconstruction of the Freethought movement.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Signs of the Times.

ALL the friends of Freethought, on learning of the dismissal of the Appeal to the House of Lords in the Bowman Will Case, must have felt what Sir Walter Scott calls "the elation of triumph." Not so very long ago the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council came to the decision that the denial of the truth of the doctrine of eternal punishment did not amount to heresy, which decision a waggish wit of the time characterized thus: "They have dismissed Hell with costs." The House of Lords has gone a step further and determined that Christianity is not part of the law of the land, as several distinguished lawyers of the past had erroneously declared. "By a majority of four to one it has laid down that an anti-Christian association is as much entitled to take a bequest as any other person or corporation." This is a noteworthy sign of the times. A legal correspondent, commenting on the judgment in the *Daily Telegraph* for May 16, says:—

> The opinions of Lords Parker, Sumner, and Buckmaster will be cited hereafter as containing the last word on a subject of great interest to lawyers. That of Lord Sumner combined both wit and wisdom. His lordship characterized Lord Mansfield's statement that Christianity is part of the law of England as rhetoric. Spring-guns, he pointed out, were got rid of, not by Christianity, but by Act of Parliament, Christianity had tolerated slavery, but the law disapproved of it, and the injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," was not a legal maxim.....The public will probably agree with the legal profession that the law, in this instance, has proved itself the perfection of common-sense.

A more significant and hopeful augury of the future success of our cause than is contained in those authoritative statements cannot be found in the whole realm of political thought and action.

But there are other signs of a similar character, though less striking, showing clearly that the modern trend of things is away from the intolerant bigotry of former days. It is quite possible that after the War there may sweep over Christendom a wave of religious reaction. At least the Churches are laying plans and making preparations with such a consummation in view; and yet there is a rapidly growing feeling among Christian teachers generally that religion after the War will be a radically different thing from what it has hitherto been. The Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, of Stamford Hill, says that it will be democratic, intensely mystical, and an intense worship of pure goodness. In bitter denunciation of religion as at present exemplified, and as a condemnation of its influence throughout the centuries, he adds: "We stand where the Pharisees stood in the time of Christ; where the Romans stood in the time of the Apostle; where the priests stood when Wyclif arose; where the moderates stood when the evangelicals came." Indeed, so utterly uncomplimentary to the past the reverend gentleman is that he thinks the new tide of religion, when it comes, will be a menace to every man who now occupies the pulpit. Dr. Brown, of Ferme

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Park Baptist Church, London, tearfully admits that there has been "a measure of failure"; but for himself he feels, "in his heart of hearts, that so far from the Church being at the point of death or exhaustion, it is just beginning to wake up." After nineteen centuries of uninterruptedly sound slumber, it is, even now, only "just beginning to wake up." And yet this is the Church which Christ is reported to have promised never to leave or forsake, but to dwell within to the end of time as the principle of endless, irresistible life and power; and it never occurs to its professional champions that in admitting its comparative failure as a world-redeeming factor, they are presenting their opponents with the most cogent of all arguments against its supernatural origin and nature.

Our present point, however, is that the official defenders of the Christian faith know only too well that in its present form it cannot possibly survive. The spirit of the age is against it, and it is only by attempting to adapt it to that spirit that any hope of its perpetuation can be cherished even by its most devout professors. As it has been from the beginning a pre-eminently syncretistic cult, so now it seeks to secure its future by befriending and borrowing from science, and by thus making itself as acceptable as possible to the modern mind. For example, the *Christian World* for May 17, while endorsing the decision of the House of Lords in the Bowman case, says that "Christianity has nothing to fear but everything to gain from allowing the utmost freedom of thought within the limits laid down by Lord Coleridge"; but our contemporary forgets that practically all the great thinkers of the Church have held the opposite opinion. The Church can boast of no greater theologian than St. Augustine, whose saintliness was of as high an order as his learning; but he was a zealous advocate of persecution. Believing that he possessed the truth about God and man his intolerance towards heretics knew no bounds. What was heresy? It was a species of adultery, blasphemy, and soul-murder, and to punish those guilty of it, even by death, was to exercise mercy towards them. Blasphemy was justly punished by death; and we maintain that St. Augustine's teaching on this subject was more distinctively Christian than that affected by the *Christian World*. The same remarks apply with equal relevancy to the writings of "Ignotus" in the *Manchester City News* for April 28 and May 5. "Ignotus" truly says:—

> The mild twentieth century knows nothing of the auto-da-fe and the Smithfield stake, but it can still brand an avowed sceptic with its scorn, pillory him with shame, rack him with neglect. History books vie with the Newgate Calendar in describing non-religious persons as execrable, though they may have been justice-loving philanthropists like Voltaire, or humanitarians like Godwin and Paine, or sages like Huxley, Tyndall, and Spencer. Truly the way of the heretic is hard.

The praiseworthy "mildness" of the twentieth century is due, however, not to Christian influence, but to the fact that Christianity has lost its control over public opinion, and that the State is no longer its vassal. There are still theologians not a few who would gladly have recourse to the auto-da-fe if the spirit of the age would only allow them; and, as the Lord Chancellor pointed out, it is the spirit of the age, not Christianity, that tolerates the Atheistic Secular Society, Limited. Christian orthodoxy, to be consistent, must of necessity persecute heterodoxy; and, if it can, destroy it off the face of the earth. There is much truth in what "Ignotus" says about the unreality of orthodoxy, its variability in different ages and countries, and its ever-growing adaptableness to modern ideas; but this only shows that Christianity is not now what it was in the great days of Augustine, Ambrose, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin. The Anglican bishops are doing their utmost to stem the tide of rational thinking so prevalent in their dioceses; but the spirit of the age smiles indulgently in their faces, ignoring their retrograde speeches and reactionary resolutions, and going on from strength to strength in the happy consciousness that the day of its triumph is drawing nigh. "Ignotus" informs us that this spirit exercises considerable sway in many of our present-day congregations. "The venerated and erudite Colenso was openly denounced as a heretic," but he "revolutionized our ideas of the Pentateuch"; and since his time the Higher Critics have revolutionized our ideas of the rest of the Bible, including even the Four Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles. With all this in mind, "Ignotus" adds:—

> But all this leads to a crucial question—If these concessions are made time after time, where shall we stop? If one miracle is explained away, why not all? If Orthodoxy changes why say that Heterodoxy is a crime? The student of history constantly discovers that the heretic of one age is accepted as the man of truth by another age. Galileo was as correct four centuries ago, when he was condemned, as he is acknowledged to be to-day; for in spite of all that Cardinals can say the planets really do revolve as he maintained. Thus Orthodoxy is put in the wrong, and Orthodoxy of a later time has frankly acknowledged it. In this and a thousand other cases it is Orthodoxy that recants, not the heretic.

"Ignotus" travels far in the direction of Freethought, and from his articles it seems reasonable to infer that, in his opinion, Freethought is the goal towards which all modern criticism is tending. Science has neither room nor need for supernaturalism in any shape or form. The signs of the times are most encouraging to lovers and advocates of the purely secular philosophy. "Where shall we stop?" asks "Ignotus," and the answer is, Nowhere until we have arrived at what we know to be true. It is the truth alone that shall make us free—free to live by the dictates of Reason, ever warming ourselves at the fires of Love.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Pope's Plaint.

> If we live thus tamely,
> To be thus jaded by a piece of scarlet,
> Farewell nobility. —*Shakespeare.*
> Clericalism, it is the enemy. —*Gambetta.*

To Freethinkers the Pope must ever be an object of extreme interest, for he is the ecclesiastic who addresses the largest congregation in the world. Using the language of his office, a pope utters words which are heard throughout the universe, and all other apostolates seem parochial by comparison. The rhetoric may be enfeebled and the platitudes exhausted, but the patriarch possesses something of the tragic character of Tithonus, "immortal age beside immortal youth." Nevertheless, his unique position with regard to the huge numbers of men and women who hold their rule of faith from the Church, of which he is the chief bishop, is striking, and nothing is more remarkable than his attitude on the present World-War. Unlike other ecclesiastics of other churches, he has not included national flags among the sacred articles of religion, and he has again and again deplored the awful sight of millions of men in arms against one another. That his warning has been treated with contempt by Christians is not his fault, and the Pope has been spared nothing that the energy of the militarist parties, and the indifference of the religious world, could

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make him suffer. Publicly he stands, the Lear of thankless children, a little shrill in his menaces, but keeping unimpaired the dignity of a paternity rejected.

It is the death-knell of the political power of the Papacy, and the bitterest commentary on the daring diplomacy, which, under Cardinal Rampolla, the Papal Secretary of State, who, during two decades, sought restlessly for the means of restoring the Pope's temporal power. It was Rampolla who suggested the Catholic Church's remarkable overtures to Republicanism and Socialism. When Leo XIII. died, Cardinal Rampolla would have been elected to succeed him but for the veto of the Emperor of Austria, which was communicated to the conclave by a Polish cardinal. While the cardinals hesitated to accept this veto, Rampolla himself accepted it, the present pope was elected, and Rampolla's dream of the restoration of the Papal temporal power came to an end. He lived thenceforward in retirement, his diplomatic combinations crumbled into nothingness, and with the outbreak of the present War went the last hopes of the greatest and most powerful of Christian Churches.

The paralysis of the great Catholic Church has been a slow process. There was a time when she was as broad-minded as her younger Anglican sister. She once had her broad wing, her scholars, statesmen, and thinkers, who found her borrowed mummeries and stolen creeds susceptible of mystical interpretation. The ignorant, bigoted, evangelical party gradually prevailed over these, and exterminated them by fire and sword, rack and gibbet, leaving themselves more ignorant and bigoted than before. Gradually the whole Catholic Church was made over to their "leprous likeness."

It required centuries to produce this result. The very triumphs of Freethought throughout Europe indirectly contributed to this end. Every Catholic who became an "Intellectual" assisted this process. The more brains that were drawn out of the Church, the more did the huge mass part with its intellectual leaven, and tend to flatten down to a mere mass of ignorance and intolerance. What constitutes the obstructive character of the Catholic Church is the abyss which now separates it from the highest intelligence around it; the live, alert intellect of science, and the leaden, moveless, stereotype of dogma. And to day the voice of the Pope, at which monarchs once trembled, attracts no more attention than "the horns of Elfland faintly blowing."

As belief has waned in England, the English Church has sought to imitate the religious practices of Rome. The Ritualists have taken part possession of the Church of England. Maybe they have not yet done all that was dreaded by Nonconformists, but they rule the ecclesiastical roost, and the archbishops and bishops are powerless. At this hour there are covered by the English Church's banner men who hold the extremest doctrine of the freedom of the individual, and men who are willing to submit to the utmost doctrine of priestly control. How long will this divided house stand? That a large and increasing number of the Anglican clergy were coquetting with Rome caused, some years ago, attention in the Catholic Church, and the Pope once had hopes of reconverting England, and of reimposing the yoke which our ancestors threw off. But much water has flowed to the sea since the English people acknowledged Papal supremacy, and were contented to bear with the tyranny of priestcraft.

In darkened and superstitious times the power of the Catholic Church was great, but it finished with the glare of the fires at Smithfield. It was never so unquestioned and unresisted as in Italy, Spain, and France. There is a wholesome tendency to resistance in British blood, which is cooler than that of the Latin races. It shows itself whenever any specially arrogant claims on obedience are heard, as Charles I. and James II. knew to their cost, and as the long contest for the freedom of the press also proves. Priestcraft may do its worst. We shall never, as a people, permit the cesspool of the confessional. We shall never submit to the poisoned weapons of priestcraft, its hypocritical affectations of celibacy, its tyranny in the home, its officiousness in public affairs, its menace and robbery at the death-bed. Ecclesiasticism had not a safe seat on British shoulders in the ages of faith, even before the days of the Reformation. It is an impossible dream now that there is an organized national Freethought Party, which has inscribed on its banners that significant Voltairean phrase, "Crush the Infamous."

Where Rampolla failed, his Church will fail too. Science expands in search of light and truth. The Christian Church is still entombed within the covers of an Oriental fetish-book. Men ask for the bread of knowledge; the Church offers but the stone of superstition. The priestly teaching is no longer of any practical use, and represents but a sluggish backwater in the river of human knowledge. The great river of thought rolls on, and bears us further and further away from the ignorance and superstition of the past, further and further from the shadow of the Cross.

MIMNERMUS.

Science and Spiritualism.

XI.

(Continued from p. 316.)

> The savage, like the child, constantly meets with the unexpected; every experience lying outside his narrow, beaten track stirs him with a shock and often fills him with fear—the handmaid of ignorance. He is apt to picture nature as a fearful monster, and to people the world with tyrannical beings. Step by step the legion of the known expands, and suggests the nature of the unknown; men expect, they foresee, they predict. The apparent chaos of mutually inimical forces gives way to the profound harmony of unifying law. And yet the unknown and the borderland that separates it from the known are always near by, to tempt curiosity and the spirit of adventure.—*Professor J. Jastrow, "Fact and Fable in Psychology,"* p. 49.

> Professor James tells us that often "our faith is faith in someone else's faith, and in the greatest matters this is most the case."..... When we look upon the popular delusions of the past through the achromatic glasses which historical remoteness from present conditions enables us to adjust to our eyes, we marvel that good and great men could have been so grossly misled, that obvious relations and fallacies could have been so stupidly overlooked, that worthless and prejudiced evidence could have been accepted as sound and significant. But the opinions to which we incline are all coloured o'er with the deep tinge of emotional reality, which is the living expression of our interest in them. What they require is a more vigorous infusion of the pale cast of thought; for the problem of the occult and the temptations to belief which it holds out are such as can be met only by a sturdy application of a critical logic.—*Professor J. Jastrow, "Fact and Fable in Psychology,"* p. 39.

THREE doctors—Flint, Lee, and Coventry—were, as we have seen, associated in the public exposure of the Fox girls; but, according to Dr. Carpenter, it was Dr. Austin Flint who first sought for a physiological explanation of the raps, and he seems to have owed his discovery to the fact that "a patient of his own being able thus to produce an exact imitation of the Rochester rappings. Dr. Austin Flint's explanation subsequently received full confirmation from Professor Schiff, since of Florence, who not only himself acquired the power of producing the raps, by the repeated displacement of a tendon which slides through a sheath behind the external protuberance of the ankle, but exhibited this acquirement to the French Academy of Medicine in April, 1859, baring

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his legs, and producing the raps without any apparent movement."[1]

A few weeks after the public detection of the Fox girls, further proof of the fraud became public. Mrs. Norman Culver, a connection by marriage of the Fox family, stated that one of the girls had confessed to her how the raps were produced. Mrs. Culver's statement, written out on April 17, 1851, and attested by two witnesses (a doctor and a clergyman), was published in the *New York Herald*. The raps were produced by the knees and toes.

Mrs. Culver says that she had for two years believed in the raps as genuine, but recently, noting some suspicious circumstances, she had offered Catherine to assist her. Catherine—her sister being absent—had gladly accepted the offer, and Mrs. Culver, under Catherine's instruction, became fairly adept in producing the raps. The statement continues:—

> Catherine told me how to manage to answer the questions. She said the reason why they asked people to write down several names on paper, and then point to them till the spirit rapped at the right one, was to give them a chance to watch the countenance and motions of the person, and in that way they could nearly always guess right. She also explained how they held down and moved tables. (Mrs. Culver gave us some illustrations of the tricks.) She told me that all I should have to do to make the raps heard on the table would be to put my foot on the bottom of the table when I rapped, and that when I wished to make the raps sound distant on the wall, I must make them louder, and direct my own eyes earnestly to the spot where I wished them to be heard. She said that if I could put my foot against the bottom of the door the raps would be heard at the top of the door.[2]

Mrs. Culver learnt from Catherine that Mrs. Fish's little daughter Elizabeth had actually discovered how to make the raps by playing with her toes against the footboard of the bed. Now, Mrs. Fish was a married sister of the Fox girls, and as she accompanied her sisters on their public performances, it is most probable that she was the moving spirit at the bottom of the whole fraud.

In the autumn of 1888, says Podmore, "Mrs. Kane (Margaretta Fox) and Mrs. Jencken (Catherine Fox) made public, and apparently spontaneous, confession that the raps had been produced by fraudulent means. Mrs. Kane even gave demonstrations before large audiences of the actual manner in which the toe-joints had been used at the early seances. Mrs. Jencken, at any rate, if not also Mrs. Kane, afterwards recanted her confession."[3] Whether they recanted or not, they were thoroughly unreliable characters, and nothing they afterwards said or did could alter the damning proof, publicly exhibited by Catherine Fox, of the manner in which the raps were produced.

In their confession, they declared that they were led into the fraud by their elder married sister, Leah Fox Underhill (formerly Mrs. Fish), whose little girl, as we have seen, first discovered how to produce the raps. On October 15, 1888, they authorized Mr. R. B. Davenport to write their confession, and it was published as *A Death-blow to Spiritualism*. The Fox girls, like Slade, were confirmed inebriates—Slade had been confined in an asylum for inebriates—fell into great poverty, and eventually they returned to Spiritism, their old followers being the only persons that would assist them, and after an interview with Mr. Newton, the millionaire spiritist, they recanted their confession. But they never achieved their old success, or gave up the drink, and ultimately died in great want.

So the plain fact emerges that the trickery of a little girl—through the "providence of God," as the pious would say—was in the beginning the means of launching this gigantic fraud which overran America, and ultimately the world, and reached its culminating point in the rank jungle-growths of superstition, as illustrated by the physical phenomena of the dark seance!

We will now consider the career of that remarkable adventuress, Madame Blavatsky, the famous founder of the Theosophical Society—the only one, by the way, who founded a new cult which still flourishes to this day. Madame Blavatsky was born in Russia in 1831 as Helen Petrovna, daughter of Colonel Hahn, of the Russian Army. At the age of seventeen she was married to an elderly gentleman, M. Blavatsky. After a few months of married life, she ran away from her husband, and entered upon her adventurous life of travel and adventure. The leading motive of her life appears to have been the search for "psychic" experiences and unusual and strange cults. She is said to have travelled to India, to absorb Hindu wisdom; to Egypt, "the motherland of superstition"; to Canada, to learn of the Red Indians; to New Orleans, to study Voodoo among the negroes; to Assyria, Siam, Cambodia, Mexico. "It is difficult to know what to believe," says Jastrow, "in the accounts prepared by her enthusiastic followers."[1] But, as Mr. Podmore observes, "For information regarding her past we had to rely mainly on her own account of herself; and research tended to show that this guarantee was insufficient."[2] Her life for the next thirty years is involved, says the same writer, "in an obscurity not wholly fortuitous." However, in 1874, and for two or three years previous, Madame passed in Egypt and the United States as a spirit medium, in which profession she was associated—at any rate, during her residence at Cairo—with M. and Madame Coulomb. In 1875, with the aid of Colonel Olcott, Madame Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society. It was about this time that the star of Spiritualism began to wane; exposure followed fast on exposure. It was revealed that the manifestations at the dark seance were not the work of spirits, but of the mediums themselves, with the help of rag hands, dirty muslin, phosphorized oil, false beards, and other material paraphernalia. Madame Blavatsky grasped the situation, and dropped Spiritualism for ever; or, rather, to be quite accurate, she metamorphized it out of all recognition—she orientalized it. As Podmore observes: "We are enabled to trace how, by stern necessity, under pressure of the environment, Spiritualism was gradually metamorphosed into Theosophy, ghosts into astral bodies, spiritual phenomena into manifestations of the occult power of the human mind; how finally Madame from a medium evolved into a Chela; John King with his saucer-shaped cap became the Mahatma Morya with his turban; and the centre of the spiritual universe shifted from the seance room to the Thibetan Himalayas."[3] "And when," says the same writer, "a few years later it was found that the busy life of New York vexed that serene atmosphere which was essential to the due absorption of theosophic truth, she found in India a ready welcome and a more congenial environment for herself and her Society."[4] The Society's headquarters were established at Adyah, in the more congenial atmosphere of the mysterious East.

Now, whether Madame Blavatsky found that the

[1] Dr. W. B. Carpenter, *Mesmerism, Spiritualism, etc., Historically and Scientifically Considered* (1877), p. 102.
[2] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 185-6.
[3] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. i., p. 188.

[1] Jastrow, *Fact and Fable in Psychology*, p. 7.
[2] Podmore, *Modern Materialism*, vol. ii., p. 163.
[3] Podmore, *Studies in Psychical Research*, p. 189.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 165.

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mere teaching of the dry bones of Theosophy—as revealed in *Isis Unveiled*—brought no converts, and therefore no grist to the mill, or from vanity, or from pure love of mystification, or because she thought it safe to do in India things that would be risky in New York or London, we do not know; probably her motives were a mixture of all. However that may be, reports began to arrive of new marvels, quite different to those of the old spiritualistic seance; nor were they the work of spirits of the common or garden kind. They were due to the operations of the Mahatmas, wise men reputed to be several hundreds of years old, and yet only in their prime. These Mahatmas were far ahead of us in science, and held control of forces quite unknown to our greatest scientists, who by comparison could only be regarded as blind moles. "Sitting in their studies," says Mr. Edward Garrett, "2,000 miles away in Tibet, they could, by a mere effort of will, project an astral epistle, or an astral body, or an astral cup and saucer, into the middle of an applauding circle at afternoon tea or picnic in Madras or Bombay. Showers of roses fluttered down from the ceiling. Invisible bells tinkled from none knew where. All kinds of tricks were played with Madame's interminable cigarettes. Sketches and treatises were physically 'precipitated' on to blank paper, nay, sometimes the very stationery was created out of nothing to receive them. Such inferior sketches, too, and such twaddling, such very twaddling, treatises."[1] In 1884 Madame Blavatsky came to England, and "starred" London; but, says the same author, "In spite of the disappointing fact that the London air proved unfavourable to miracles, the tale of the Indian ones was greedily drunk in, and Theosophy became the fashionable fad" (p. 16).

Madame's star was in the ascendant; this was the heyday of her popularity.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Whitman at the Front.

FREETHINKERS are particularly well supplied with amusement. The beliefs they study, and against which they fight, seem, sometimes, to contain the very acme of humour. From the vantage ground reason affords they can observe the innumerable, straggling rabbles of absurdities, all perpetrated by the devotees of the insane creeds. The fight is full of funny, even quaint, little incidents; and if the redeeming feature of humour preserves, develops, and strengthens a man's humanity, then Freethinkers have a nearly unlimited ration of that valuable purifier.

Most comical are the endeavours of religionists to steer safely around the rocks of disruption. Their attempts to be sanctimonious when faced by the antagonism of events are veritable studies in the ludicrous; and when, as engaged in that most hopeless of hopeless battles, their tongue betrayeth their intelligence, their service to the King of Liars is most sublime.

The other night one of these happy little incidents, that continually crop up when religionists are around, came my way. Everything about loved me not, to put the matter mildly. Beneath the surface of the environment lay realities that prompted the mind more to sobriety than merriment.

In a Y.M.C.A. hut fifty of us assembled to hear a lecture. We were all soldiers. Chairman and lecturer were dressed in refined khaki, made distinctive by the sign of the inverted red triangle, the technical name of which I have forgotten. We had signed a pledge, giving ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, to the social forces represented by the Union Jack. As individuals, possessing an ego, a personality, an entity, enjoying the only qualification, as it were, that makes manifest the actuality of that ego, we had ceased to exist. To this absolute annihilation of self we had consented. Our destinies were not in our own hands. Obedience was our first and most important duty. Independent thought and its corresponding action were nasty incumbrances. At the last gasp, they were forlorn hopes, out of which time made lucky bags to contain V.C.'s or courts-martial. And in the resignation of the mind from its supreme seat in the chamber of life, we had deliberately scrapped all the higher orders of mental things.

When the Chairman announced that Professor de Selincourt's subject was not merely "Walt Whitman," but "Walt Whitman and His Democratic Mission," it was time to smile. To listen to such a lecture amidst such surroundings must have tempted the gods to laughter. In fact, I could nearly hear their ironic merriment.

The Professor surmounted the initial difficulty by referring to post-War social problems in Blighty. Whitman hated classification. Against the ugliness of much of our commercialized life Whitman turned the power of his genius. What we wanted, said the eminent Professor of English Literature, was the life crystallization of Whitman's wonderful comrade-spirit. If employers and employees would only extend the hand of fellowship to each other, the world would rejoice.

It was an inane wish, a desire, that the Professor himself does not believe possible of fulfilment. He must realize that the perfect city of Whitman's dreams will never be founded by the voluntary renunciation by capitalists of their power. In fact, the Professor twisted from an unhealthy dugout, and fled along a comparatively safe communication trench, just as he did when he was up against Whitman's heterodoxy.

De Selincourt, very gracefully, remarked that the poet was no sympathizer with established creeds. But what did that matter? Whitman's ideas were similar to those of the best Christians. The ideals of the true follower of Jesus Christ were the ideals expressed in Walt Whitman's poems. The Professor hinted that the Lord Jesus Christ was the great human exampler of the comrade-spirit that rings through the poet's verses, the comrade-spirit that will purge society.

The lecturer, very carefully, as befitted so well-known an exponent of genius, avoided emphasizing the fact that if Whitman could live without comradeship, help from established beliefs and age-encrusted creeds, then, obviously, there was little need of these props to a weak-kneed morality. Comradeship would do all that was necessary in the gigantic tasks undertaken by the pioneers.

De Selincourt quoted a poem in which the great Democrat tells us he sees God in the cobbles of the streets, and, Whitmanesque, in the reflection of his own face in the mirror. We know the modern Christian can say the same thing. So, also, can the savage. The difference between Whitman's meaning and their meaning of the same statement of belief the lecturer, in truly ingenuous and faithfully Christianlike way, failed to note. He did not tell us that when the poet used the word "God" he was speaking about Walt Whitman; which is a very easy, quiet, pleasant method of asseverating the non-existence of a Deity; and amounted to a frank confession of Freethought.

If an author should be treated fairly and squarely, without the interference of personal prejudice and the weight of preconcepted enmity of thought, then the Professor discredited himself as an authority. Deli-

[1] Edmund Garrett, *Isis Very Much Unveiled*, pp. 14-15.

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berately to misinterpret a writer's expressed principles because we do not happen to agree with him, to falsify his beliefs because of intellectual animosity, is the very limit of literary profligacy.

I am not going to say the Professor knew his audience. The platform support, an artist and a musician, apparently both holy men, confessed to an ignorance of the subject, and promised faithfully to look Whitman up. One or two of the men were acquainted with the poet. A tent "chum" thought he was a Scotsman because I was going to the lecture. Altogether, I fancy, there were three of us, including the lecturer, who knew Walt Whitman. But with an unlearned audience the literary and critical crimes of the Professor were all the more heinous.

Although I enjoyed the funny experience for the amusement I derived from it, and although de Selincourt told me nothing new about the well-beloved poet, the quotations came into the hidden soul of me like sparkling drops of water to the parched throat of a prisoner. Wonderful rays of light they were, shining from the promised land. I nearly prayed that the Professor would forget the book when he left. I would have pinched it. Silently I devoutly joined my wishes to his, when he hoped that upon the ruins of the present one might build the perfect cities of the future.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Acid Drops.

In the name of Christianity the Archbishop denounces reprisals. In the name of Christianity, Mr. Hall Caine approves them. And in the name of Christianity they are both right, for in that adaptable creed one can find anything one likes. But on one point Mr. Hall Caine has the Archbishop on the hip. He says it is ridiculous to praise and support war on the one hand, and to denounce reprisals on the other. And in that we agree. "Civilized warfare" is an anachronism. There is no such thing. As Mr. Caine says, "to justify war and to condemn its natural if tragic developments, is to strain at the gnat and swallow the camel." From all of which we see what a rare guide Christianity is when it comes to a matter of practical concern. You may succour your enemy or kill him; and whichever you do, you may rest assured of Christian sanction.

But Mr. Caine is himself in confusion when he justifies reprisals on the ground that in War it is our first duty to restrain the enemy. For the objections to reprisals is that while it involves one in a competition of brutality—for reprisals always means action against defenceless people—it is doubtful whether they do more than incite those against whom they are directed to still further brutalities. And the argument may be reduced to an absurdity. For if to attack undefended towns, or to kill non-combatants, in Germany, will drive the Germans to do what we wish, why not threaten this on a larger scale, unless the German Government concludes a peace on terms suitable to the Allies? If that could be done, we think most people would favour the policy. But it seems to us that it was exactly by depending upon that policy that Germany made its greatest mistake. "Frightfulness" is more than a crime, it is a blunder.

Mr. George R. Sims is on stronger ground when he advocates reprisals: "Because the Bible told me so." There is, he says, "every authority for reprisals in the Bible." With that we quite agree, and Mr. Sims may be pleased to learn that the Germans are in hearty agreement with them. Indeed, the Kaiser has proclaimed that the Bible is his great guide. What could any advocate of "frightfulness" desire more than this:—

> And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it (*i.e.*, the city) into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, thou shalt take unto thyself . . . Of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.

It is true that even the German Army has fallen short of the "divine injunction," but it has done its best. And, perhaps, its shortcomings in this direction are due to the fact that it has to deal with a world conscience that does not look to the Bible for guidance.

Sir Robert Lockhart, replying to Sabbatarian objections by ministers concerning Sunday sittings of Military Tribunals, says "the ministers of Kircaldy have not taken their fair share of the burdens of War Service." The remark applies to the clergy all over the United Kingdom.

A silk-dresser, who was exempted for four months by a Shoreditch Tribunal, was said to have dressed the silk "which caused the rustle in church aisles and the frou-frou." Perhaps the tribunal thought that ladies would not attend church without the frou-frou.

An absent-minded Christian took an eight-day clock from the vestry of a Mitcham church, and the vicar is advertising for its return. Meanwhile, the minister will watch and pray.

Owing to the scarcity of applicants for ordination in the Church, the Archbishop of York has licensed Mr. E. R. Turton, M.P., of Upsale Castle, to conduct services. Has the Archbishop overlooked the claims of that distinguished Christian, Mr. Horatio Bottomley?

The Rev. J. N. Newton, pastor-elect of the London City Temple, in the course of his farewell address in America, accepted the presentation of a United States flag, which he promised to drape over his London pulpit intertwined with the Union Jack. The religion of the Prince of Peace is, indeed, flagging.

Mr. Fisher, Minister for Education, visited Plymouth on a recent date, and Mr. A. G. Hann, Headmaster of Braidwood School, takes him sharply to task for remaining silent on the question of religious instruction in State Schools. Mr. Hann writes a good and timely letter to the *Western Daily Mercury* on the subject, and we hope it will have some effect in getting Mr. Fisher to see that this question cannot be evaded. It must be faced. Mr. Hann fittingly reminds Mr. Fisher, *apropos* of a complimentary allusion to France, that he will do well if he "equally appreciates the lead that France gave us when, by the adoption of a purely Secular code, she precluded for ever the possibility of religious controversy in the schools of the State." It will certainly be impossible for English people to hold up France, in the future, as a sample of the deterioration that sets in when religion is banished from the schools. That game came to a stop with the outbreak of war.

King George has contributed £100 to the Bible Society, which is stated to be faced with "grave difficulties." There is humour in the idea of George patronising the King of Kings.

At a sale of jewels at Christie's over £37,900 was realized in an hour, three necklaces fetching £13,300. Is this the country of the Carpenter-God?

The clergy are as fond of King Charles's head as the famous character portrayed by Dickens. At the Lower House of Convocation a resolution that the name of King Charles should be re-inserted in the Church calendar as a black-letter day was carried. A "saint" without a head is appropriate for parsons who are losing their own.

Six million Bibles, in fifty languages, have been sent to the soldiers on the Continent. This claim is made by the Bible Societies. If correct, it is a gross waste of paper and ship tonnage.

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Modern Christianity is a very comprehensive religion, and includes almost everything, from saloon-smashing to soul-saving. The Bishop of London, who is very emphatic in his likes and dislikes, says, "We cannot have the old public-houses again." "The Angel," at all events, ought to be popular, for it should remind people of the Mons bogeys.

Helen Mathers, the novelist, in an interview in a weekly paper, says: "In the beginning God gave man two friends, the horse to bear him away from wild beasts and enemies, and the dog to guard his hearth and home." Why stop there? Were not bugs, fleas, and lice given to keep man company?

Mr. Lloyd George is a busy man, but he has found time to write a testimonial for the Church Army's recreation huts. It would be more to the purpose if he devoted his attention to the matter of parsons of military age being incorporated in the real Army for other purposes than serving Communion port.

At Portsmouth the Vicar of St. James's, Milton, arranged for a series of services on the "principal allotment grounds" to "Ask for God's blessing on the land." Why only the principal one? Surely God is not above blessing the little plot of potatoes in the back garden? Quite appropriately the last of the services was announced to take place at Milton Cemetery. It would have been still more appropriate at the Asylum. Then the circle would have been complete.

The Rev. E. F. Russell, of St. Alban's Church, Holborn, has been presented with a testimonial of 1,200 guineas by his admirers, and the presentation was made by the Bishop of London, a bachelor-ecclesiastic who gets £10,000 yearly. Christianity is a more profitable profession to-day than it was in the time of the twelve disciples.

Sunday-school treats are forbidden, and now tea-meetings are to be banned. The Mayor of St. Albans has approached the Food Controller as to whether tea-fights and similar gatherings are permissible in war-time, and has received a reply in the negative. The dear clergy who attend these festive gatherings will have less reason than ever to evade their national obligations.

The inclusion of King Charles the Martyr among the English saints reminds us of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's sarcastic comment on the King's title of "martyr." "Yes,' said Coleridge, "a martyr to lies and equivocation."

Mr. H. G. Wells has been girding at the "kingly caste of Germans," and writes of "a constellation of quasi-divine Teutonic monarchs." "Quasi-divine" is good; but most monarchs receive consecration at the hands of their priests.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley seems to believe in a limited-liability God, for he says: "Never again, until German devilry is finally crushed, can golden argosies of God's generous grain ride the waves in safety." This appeared in a Sunday paper, but it might have been written by Billy Sunday.

Many of our comments on the clergy are, quite naturally, taken by Christians as owing their origin to anti-Christian prejudice. But here is Dr. Hastings Rashdall, Canon of Hereford, saying in the course of a recent sermon much of what we have often said in these columns. Thus:—

> It remains true that great theological ignorance, or most inadequate and dangerously superficial knowledge, is often found among men whose high ability raises them to positions of great influence in the Church. That is of course still more so among men of fair ability, not intellectual enough to face such questions for themselves, but quite capable of being interested and instructed in them if they were properly set before them in the course of their professional education. And is not the result disastrous? Is it too much to say that a well-educated layman usually shrinks from entering upon any really serious intellectual question with a clergyman whom he casually meets, very much as he would shrink from discussing such subjects with a child? He assumes that either he does not know, or that his mind is closed—perhaps that it would not be fair to disturb his contented ignorance.

It is really an open question as to whether the pulpit is fooling the pew to a greater degree than the pew is fooling the pulpit.

Canon Rashdall goes on to point out that when the clergy have "matured," so to speak, they become almost useless as teachers. Their training does not fit them for the work, and their habit of judging by cut-and-dried theological formulæ is fatal to fruitful thinking. No one who has studied the clergy will think this indictment overdrawn. The noteworthy thing is that it is this class of men that local authorities propose replacing trained teachers in public schools. A more foolish or suicidal policy could hardly be conceived.

The playfulness of Providence has not been altogether damped by the World-War. A telegram from Rome states that earthquake shocks have been felt in Italy, about fifty persons being killed and injured.

On the authority of the Committee on Religion, Morals, and Temperance of the Scottish Free Church, we learn that the Kaiser is quite correct in claiming companionship with God. According to a report just issued, and summarized in a Glasgow paper, "the right view undoubtedly is that the Kaiser is an instrument in the Divine hand to chastise us for our personal and national sins." So God is behind the Kaiser after all. He has been appointed to chastise us, and when we have been chastised enough we presume peace will come. But it is rough on the Kaiser to talk of punishing him for doing God's work.

Decree, with expenses, was granted in absence in Edinburgh Small Debt Court recently in a case in which Jane Smith Robertson, Tulloch Terrace, Perth, sued the Rev. Robert Stephen Barclay, of St. Mark's Chapel of Ease, Perth, for payment of aliment for her illegitimate child, of which she alleges the defender is the father. Defender is understood to hold a commission in the Army, and a short time ago pursuer's agent informed the Sheriff that the agents for the defender had retired from the case.

A West of England correspondent sends us an amusing story concerning the slimness of the Salvation Army in a well-known town. A schoolmaster built a large schoolroom close to a fashionable church, and maintained it as an educational establishment for about three years. After passing through several hands the hall was finally sold to the Salvation Army. This annoyed the fashionable and fashionably religious folk, who put their heads together and finally purchased the place at a price which gave the Army a handsome profit. So the Army gave up the hall, and with the £1,000 of profit made bought a large house quite close to the church, and continues to hold its meetings there. The "Army" is slim, very slim!

Quite a Simple Thing to Do.

SOME time back we induced a friend in South Wales to see what he could do to increase the sale of the *Freethinker* in his district. He was an energetic man, and threw himself into the work with a will. Within three or four months he had secured over one hundred new readers, and has kept them supplied ever since.

Now, what was done in South Wales could be done, in larger or smaller measure, all over the country. There are thousands of people who would become regular subscribers to this journal if only they knew of its existence. There are thousands of men and women who date their mental emancipation from the day a copy first came into their hands. It is the easiest thing in the world to pass a copy on to a likely reader. It takes up no time, and costs little, even though it be bought for that special purpose. It is an easy and effective way of helping a great cause, of not merely securing a new reader, but of adding a new recruit to the Army of Freethought.

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To Correspondents.

E. B. writes on the result of the Bowman Case: "This victory for liberty is as great as any recently won in the field," which, we think, will express the opinion of most of our readers. Mr. Harry Snell also sends "sincere congratulations to the Freethought Party on its great victory," and says: "the bigots have been driven to the pit at last. Henceforth men will be able to leave money to a cause they believe in without fear that it will be diverted to other purposes."

A. Jones.—Thanks for suggestions.

Several inquiries reach us as to the publishers of Madelin's *The Revolution*, recently mentioned in these columns. Perhaps one of our readers can tell us. We only know the French edition.

A. W. Davis.—Sorry that want of space prevents publication of your interesting letter on Hebert.

J. C.—Shall appear after the N. S. S. Conference Business and the Bowman Report have liberated some of our space. Thanks.

H. C. Hebbes.—Sorry we cannot spare space in which to pursue further the subject of Adult Schools. We note your opinion that Freethinkers attending them may exert a good influence on the religious-minded.

R. G. Catling.—We agree with you that to say God is nothing and to say God is everything are really identical statements—certainly so far as any theology is concerned. Pleased to know you enjoyed our review of Norman Pearson's *The Soul*. If we can find time we may deal with Professor Pringle-Pattison's *Idea of God*, but we are overloaded with work at the moment.

Major Warren.—Much obliged for your reminiscence of Ingersoll, which sh all appear. We quite agree with your estimate of Mr. G. H. Wells' new book. We intend writing on it as soon as other matters are off our hands.

E. P.—Letter redirected, as requested.

H. G. Farmer.—Please let us know how things progress.

S. Leech.—Sorry we missed you in the House of Lords. Should have liked a word with you.

J. B. Middleton.—Thanks for cutting, also for congratulations.

G. C. Webb.—The gentleman you name expressed the same sentiments to us. Nor are we surprised that intelligent men and women should realize the iniquity of laws which are framed for the purpose of hindering the expression of reasoned conviction on matters of religion. We hope to see the whole of the Blasphemy Laws cleared away before many years have passed.

J. G. Finlay.—We take it that the House of Lords decision applies to Scotland equally with England. Thanks for good wishes.

T. Pourdall.—We do not know anything of the Hon. A. S. Canning beyond the fact of his being the author of a number of historical works. A large size portrait of G. W. Foote can be obtained at the *Freethinker* office, price 1s., postage 3d.

G. Tacchi.—Shall be pleased to see you when you return to London.

E. Greenwood.—Sorry that want of space prevents our pursuing the correspondence. We agree with you that there is nothing necessarily antagonistic between scientific materialism and telepathy.

Mr. Sibley.—Thanks for all you have done to secure new subscribers.

T. Lea.—We might revive the Freethinker League on a wider and more effective basis.

J. Allen.—Verses received. The antithetical idea is a good one, but we regret that for the present we are unable to publish.

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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.

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

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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 takes place the fifty-first Annual Conference of the National Secular Society. The business meetings (morning and afternoon) and the evening demonstration will all be held in the South Place Institute, Moorgate Street, E.C. The morning and afternoon meetings are open to members and delegates only, and we hope to see a good muster. Naturally, the number of provincial delegates will be restricted this year, although we hope the triumph in the House of Lords will have the effect of deciding some hesitant ones to attend, after all. The evening meeting is open to the general public, and all London Freethinkers can do their share towards seeing that the hall is crowded. The "platform" is, as usual, a good one, and Freethinkers may invite their more orthodox friends with the security that they will feel their evening has been well spent. Admission to the evening meeting is quite free, although there will be the inevitable collection towards expenses.

It is not possible to make very elaborate arrangements for a Conference Luncheon, owing to war conditions, but such as are possible will be announced at the morning business meeting.

It is impossible for us to acknowledge in any other way than this the shower of congratulatory telegrams and letters that have fallen on us over the Bowman Case. At first we purposed filling a column or so with some of the more striking ones, but as these grew we gave it up as hopeless. Most of our correspondents have said exactly the right thing in the right way. As was said on another famous occasion, "It was a glorious victory," and everybody worth bothering about has recognized it as such.

But some of the letters received show that the writers were labouring under certain misapprehensions. One of them is that the Secular Society, Limited, receives a bequest of £10,000. That figure represents the *gross* value of the estate. But from that has to be deducted payment of certain legacies, estate duty, and the expenses incurred during two years of litigation—and the latter is not a form of amusement that can be indulged in cheaply. What will be the net amount no one is able to say, and we had better not guess.

A second misapprehension is that the *Freethinker* benefits from the legacy. That is not the case. The bequest is to the Secular Society, Limited, and the *Freethinker* has no claim whatever upon any portion of it. The deficiency on the year's working of the *Freethinker* will have to be met as last year's deficit was met, and I have no doubt it will be faced as cheerfully and as generously. And we may say at once that bearing in mind the still further increased cost of paper and the new rise in the wages of compositors, that loss, while it may be absolutely larger than last year, will not represent all the increased cost of production.

We see by a return in one of the trade organs that nearly five hundred papers in this country have raised their price, a very much larger number have cut down the number of pages. Very many have both raised the price and reduced the size. Propagandist organs have also been compelled to appeal for large sustentation funds, from a thousand pounds and upwards. We say these things, not to gloat over other people's troubles, or magnify our own achievements, but merely to give readers some notion of the anxieties and difficulties attendant on keeping the *Freethinker* unchanged in size and price during a time like the present.

We are pleased to welcome a new edition of *Richard Jefferies and Civilization*, by one of our contributors, Mr. A. F. Thorne. Our readers may remember that the book was noticed in these pages some months ago. It is published by Stockwell, 29 Ludgate Hill, E.C., price 6d. net, and those

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who know Mr. Thorne's writings will hardly need persuasion to secure a copy. We have several things in hand of Mr. Thorne's, including a lengthy article on "Freethought," which we hope soon to publish.

The Rationalist Press Association has done a useful work in circularizing Freethinking Associations among the Allied nations with a view to preventing the Papacy taking an official part in any forthcoming Peace Congress. Amongst other reasons given for this protest are the following:—

1. The Pope is not a temporal sovereign, and has no more title to be represented than the Dalai Lama of Tibet, the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the head of any other sect.

2. The admission of the Pope would be a rebuff to our Ally Italy, which for forty-six years has been combating intrigues aiming at the re-establishment of the Temporal Power.

3. None of the Allied Governments but that of Belgium is Catholic. In France, Portugal, and Japan the Church and State are separated. In Great Britain the State religion is Protestant; in Russia, Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro it is the Eastern Church. [Since this was issued the United States, in which Church and State are separated, has become one of the Allies.]

4. Belgium, which might have hoped for the support of the Papacy, has been consistently ignored, and no condemnation of the invasion and rapine of the country by Germany in 1914 has yet come from the Vatican.

It may be taken for certain that the only aim of the Papacy at such a Conference would be the strengthening the hands of the Catholic Church. And it would be simply disastrous to permit at a Congress, which many hope will mark the opening of a new era, one of the most sinister influences of the past. Judging from the replies received to the R.P.A.'s manifesto, every effort will be made by Continental Freethinkers to make this impossible.

Literature was sold in the London Parks on Sunday last at all the N. S. S. meetings, and the names of the sellers duly taken. Nothing has been heard from the Council up to the time of writing, but the following appeared on the L.C.C. Agenda for May 22:—

Sale of Literature.

1.—We have had before us the reference from the Council of 1st May, 1917 (p. 445), under standing order No. 62 to consider and report whether the arrangements which obtained for more than 25 years for the sale of literature at meetings at the Council's parks and open spaces should be restored. Apart from the merits of the question, we understand that, owing to the depletion of staff, it would be impracticable, during the period of the war, to modify the resolution of the Council of 30th May, 1916 (p. 566), to issue no further permits for the sale of literature and we have therefore decided to postpone the further consideration of the matter until after the declaration of peace.

By the Rev. Stewart Headlam:—

That it be referred to the Parks and Small Holdings and Allotments Committee to consider and report in connection with the order prohibiting permits for the sale of literature at parks and open spaces, as to relaxing the order in favour of holders of permits issued before the date of such order.

"The Slave's Dream."

Of these am I, Coila my name.
—*Burns, "The Vision."*

The prisons are full; and yet the doors and windows are wide open, where the sunshine and the azure pours, and clouds of beauty pass on winds of liberty. The waving forests shout of liberty, and the fields and streams; all the earth and air with thy voice is loud.

And the blast of the desert cries aloud
With a voice so wild and free;
The pris'ners half-awake and smile
At their tempestuous glee.[1]

[1] Longfellow, *The Slave's Dream*, adapted.

And sleep again; but not so soundly. Or here and there one rises, and groping, instinctive, finds his way, and feels the fresh air on his brow; is dizzy and dazzled for a space; timid, bewildered, distressed, conscience-smitten in the midst of his Pagan joy.

Bring back the chain! But, no; the Liberator can never be the enslaver. The John Howards have been, and are still, abroad in the land. They have lingered near those mural shades of willing captivity—are lingering still—and longing and thinking, writing, speaking, daring, devising, enduring for those in durance. For their own sakes, too; for the fuller life of the free when all are freed.

What vast prison is this? What paradox is this? What task for the Howards to improve and empty it!—the more it is improved, the more it is emptied. To make those prisons habitable is to make them uninhabitable—to substitute a habitable globe! This is the task of the reformer; this is the faith of the free; this is the "holiest religion." These prison walls are compounded of all the creeds; their cement is superstition; their caretakers the priests of every supernatural system, and convicts all—or moral cowards.

What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
Alas, not all the blood of all the Howards.

But blood will tell—and brains; the blood of the pioneers. They have made a beginning.

We must liberate our intelligence. The real gaols are not Duke Streets and Old Baileys and Wormwood Scrubbs, but churches and cathedrals, with their ancient encrustation of tradition, custom, canon, convention, and all the shallow moralism and solemn pietism of the pulpit's narrow curve.

Methinks, my friends, the philosophy of Spinoza, in its essential significance and ultimate implication, is never likely to be wholly, or even partly, set aside. He uses a magnificent metaphysic to kill metaphysics. Whether he "rules in" or "rules out" God in his finite and infinite universe, in his negation and affirmation he rules "Him" with a rod of iron—the iron of "His" own necessity. God is the absolute, the all, or the nothing. Spinoza's is a clear conception and expression of the impersonal God—or, we are inclined to think, the God that does not exist. Like the astronomy of Laplace, the philosophy of Spinoza has no need of that hypothesis. The great thinker sets forth in volumes what Shakespeare has suggested in the sentence, "A touch of nature makes the whole world kin." He teaches, for instance, that not an atom of matter could be other than it is without supposing the whole material world to be other than it is; also, the life of absolute truth or reason is not a life that is foreign to us, but one in which we come to our own. As a reader of the *Freethinker*, one need not have made an exhaustive study of the sages; but merely to "dip into" such volumes is to be at once electrified by the profound significance of such simple phrases. In the same simple and unassuming way, the poetaster of science and philosophy may quite confidently and correctly suggest that if the mantle of Spinoza has fallen on the shoulders of anyone now living, it is surely resting easily and gracefully, and quite naturally, on the shoulders of the present able but unpretentious Editor of the *Freethinker*.

Ah, those woods! in the budding spring, the leafy month of June, in autumn's cloth of gold; aye, even when:—

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy Tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity.
—Keats, *Palgrave's G. T.*, p. 206.

How dry-as-dust those leaves in our libraries compared with those leaves of grass, human and vegetable; and

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the best of the former are but translations and interpretations of the great original volume. We must often return to the great original, and read it in the original "Hebrew," which all can understand. Or, in the lines recently quoted by our ever-happy "Mimnermus":—

Sick am I of idle words,
Past all reconciling:
Words that weary and perplex
And pander and conceal;
Wake the sounds that cannot die,
For all their sweet beguiling:
The language we need fathom not,
But only hear and feel.

COILA.

Correspondence.

PSYCHISM AND THE SUPERNATURAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I wish to thank Mr. Edwin Greenwood for his courteous letter, and as there are no doubt many others of Mr. Greenwood's opinion, I take this opportunity of putting myself right with them. There is only one passage that I object to in Mr. Greenwood's letter, it is the following: "Mr. Mann may be doing the Rationalist cause a great deal of harm by implying that all forms of psychic phenomena are fraudulent." This may be the impression honestly made on Mr. Greenwood's mind by my articles, but it has not the slightest foundation in fact. I have been dealing solely with the physical phenomena up to now, and when I have finished with that I will deal with the psychical phenomena.

As to telepathy I have no prejudice against it, if one living person can communicate with another at a distance by means of the mind; it would merely constitute an interesting scientific fact, it would not affect my philosophy in the least. I should still remain a Materialist and an Atheist. In their proper sequence I shall give the reasons why the evidence for telepathy does not convince me.

If I had commenced my articles by dealing with the psychical phenomena, no doubt people would have written to know why I had not dealt with the physical phenomena.

As for fraud, I should not think of charging Sir Oliver Lodge, or the late Mr. Stead, with fraud; nevertheless, I do not believe for a moment that they have communicated with people who are dead. They are under a delusion. There is a tale of the Frenchman who assured his friend that the earth did move round the sun, and offered his word of honour as a guarantee. But words of honour and respectability do not carry much weight in science, for history attests that the most outrageous and ridiculous superstitions have been believed in, and vouched for by men of the utmost integrity and honour.

W. MANN.

"A PURITAN ON PAINE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In his interesting article, "A Puritan on Paine," Mr. Underwood, referring to Mr. Birrell's objection that Paine was not a teetotaler, points out that Paine's was an age of hard drinking. He also states that "Drinking was one of the signs of a vigorous and expansive temperament. It set up no more deterioration in Thomas Paine, or Charles Lamb, or Pitt, than did the deplorable opium habit in Coleridge, for whose moral shortcomings Mr. Birrell would be the first to find excuses."

Mr. Birrell does this, or something very much like it, in the case of Charles Lamb. In his introduction to *The Essays of Elia* (Everyman's Library, he writes:—

> He used to get drunk somewhat too frequently. Let the fact be stated in all its deformity—he was too fond of gin-and-water. He once gave a lady the welcome assurance that he never got drunk twice in the same house.....It is a mitigating circumstance.....Lamb was also a too inveterate punster..... When we have said these things against Lamb we have said all. Pale Malice, speckled Jealousy, may now be invited to search the records of his life, to probe his motives, to read his private letters, to pry into his desk, to dissect his character. Baffled, beaten, and disappointed, they fall back. An occasional intoxication which hurt no one but himself, which blinded him to no duty, which led him into no extravagance, which in no way interfered with the soundness of his judgment, the charity of his heart, or the independence of his life, and a shower of bad puns—behold the faults of Elia! His virtues—noble, manly, gentle—are strewn over every page of his life, and may be read in every letter he ever wrote.

This is, no doubt, a very temperate and just estimate of Lamb, and it causes one to regret, and wonder, that Mr. Birrell did not show a similar spirit in dealing with Paine.

Another example of the many misrepresentations of Paine's character occurred in Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, which is referred to by Dr. Moncure D. Conway in the preface to *The Life of Thomas Paine*. Dr. Conway states that on its appearance, he recognized "the old effigy of Paine elaborately constructed by Oldys and Cheetham," and that, in 1879, he discovered that these libels were the only "biographies" of Paine in the London Library which, he knew, was used by Stephen. In his second edition, Mr. Stephen stated that the portrait of Paine presented was "drawn by an enemy," on which Mr. J. M. Robertson asked why it was allowed to stand. In September, 1892, Mr. Stephen wrote in the *National Reformer*: "The account I gave of Paine.....was, I have no doubt, erroneous. My only excuse, if it be an excuse, was the old one, 'pure ignorance.'" He added that he intended to go into the question again, and that if he found, as he expected to find, that Paine was greatly maligned, he would make some redress for his previous misguided remarks. He stated also that he would be "especially sorry to do anything short of justice to a man of Paine's real importance."

In August, 1893, he duly made amends in an article on "Thomas Paine" in the *Fortnightly Review*. He wrote:—

> For some three generations the name of Paine has been regarded by the respectable classes as synonymous with vulgar brutality. Mr. Moncure Conway has recently published a biography.....He states in his preface that a book of mine published some years ago accepted certain scandals about Paine; and as I misled at least one of my readers, I think it a duty to confess my error frankly. My description of Paine's last years was taken from a statement by a witness whom Mr. Conway has proved to be utterly unworthy of credit.....I am the more sorry.....because in any case the charges were but slightly relevant—Paine's brandy is less to the purpose than Pitt's port, and much less to the purpose than Coleridge's opium. Patriots may love Pitt, and poets may love Coleridge, in spite of weaknesses which really affected their careers. But Paine's lapse into drink, such as it was, did not take place till his work was substantially done; and his writings were the product of brains certainly not sodden by brandy, but clear, vigorous, and in some ways curiously free from passion.

Thus Mr., aftrewards Sir, Leslie Stephen, having investigated the matter, honourably and generously confessed his error, and his example may be commended to the many who have similarly erred in "pure ignorance" with the advice, "Go, and do thou likewise."

J. A. TOMKINS.

Bowman and Others
V.
Secular Society, Limited.

(THE LORD CHANCELLOR—*continued from p. 318.*)

IN arriving at the conclusion that the object of the Respondent Society was not unlawful in the sense that the Court will not aid the Plaintiffs to get the legacy, the Court of Appeal found it necessary to overrule two cases. The first of these cases is Briggs *v.* Hartley (1850) 19 L.J. Ch. 416. In this case a legacy had been left for the best original essay on "The Subject of Natural Theology, treating it as a science and demonstrating the truth, harmony, and infallibility of the evidence on which it is founded, and the perfect accordance of such evidence with reason, also demonstrating the adequacy and sufficiency of natural theology when so treated and taught as a science to constitute a true, perfect, and philosophical system of universal religion (analogous to other universal systems of science such as astronomy, etc.) founded on immutable facts and the works of creation, and beautifully adapted to man's reason and nature, and tending, as other sciences do, but in

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a higher degree, to remove and elevate his nature and to render him a wise, happy, and exalted being." Vice-Chancellor Shadwell gave judgment in these terms: "I cannot conceive that the bequest in the Testator's will is at all consistent with Christianity, and therefore it must fail."

This is a direct decision by a Judge of great eminence upon the point, and, in my opinion, the Court of Appeal had no sufficient ground for overruling it. The second of these cases is Cowan *v.* Milbourn (1867) L.R. 2 Ex. 230. In that case the Plaintiff had hired of the Defendant some rooms at Liverpool for the purpose of having lectures delivered there. Placards were issued giving as some of the subjects of the lectures "The Character and Teachings of Christ: the Former Defective, the Latter Misleading," and "The Bible shown to be no more Inspired than any other Book with a Refutation of Modern Theories Thereon." The use of the rooms was refused by the Defendant, and he justified his refusal by the character of the lectures proposed to be delivered. In an action in the Court of Passage, Liverpool, for breach of contract to let, the learned Judge ruled that the lectures announced were blasphemous and illegal, and a verdict was entered for the Defendants, with leave to the Plaintiff to move to enter a verdict for him on each of these counts. Motion was made accordingly in the Court of Exchequer before Chief Baron Kelly, Baron Martin, and Baron Bramwell. The Court refused to grant a Rule, the Chief Baron expressing himself as follows: "It would be a violation of duty to allow the question raised to remain in any doubt. That question is, whether one who has contracted to let rooms for a purpose stated in general terms, and who afterwards discovers that they are to be used for the delivery of lectures in support of a proposition which states, with respect to our Saviour and His teaching, that the first is defective and the second misleading, is, nevertheless, bound to permit his rooms to be used for that purpose in pursuance of that general contract. There is abundant authority for saying that Christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land; and that, therefore, to support and maintain publicly the proposition I have above mentioned is a violation of the first principles of the law, and cannot be done without blasphemy. I, therefore, do not hesitate to say that the Defendant was not only entitled, but was called on and bound by the law, to refuse his sanction to this use of his rooms."

Baron Martin concurred. Baron Bramwell said: "I am of the same opinion, and I will state my grounds. I think that the Plaintiff was about to use the rooms for an unlawful purpose, because he was about to use them for the purpose of 'by teaching or advised speaking, denying the Christian religion to be true, or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of Divine authority.' That he intended to use the rooms for the purposes declared by the Statute to be unlawful is perfectly clear, for he proposed to show that the character of Christ was defective, and His teaching misleading, and that the Bible was no more inspired than any other book. That being so, his purpose was unlawful; and if the Defendant had known his purpose at the time of the refusal, he clearly would not have been bound to let the Plaintiff occupy them, for, if he would, he would then have been compelled to do a thing in pursuance of an illegal purpose." Then a little further on: "Now it appears that the Plaintiff here was going to use the rooms for an unlawful purpose; he, therefore, could not enforce the contract for that purpose, and, therefore, the Defendant was not bound, though he did not know the fact. It is strange there should be so much difficulty in making it understood that a thing may be unlawful in the sense that the law will not aid it, and yet that the law will not immediately punish it. If that only were unlawful to which a penalty is attached, the consequence would be that, inasmuch as no penalty is provided by the law for prostitution, a contract having prostitution for its object would be valid in a Court of law. The rule must be refused, and I do not regret the result, and on this ground, that this placard must have given great pain to many of those who read it."

The authority of these two decisions has never, so far as I am aware, been questioned in any later case, and no satisfactory reason is given in the Court of Appeal for disregarding them. The Master of the Rolls says: "It seems to me that the undoubted relaxation of the views as to common law blasphemy must extend to matters outside the Criminal Law." He goes on to say that in his view the decision in Briggs *v.* Hartley ought not to be followed, and, with regard to Cowan *v.* Milbourn, he says: "So far as I am aware, this case, which was decided in 1867, has never been followed, and notwithstanding my profound respect for the learned Judges who decided it, I am bound to say that it ought not to be followed. If Cowan *v.* Milbourn is still good law, the Plaintiffs cannot claim the legacy, but as I do not consider it is good law I think Mr. Justice Joyce was right in the view which he took."

Lord Justice Pickford says: "A much more difficult question is whether this object, though not illegal in the sense of being punishable, is illegal in the sense that the law will not recognize it as being the foundation of legal right, and will do nothing to aid it. The denial of religion is not in terms the object of the Company as set out in (*a*), but I think that it is involved in it, and that it is not possible to promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and that human welfare is the proper end of all thought and action, without, at any rate inferentially, denying the Divine government of the world, and the principles of religion. I think there is no doubt that in former times such an object would have been held to have been contrary to public policy, but the question is whether it is right to hold so now. I think that the doctrine of public policy cannot be considered as being always the same, and that many things would be and have been, held contrary to public policy which are not so held now." The learned Lord Justice goes on to refer to the cases of Briggs *v.* Hartley and Cowan *v.* Milbourn, and says: "Whatever may have been the doctrine as to public policy prevailing in 1850, when the former case was decided, I do not think that it ought now to be followed. If the latter decision means that no consideration will support a contract which involves any questioning of the truth of religion, I also think that should not be followed, but the Court may have inferred from the title to which I referred that the lectures attacked religion in a reviling and contumelious manner, and if that were the case the decision was, I think, right."

Lord Justice Warrington does not specifically refer to the case of Briggs *v.* Hartley, but with regard to the judgments of Chief Baron Kelly and Baron Bramwell in Cowan *v.* Milbourn, he says: "Neither of the Judges really dealt with the question whether the lectures, if not infringing a positive ordinance of law, would have rendered the contract incapable of being enforced. It is quite true that Baron Bramwell laid it down that a thing may be unlawful in the sense that the law will not aid it; but accepting this as correct, as I think it clearly is, it still remains to consider whether the particular thing in question is unlawful in the wider sense or not. In my opinion there is no authority binding us to hold that the promotion in a proper manner of the objects of the Company is contrary to public policy, and we ought not to hold it to be so."

It may be that there has been a considerable change of public opinion with regard to the discussion of religion, but the question is whether anything has taken place to justify any Court in holding that the principle of law on this matter may be treated as obsolete. From time to time the standard as to what is decent discussion of religious subjects may vary, and in one age a jury would find that a particular publication was blasphemous in the strict sense of the term which would not be so considered in another. With regard to questions of public policy such as those arising in connection with restraint of trade, circumstances with regard to facility of communication and of travel may so alter, that the principle invalidating such contracts would apply to a particular state of circumstances in one age but not in another. But it is difficult to see how a change in the spirit of the time could justify a change in a principle of law by judicial decision. Such changes in public opinion may lead to legislative interference and substantive alteration of the law, but cannot justify a departure by any Court from legal principle, however they may affect its application in particular cases.

The decisions in Briggs *v.* Hartley and Cowan *v.* Milbourn are in conformity with a considerable body of authority on this subject. It has been repeatedly laid down by the Courts that Christianity is part of the law of the land, and it is the

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fact that our civil policy is to a large extent based upon the Christian religion. This is notably so with regard to the law of marriage and the law affecting the family. The statement that Christianity is part of the law of the land has been often given as a reason for punishing criminally contumelious attacks upon Christianity. It is true that expressions have in some cases been used that would seem to imply that any attack upon Christianity, however decently conducted, would be criminal. For the reasons I have already given, I do not think that this view can be accepted as having represented the common law of England at any time. But the fact that Christianity is recognized by the law as the basis to a great extent of our civil policy is quite sufficient reason for holding that the law will not help endeavours to undermine it.

Authorities, beginning with De Costa *v.* De Paz in 1744 and ending with Pare *v.* Clegg in 1860, appear to me to establish that the Courts will not help in the promotion of objects contrary to the Christian religion, apart altogether from any criminal liability, and to show that Briggs *v.* Hartley and Cowan *v.* Milbourn were well decided, and that, if the law of England is to be altered upon the point, the change must be effected not by judicial decision but by the act of the Legislature.

It is foreign to the subject of the present inquiry to consider whether the welfare of the individual and the greatness of the nation would be best promoted by proceeding on the lines of the Secular Society, involving the ignoring of the supernatural as influencing human conduct, and holding out the promotion of happiness in this world as the chief end of man, or upon the lines indicated in the striking passage with which Lord Bacon concludes his Essay on Atheism, and the still more striking quotation from Cicero which he there makes. Such considerations bear upon public policy, and may have had some influence in moulding the English law upon the subject. But we have to deal not with a rule of public policy which might fluctuate with the opinions of the age, but with a definite rule of law to the effect that any purpose hostile to Christianity is illegal. The opinion of the age may influence the application of this rule, but cannot affect the rule itself. It can never be the duty of a Court of Law to begin by inquiring what is the spirit of the age, and in supposed conformity with it to decide what the law is. Very nice and difficult questions may arise as to whether in any particular case the purpose is hostile to the Christian religion. No such difficulty arises in the present case, as by the Memorandum of Association the axe is laid to the root of the tree of all religion.

The legacy was given and would be taken for the purposes of the Society, as stated in the Memorandum, and if these purposes are illegal their illegality is not mended by the Certificate of Incorporation. In my opinion they are illegal in the sense that the law will not aid in their promotion, and this Appeal ought to be allowed.

LORD DUNEDIN.

My Lords, before I had committed my views in this case to writing, I had the advantage of seeing not only the judgment just delivered by the Lord Chancellor, but also those about to be delivered by my noble and learned friends, Lord Parker and Lord Buckmaster. In these there is contained so much that not only has my adhesion, but is expressed better that I could hope to do, that I shall refer to them for several of the propositions on which my judgment rests, and shall only state succinctly the reasons which have led me, though not without hesitation, to the conclusion that this Appeal should be dismissed.

My Lords, I have said that I have formed my opinion not without hesitation; but that hesitation is due to one fact only. Had there been no authorities to deal with, and I were to approach the matter from the point of view of legal principle alone, I do not think I should have felt much difficulty. What has troubled me is that I think it is impossible to decide the case as I think it should be decided without going counter to what has been said by Judges of great authority in past generations. It is always, I feel, no light matter to overrule such pronouncements.

I shall first deal with two points which must be resolved before the case can be further considered, but on which, for the reason already mentioned, I shall adopt the opinion of others as my own. I agree with what I understand is the unanimous opinion of your Lordships, that as to what is necessary to constitute the crime of blasphemy at common law, the dicta of Mr. Justice Erskine, Lord Chief Justice Denman, and Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, in the cases of Shore *v.* Wilson, R *v.* Hetherington, and R. *v.* Ramsey respectively are correct; and I adopt the reasoning of the Lord Chancellor and Lord Buckmaster. Further, I agree with the Lord Chancellor that on a fair construction, paragraph 3*a* of the Memorandum of Association of the Respondent Company expresses the dominating purpose of the Company; and that the other matters are mentioned not as independent, but only as subsidiary aims. I agree with him in thinking that teaching in accordance with (3*a*) is inconsistent with and to that extent subversive of the Christian religion—by which expression, without attempting definition, I mean all such forms of religion as have for a common basis belief in the Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is said for the Appellants that the Court will not lend its assistance for the furtherance of an illegal object, and that money given to the Society must needs be illegally applied, because it certainly can only be used for objects in terms of the Memorandum, and such objects are illegal, because the Christian religion is part of the law of the land. Now, if money was laid out in either procuring publications or lectures in terms of the objects of the Memorandum, such publications or lectures need not be couched in scurrilous language, and so need not be such as would constitute the crime of blasphemy at common law. Now, need they be criminal under the Blasphemy Act? for here I agree with Lord Buckmaster that the Act is so framed as to make its penalties only apply when there has been what may be termed apostasy. It would not, I think, be safe to found any argument on the fact—but it is a fact sufficiently curious to be mentioned—that the Scottish Parliament two years before the Blasphemy Act passed an Act in similar terms, but omitting the words "having been educated in or at any time having made profession of the Christian religion, etc." In the Repealing Act, 50 Geo. 3, c. 160, this and another older Scottish Act are repealed *in toto*, while the Blasphemy Act was allowed to stand. How innocuous it was on a true construction may be surmized from the fact that there seem to have been no prosecutions under it.

Criminal liability being negatived, no one has suggested any statute in terms of which it—by which I mean the supposed use of the money—is directly prohibited. There is no question of offence against what may be termed the natural moral sense. Neither has it been held, I think, as being against public policy, as that phrase is applied in the cases that have been decided on that head. Now, if this is so, I confess I cannot bring myself to believe that there is still a *terra media* of things illegal, which are not criminal, not directly prohibited, not *contra bonos mores*, and not against public policy. Yet that, I think, is the result of holding that anything inconsistent with Christianity as part of the law of England cannot in any way be assisted by the action of the Courts.

So far, I have dealt with the matter as if the question were one of contract or of trust. Now that there is no trust here is, I think, clear beyond doubt. The trust to be constituted must either be found in some expression of the donor—here the testator—relative to the gift; or in the fact that the donee—here the Society—is a trustee, and that the gift is only given to him in that capacity. But the testator has clogged his gift with no conditions. He has made an absolute gift to a legal entity which is entitled to receive money. The Certificate of Incorporation, in terms of the section quoted of the Companies Act, 1906, prevents anyone alleging that the Company does not exist. Then the law of Ashbury *v.* Riche is based upon the consideration of what is not *intra vires* of a statutory corporation, but I have never heard it suggested that it made a Company a trustee for the purposes of its Memorandum. I do not say more, for here I wish respectfully to concur with what is said on this subject by Lord Parker. Trust being out of the reckoning, there can be no doubt that there is here no question of contract. What remains? Nothing but an ordinary action for a legacy at the instance of a legal person that has a right to sue. It is

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here that I feel disposed to quarrel with the phrase "the assistance of the Courts." I do not see that the Company is seeking the assistance of the Courts to carry out the objects of the Memorandum. It is seeking their assistance only to compel the executor to do his duty, so that it may receive what is legally due to it. If the legacy were due to an individual, the executor would not be heard to discuss the probable uses to which the legatee would put the money. I do not think he can do so in the case of the Society. For after all—and treating the Memorandum, in spite of the opinion I have expressed already, as indicating purposes entirely illegal such as in contract would not serve as foundation for an action—there is no reason why the Society should not employ the money in paying its office rent. For these reasons, and those to be more fully stated by my noble and learned friends who are to follow me, I am of opinion that this Appeal should be dismissed.

LORD PARKER OF WADDINGTON.

(READ BY LORD SHAW OF DUNFERMLINE.)

My Lords: In considering the questions which arise for decision on this appeal, it is, I think, well to bear in mind certain general and perhaps somewhat elementary principles. At common law the conditions essential to the validity of a gift are reasonably clear. The subject-matter must be certain; the donor must have the necessary disposing power over, and must employ the means recognized by common law as sufficient for the transfer of the subject-matter; and, finally, the donee must be capable of acquiring the subject-matter. If these conditions be fulfilled, the property in the subject-matter of the gift passes to the donee, and he becomes the absolute owner thereof, and can deal with the same as he thinks fit. The common law takes no notice whatever of the donor's motive in making the gift or of the purposes for which he intends the property to be applied by the donee, or of any condition or direction purporting to affect its free distribution in the hands of the donee. It is immaterial that the gift is intended to be applied for a purpose actually illegal, as for example, in trade with the King's enemies—or in a manner contrary to the policy of the law—as, for example, in paying the fines of persons convicted of poaching. In either case, the essential conditions being fulfilled, the gift is complete, the property has passed, and there is an end of the matter. A gift at common law is never executory in the sense that it requires the intervention of the Courts to enforce it.

It may be well to illustrate what I have said by one or two examples. Thus if a testator gives £500 to A, saying that he knows A will expend it in procuring masses to be said for testator's soul, the question arises whether A is a trustee for the purpose indicated. If he be not a trustee, he will in equity take the legacy beneficially; the fact that the trust, if there be a trust, would be unlawful, being quite immaterial. If, however, it be held that A is a trustee, then, as the trust is unlawful, equity will not allow the trustee to retain the legacy. Again, in the case of a simple legacy of £500 to A, where conversations had taken place between A and the testator as to the purposes for which the legacy should be applied, the question would arise whether these conversations rendered it unconscionable for A to take the legacy for his own use. If so, equity would treat him as a trustee. If not, it would allow him to retain the legacy, although the purpose for which the legacy was intended by the testator was unlawful, or otherwise unenforceable. Again, it is well settled that a gift to A to help him in his business is an absolute gift to A, and it is therefore immaterial whether A's business is that of a corn merchant or a receiver of stolen goods. If, however, A were a trustee, the character of the business would be material in considering whether the trust was one which equity would carry into execution.

My Lords, in the present case you will find that the testator has given his residuary estate through the medium of trustees for sale and conversion to the Secular Society, Limited, and the question is as to the validity of this gift. There is no doubt as to the certainty of the subject-matter or as to the testator's disposing power, or as to the validity of his will. So far as the conditions essential to the validity of the gift are concerned, the only doubt is as to the capacity of the donee.

(To be continued.)

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.

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INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE INSTITUTE (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 7, Public Meeting, following the Annual Conference of the N. S. S. Speakers: Messrs. C. Cohen, J. T. Lloyd, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., F. Willis, and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): No meeting.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: No meeting.

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NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): No meeting.

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THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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A Secular Charter.

II.

It may be taken as indicative of the growth of public opinion in relation to Freethought that none of the newspapers, religious or secular, that dealt with the case—at least, none that we have seen—found fault with the judgment. It might almost be called a popular verdict, judging from the way it was received. The *Christian World*, which may be said to be as representative as any paper of English Christianity, said that in its opinion the verdict was "just and right." The *Church Times*, in a rather more sorrowful vein admitted that the judges could come to no other conclusion, and rubbed home the moral that by the verdict "England is no longer in law, as it has ceased to be in fact, a Christian country." The *Guardian* makes the best of the situation in the remark that "the religion of the Church can assuredly stand by itself." The *Westminster Gazette* "welcomes" the decision. The *Telegraph*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Star*, and numerous other papers published paragraphs or articles pointing out that the verdict was inevitable, and in accord with enlightened opinions. Even the *New Statesman* chaffingly remarked that "the Lord Chancellor has yet to discover that it is not illegal in this country to seek to disprove the tenets of Christian dogma."

This chorus of approval is highly significant. A generation ago one may safely say that the virtual disestablishment of religion in our supreme court of law would have given rise to much controversy, and would have aroused much dissent. That its reception has been otherwise is circumstantial proof that the work of Freethought propaganda has not been in vain. For only in a community saturated with heresy would the daily and weekly press have greeted such a verdict in such a manner.

The judgment, indeed, goes further than many people may, at first glance, perceive. The Secular Society, Limited, is a duly incorporated body, and, as a legal entity, it claimed its legal rights. But a reading of the judgments will show that much more than this was involved, and more than this was decided. What the House of Lords verdict settled, once for all, was that *bequests to a society formed for the purpose of criticising Christianity are perfectly legal whether the society is incorporated or not.* Let me make this point quite clear. Admittedly, bequests made to an unincorporated body are perfectly legal, and may be claimed on establishing evidence of identity. Bequests to secular societies have been contested, not really on the ground of the societies being unincorporated, but on the ground that the purposes for which the societies were formed—*i.e.*, an attack on Christian doctrines—were, in themselves, illegal. (We believe, as we said last week that, provided the gift be absolute, a bequest could have been made good, even under the old reading of the law, but for the moment we may let that pass). But now we have one judge after another, in a Criminal Court, in the Court of Chancery, in the Court of Appeal, and in the House of Lords, all agreeing that there is nothing whatever illegal in such a purpose. It is illegal to attack Christianity, only when the attacks are couched in abusive language, or in language likely to lead to a breach of the peace. That much is clear, and it is final.

Clearly, then, it would be impossible to withold a bequest to, say an unregistered body such as the National Secular Society, on the ground of its being unregistered body. We do not think that position was ever taken up, and we are quite certain it would not now hold if it were. And it is quite impossible to argue that the principles of any secular society are, in themselves, an abusive attack on Christianity. A secular lecturer may use abusive language, but each case would have to be dealt with as it arises. It cannot affect the society, or the combination of individuals who choose to call themselves the society.

An immediate effect of the decision in the Bowman Case is, then, of much wider scope than that of the establishment of the legality of the Secular Society, Limited. *It establishes the legality of a bequest to any secular society whether that society be registered or not.* That is a consideration of vast importance, and worth bearing in mind. It means, to use the language of the *Church Times*, "the legal establishment of Secularism." A bequest to a Freethought association is now as good at law as a bequest to a tin tabernacle or to an individual. The purpose of a bequest—if the purpose be a legal one, cannot be affected by the consideration that there is a possibility of its being carried into effect in an objectionable manner.

There remains the question of the Blasphemy Laws. And here we need be on our guard against overestimating the extent of our victory. These still remain, and while they cannot well be used against a society, registered or unregistered, they may still be used against individuals. There was unanimity on the part of the judges that a mere attack on Christianity was not illegal. There was also unanimity that if the attack was not expressed in "decent" or "tem-

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perate " language it was illegal. It was also said that under Common Law no prosecution for blasphemy had ever taken place without the accompanying feature of ribaldry or scoffing. That is true, and yet we say, without the least hesitation, that no prosecution for blasphemy ever did take place because of the language used, and no jury ever convicted on that account. The language furnished the excuse for the prosecution, the real thing attacked was the opinion expressed. Canon Law, upon which this particular aspect of the Civil Law is based, quite honestly and properly treated blasphemy as a matter of opinion, no matter how expressed. Historical causes led to its being impossible to take over this principle without some modification in form, but the facts of the situation are plain to all who carefully examine them.

What are the "decencies of controversy," to use Lord Coleridge's famous phrase, that we are asked to respect? No one worth bothering about objects to controversy being conducted in a "decent" manner, or wishes to see controversy carried on in any other way. But what are these "decencies"? There seems to be only one sound test, and that is such rules, written or unwritten, as obtain amongst people in connection with non-religious subjects. If a person uses "indecent" language, prosecute him. If he incites to a breach of the peace, prosecute him. But to both these ends the ordinary law amply suffices. The mere fact of Freethinkers being charged with one or the other offence under a special law is proof positive that the blasphemy laws are maintained, not for the prevention of a breach of the peace, or for securing decency in controversy, but entirely for the purpose of inflicting a penalty upon opinion. It is the protection of religion that is aimed at, the punishment of freethinking that is intended. And the existence of such laws places the safety of Freethinkers at the mercy of a Christian judge and a Christian jury, who have to decide whether the Freethinker has attacked their religion in a manner agreeable to *them*. And, of course, the answer always has been, and always will be, that it is not. That is why blasphemy prosecutions never fail.

The Blasphemy Laws were ridiculous before the House of Lords decision. They are still more ridiculous now. Christianity, said Lord Sumner, is no part of the laws of England. The statement is rhetoric, not law. That being granted, one may well ask on what reasonable ground the existence of the Blasphemy Laws, or even the establishment of religion can be any longer maintained? On the one side, the State establishes a form of Christianity as the true religion. On the other side, it declares perfectly legal a society which declares such religion to be false and mischievous. Absurdity could hardly go further than that. In the courts the religious oaths may be dispensed with, thus reducing that formula to the level of a purely personal idiosyncracy. Jews, Positivists, Atheists, Agnostics, may enter Parliament, occupy all offices in the State, even administer the law itself. The pretence that freethinking opinion endangers the welfare of the State is, in the face of such facts, so ridiculous that no one outside a pulpit or a lunatic asylum would maintain it. And no one ever pretends that religious subjects cannot be discussed without endangering the peace or threatening good manners.

Had the House of Lords decided against the Secular Society, Limited, its decision would have been a threat against every non-Christian body in England. It would, as Lord Buckmaster pointed out, have prevented the enforcement of a contract by way of payment to author, publisher, or bookseller, where any anti-Christian publication was concerned. As it decided in favour of the Society, it has gone a long way towards justifying the demand for the complete disestablishment of religion in this country. If the Blasphemy Laws are not to be used to protect religion against an attack from opinion, it is ridiculous to preserve them on the pretence that they will protect religion against bad language. Religion has never suffered from the latter, its deepest wounds have been inflicted by the former, and against that there is not, and never has been, a defence strong enough to ultimately defeat attack.

The outcome of the House of Lords' judgment should be, then, the creation of a more insistent attempt to disestablish religion and to wipe out the Blasphemy Laws altogether. So long as these latter remain on the statute books they are a constant menace to real freedom. No one can be sure when they will be put into operation, nor against whom. So soon as religion is recognized as a form of opinion, there is every reason for placing it upon precisely the same level as all other opinions, with no greater safeguards and with no greater disabilities. If the Secular Society, Limited, had lost its case, we should have used our defeat as a reason for renewed endeavours to establish mental freedom. And the Freethought Party will fall short of its duty if it does not utilize this magnificent victory as a stepping-stone to still greater triumphs.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Heretics.

HERESY was for centuries a crime in most Christian countries, punishable by law, and, naturally, heretics were denounced as most disreputable characters, imprisoned, tortured, and often put to death. In 2 Peter ii. 1, we read of "false teachers, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." In Titus iii. 10, the readers are advised to shun an obstinate heretic, on the ground that he is a pervert and a sinner, being self-condemned. Paul could not endure such a character, but without a moment's compunction said of him: "Let him be anathema." The sin of sins was to contradict the Pauline Gospel. Even if an angel from heaven dared to do that he would be accursed. In Acts xiii. 9, 10, a heretic is thus addressed: "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?" As is well known, the Pauline Gospel substantially became the Gospel of the Orthodox Church, carrying with it all the rigors of the bigoted Pauline spirit. The faith of the majority was invariably declared to be the true faith, departures from which were called destructive heresies. Harnack says:—

> The sad passion for heresy-hunting, which obtained among Christians as early as the second century, was not only a result of their fanatical devotion to true doctrine, but quite as much an outcome of their rigid organization, and of the exalted predicates of honour which they applied to themselves as "the Church of God." Here the reverse of the medal is to be seen. The community's valuation of itself, its claim to represent the *ecclesia tou theou* ("the Church of God," or "the Catholic Church," in Corinth, Ephesus, etc.) made it evidently unable to recognize or tolerate any Christianity whatsoever outside its own boundaries (*Expansion of Christianity*, vol. ii., p. 62-3).

Celsus, one of the earliest and ablest opponents of Christianity, whose arguments Origin tried to refute, gave the following account of that heresy-hunting mania:—

> These people utter all sorts of blasphemy, mentionable and unmentionable, against one another, nor will they give way in the smallest point for the sake of concord, hating each other with a perfect hatred (v. lxiii).

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Generally speaking, orthodoxy is the faith of the ruling majority in the Church, and heterodoxy that of a larger or smaller minority. "Ignotus" tells us, in the *Manchester City News* for May 5, that by a heretic he means, "not a scoffer, not a denier, not a foolish man who boasts of ignorance." Of course, no serious-minded person can honestly be dubbed a "scoffer," nor is any genuine Agnostic foolish enough to "boast of ignorance"; but it is equally certain that every heretic is a "denier." It is his denial of some or all of the dogmas held by the orthodox that constitutes him a heretic. Unquestionably Celsus denied the truth of the Christian religion as a new form of supernaturalism. Unitarians deny the doctrine of the Trinity, the proper Deity of Jesus Christ, and the Atonement. Atheists deny and reject all forms of Theism. They deny the existence of every God that has ever been defined; and in their denial many of them employ ridicule as their most effective weapon. And with all due deference, we venture to characterize "Ignotus" himself as a vigorous denier of at least one fundamental tenet of Christianity, namely, that salvation is impossible without faith in the atoning death of Christ. He maintains that unbelievers not only *can* but *do* live righteously, and that the lack of trust in God is no hindrance whatever to the growth and development of the noblest character. The truth of this statement is absolutely incontrovertible; but its truth proves conclusively that the claim so frequently made that a Christless person is hopelessly lost, utterly incapable of devoting himself or herself to the highest human interests, is wholly false and most mischievous in its influence. "Ignotus" lays great stress on this point, and he exhibits exceptional courage in the following passage:—

> Before the Christian era the two supreme men, Pagans both, were Plato and Socrates, and it might be doubted whether any form of Divine faith has produced characters more sublime. But I will pass them by, as they cannot possibly enter into the argument. I will not insist either on the example of Marcus Aurelius, of whose fine moral doctrines and elevated conception of life and duty no praise can be too high. But if I were seeking an Ideal Man—a man who wrought great deeds, who was inspired by the loftiest motions, and whose career was marked by singular purity, courage, unselfishness, and integrity—I should in justice have to recognize a man who deliberately abjured Christianity after it had been offered him—Julian the Apostate, the noblest Emperor who sat upon the Roman throne. Are we to assume that because after long meditation he could not accept a creed unconvincing to his reason, his resplendent life of virtue availed nothing? By the same logic we should make an outcast of John Kyrle, the Man of Ross, and forget his philanthropy while scrutinizing his evangelicalism.

There is nothing in his article to indicate whether "Ignotus" is a supernatural believer or not, though one might not unreasonably infer from certain expressions used that he is not; but the main merit of the letter lies in its eloquent insistence upon the principle that supernaturalism plays no indispensable part in the cultivation of moral excellence, and that some of the greatest benefactors of the human race have been unbelievers. Special attention is called to the fact that "the world is vided up among a multitude of rivals and antagonists, each possessed of the 'one True Faith,'" and then comes the exclamation, "What an amazing spectacle it is!" Indeed, the spectacle *is* at once amazing, amusing, and saddening; but it is a hopeful and cheering sign of the times that the secular press opens its columns to so sane a writer as "Ignotus." Though we cannot agree with all he says, the spirit that pervades his contributions is uniformly admirable. We may not share his reverence when he asks in regard to theological dogmas, "*Cui bono?* what does it matter?" but we do fully appreciate his sincerity when he adds:—

> Am I a better man for belief in baptism or transubstantiation? Am I a worse citizen, husband, and father because I doubt or disbelieve them? Why should I perish as a Socinian or be saved as a Trinitarian? And who is to decide my fate in advance, and why? If we had toleration there would be mutual helpfulness, but arrogance is the most besetting sin in Religion and inimical to a true understanding.

The only fault we have to find with "Ignotus" is his use or misuse of the term "religion." He says: "Shall I give any one a painful shock by saying that 'theology' and 'religion' may be quite distinct, may even be opposed? Shall I dare to add that theology—found in creeds and forms and dogmas and decrees—cannot be essential to salvation, cannot even be a direct help to good life, and that it is theology, not religion, that creates the heretic?" "Ignotus" does not define the word "religion," but when he tells us that he "should call Abou Ben Adhem a religious man because he loved his fellow-men," he gives us the right to conclude that he does not attach to it the conventional and historical signification. Leigh Hunt's exquisitely lovely poem shows at once the absurdity and the real significance of such ambiguous use of terms:—

> Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
> Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
> And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
> Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
> An angel writing in a book of gold:—
> Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
> And to the presence in the room he said,
> "What writest thou?"—The vision raised its head,
> And with a look made of all sweet accord,
> Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
> "And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
> Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
> But cheery still; and said, "I pray thee then,
> Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."
> The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
> It came again with a great wakening light,
> And showed the names whom love of God had bless'd,
> And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

There are myriads of people in the world to-day who deeply love and faithfully serve their fellow-beings without believing in God at all. They are not Christians, even without knowing it, and in the traditional and only recognized sense of the word, they are utterly without religion. To them, as to Plato's Socrates in *Protagoras*, virtue means knowledge, and vice ignorance, and love is the fulfilment of the law of life. They are heretics in the old Athenian sense of having freely chosen their opinions for themselves, and these opinions they find to be helpful to them in the art of living. So far are they from boasting of ignorance that their one aim is to acquire knowledge which they believe is power, and to banish ignorance which they know to be fatal weakness.

J. T. LLOYD.

Watson's Wonderland.

> For in life's midmost chamber there still burns
> Upon the ancient hearth the ancient fire,
> Whence are all flamelike things, the unquenchable muse
> Among them, who, though meanly lodged to-day,
> In dreariest outlands of the world's regard
> Foresees the hour when man shall once more feel
> His need of her and call the exile home.
>
> —*William Watson.*

MR. WILLIAM WATSON is the most austere of contemporary poets. We think of him not as we think of many minstrels, as men singing passionately in the guest-hall, but as a white-robed ministrant at the altar of Liberty,

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burning, with a severe grace, the incense and the precious gums.

On matters of high moment, indeed, Mr. Watson always sings with dignity. It is not too much to say that *Wordsworth's Grave*, *The Tomb of Burns*, *In Lalehan Churchyard*, and *Shelley's Centenary*, will be linked indissolubly with the memory of those great writers they celebrate, so penetrating is the insight into the genius of each poet. Maybe, Mr. Watson's finest effort in this direction was his *Lachrymæ Musarum*, which made so notable a stir when Tennyson died. It must rank as one of the noblest poems we have had for many years, for Mr. Watson handled that great theme of august death right worthily.

Collected works make or mar men's reputations, for so often they are warehouses rather than treasuries. Beside the masterpiece comes the half success; beside the permanent, the temporary, and sometimes the frankly fugitive. But nothing is more gratifying in these days of exaggerated and bubble reputations than to note the steady path along which the fame of Mr. Watson has advanced. He owes his good fortune solely to the sterling merit of his work, for no one has done less to advertise it. Those who look back to the best reviews of the past few years will be surprised to perceive how noiselessly Mr. Watson crept into the hearts of lovers of literature.

No one can read these poems from *The Prince's Quest*, published nearly forty years ago, to the very latest volume, *The Man Who Saw*, issued this week, without being struck with the amount of work of the classical quality, of which there can be no question. To begin with, they are a golden treasury of jewelled aphorisms. Take, for instance, the following felicities of expression:—

> The mystery we make darker with a name.
> Not in vague dreams of man forgetting men,
> Nor in vast morrows losing the to-day.
> Now touching goal, now backward hurled,
> Toils the indomitable world.
> Song is not Truth, not Wisdom, but the rose
> Upon Truth's lips, the light in Wisdom's eyes.
> And set his heart upon the goal,
> Not on the prize.

In nothing, perhaps, is Mr. Watson's genius so bright as in his treatment of Nature. When we remember what Catullus, what Lucretius, what Wordsworth, what Tennyson, what innumerable poets have sung in praise of Nature, we might well despair of hearing a new note. But Mr. Watson has a charm and power of his own. Listen! Here is a couplet in *The First Skylark of Spring*:—

> O high above this home of tears
> Eternal joy sing on!

He can make a picture of a commonplace scene:—

> Where, on the tattered fringes of the land,
> The uncounted flowers of the penurious sand
> Are pale against the pale lips of the sea.

How unforgettable in its way is the following:—

> I beheld the waters in their might
> Writhe as a dragon by some great spell curbed
> And foiled; and one lone sail; and over me
> The everlasting taciturnity;
> The august, inhospitable, inhuman night,
> Glittering magnificently unperturbed.

Mr. Watson's humanity is beyond question. In *The Purple East* and *A Year of Shame* he impeached Abdul, the Damned. Was ever monarch attacked in such grand and sonorous lines, with such sinewy rhetoric, sounding declamation, pictorial richness, sonnets, written for the purposes of the moment, echoing in the heart, and present in the memory of the men who read them? For Mr. Watson has never lacked courage, witness his Freethought "four square to all the winds that blow." It is playful in *The Eloping Angels*, a satire in the Byronic vein, and it is serious in *The Unknown God*:—

> A god whose ghost in arch and aisle
> Yet haunts his temple—and his tomb;
> But follows in a little while
> Odin and Zeus to equal doom;
> A god of kindred seed and line;
> Man's giant shadow, hailed divine.

In a fine sonnet, addressed to Aubrey de Vere, the poet, he expressly voices negation:—

> Not mine your mystic creed; not mine in prayer
> And worship, at the ensanguined Cross to kneel;
> But when I mark your path how pure and fair,
> How based on love, on passion for man's weal,
> My mind, half envying what it cannot share,
> Reveres the reverence which it cannot feel.

In his latest volume, *The Man Who Saw, and Other Poems Arising Out of the War*, Mr. Watson writes on the subject of the world-upheaval. He has chosen Mr. Lloyd George as the theme of his principal poem, and cramped his poetic genius within the narrow limits of the conventional. It is a real tribute to Mr. Watson's powers to say he is neither rhetorical nor dull. Compared to the official Laureate's later crudities, Mr. Rudyard Kipling's hysterics, and the tiny outbursts of minor poetasters, the dignified lines of Mr. Watson's are, at least, readable. Few real poets could write about contemporary politicians, and remain poets. Even Swinburne and Tennyson, living in an era of far greater men, did not do this thing with impunity, and their political poems represent but the excrement of their genius.

The trouble is that it is well-nigh impossible at present for a man to write exactly what he thinks, as a man, about men in authority, and yet print what he writes. This makes political poetry possible, but improbable, and gives point to the gibe that there is less freedom in Britain under the Guelphs than in ancient Rome under the Cæsars.

Mr. Watson's portrait of Mr. Lloyd George is painted well, and has some of Dryden's vigour:—

> No fabled Merlin, son of mist,
> And brother to the twilight, but a man
> Who in a time terrifically real
> Is real as the time; formed for the time;
> Not much beholden to the munificent Past,
> In mind or spirit, but frankly of this hour;
> No faggot of perfections, angel or saint,
> Created faultless and intolerable;
> No meeting-place of all the heavenlinesses;
> But eminently a man to stir and spur
> Men, to afflict them with benign alarm,
> Harass their sluggish and uneager blood,
> Till, like himself, they are hungry for the goal:
> A man with something of the cragginess
> Of his own mountains, something of the force
> That goads to their loud leap the mountain streams.

This is fine writing, but poets are not always prophets, and it is too soon to say whether Mr. Watson's eulogy is deserved. The verdict of history has yet to be pronounced. The poet is on surer ground in the sonnet in which he salutes America on her entry into the War:—

> Thy place is with the great who know not how
> To falter, though their night be without star,
> And their vast agony without anodyne.

Mr. Watson's poems on Germany are white-hot with a scornful fury, intensified by the skill with which the poet makes every word add its share to the full effect. Yet he can get away from these war-like moods, and return to Nature; as in the beautiful lyric, *The Yellow Pansy*:—

> Winter has swooped, a lean and hungry hawk;
> It seemed an age since summer was entombed,
> Yet in our garden, on its frozen stalk,
> A yellow pansy bloomed.

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'Twas Nature, saying by trope and metaphor:
"Behold, when empire against empire strives,
Though all else perish; ground 'neath iron war,
The golden thought survives."

It will be seen that the awful turmoil of the world-war disconcerts Mr. Watson. In all these poems we see the artist struggling with intractable material, and the agony of his mind is reflected in his verse. We feel convinced that this is but a passing mood. We remember gratefully that Mr. Watson has, in his time, given us of his best, and that is the highest kind of poetry. He is one of the singers of the English race who has held his ear close to the movements of the modern world, and brought away with him some sounding echoes of its music. We expect him to leave fulsome adulation of politicians to other writers. Young University men and the editor of *Punch* can do these little things admirably. We should prefer that a real and unmistakable poet was silent than that he should stammer in such a chorus. We hope that in Mr. Watson's next volume we shall hear again, at its best and freest, that golden voice which has within it the deepest message known to the sons of men. For, in the last analysis, noble thinking means noble writing. All else is as ephemeral as ocean foam.

MIMNERMUS.

Science and Spiritualism.

XII.

(Continued from p. 326.)

PEN PICTURES OF MADAME BLAVATSKY.

Mabel Collins, who for over a year co-edited *Lucifer* with her, said: "She taught me one great lesson: I learned from her how foolish, how 'gullible,' how easily flattered human beings are, taken *en masse*. Her contempt for her kind was on the same gigantic scale as everything else about her, except her marvellously delicate taper fingers. In all else she was a big woman; she had a greater power over the weak and credulous, a greater capacity for making black appear white, a larger waist, a more voracious appetite, a more confirmed passion for tobacco, a more ceaseless and insatiable hatred for those whom she thought to be her enemies, a greater disrespect for *les convenances*, a worse temper, a greater command of bad language, and a greater contempt for the intelligence of her fellow-beings than I had ever supposed possible to be contained in one person.—*Cited by J. M. Wheeler, the "Freethinker"* (Feb. 18, 1912), p. 107.

Her chief strength and the secret of her successes lay in her extraordinary cynicism and contempt for mankind; a cynicism which she used to conceal as a rule with great skill, but which still broke out irresistibly at times. "The simpler and the coarser the phenomena," she subsequently admitted to me, "the more likely it is to succeed. The vast majority of people who are reckoned clever by themselves and others, are hopeless fools.....—*V. S. Solovyoff*, "*A Modern Priestess of Isis*," pp. 71-72.

MADAME BLAVATSKY, seeking for a habitation for the marvellous Mahatmas she had evolved from her inner consciousness to replace the now discredited mediums, an abode where they would be secure from the madding crowd of unbelievers and sceptics who detected and exposed the best laid plans for exploiting the multitude, Madame decided that no place could answer better than Thibet. A few travellers had entered the country in disguise, at the risk of their lives, and had brought back accounts of the Grand Lama and the immense monasteries, which had aroused the highest curiosity. Other travellers had been turned back, or, if they had persisted, had been barbarously treated, and barely escaped with their lives. No European had ever, in modern times, penetrated to Lhasa, the capital, which was therefore wrapped in a veil of impenetrable mystery and romance—quite a Rider Haggard flavour about it, in fact. Certainly there must be some very mysterious secret to be guarded so strictly. There was no fear of the Seybert Commission or the Psychical Research Society sending committees to seek out and interview the new wonder-workers whose agent-general in Europe was Madame Blavatsky.

Thibet is very difficult of access, owing to its situation on a plateau 16,000 feet above the sea level; the highest country in the world, cut off from India by the Himalayas. Our troops encountered the greatest difficulties in reaching the country in 1904—three years after Madame Blavatsky's death—and suffered great hardships for want of roads, the severe climate, and the bleak and desolate country. No European had succeeded in penetrating to Lhasa, the capital, until the military expedition under Colonel Younghusband reached there in 1904.

The two Mahatmas more especially at Madame's disposal were Mahatma Morya and Mahatma Koot Hoomi. At the headquarters at Adyah, says Edmund Garrett,—

in the "Occult Room" adjoining Madame's bedchamber, hung the famous "Shrine," a sort of cupboard containing a fancy portrait in oils of the condescending Koot. This became associated with as many marvels as the image of a mediæval saint. Suppose you are an intending Theosophist—a hesitating convert, especially a moneyed one, like Mr. Jacob Sassoon. You call at headquarters. You are shown round by Damodar, or by M. or Madame Coulomb, librarian and secretary. With natural curiosity you ask to gaze upon the Master's features. You are told of his indulgent concessions to deserving neophytes seeking for a sign. When the cupboard has been shut again, you are asked if there is anything you particularly desire from the Master. You indicate, not unnaturally, a message. It is about even chances whether the said message—reading generally not unlike Mr. Martin Tupper in his more oracular vein—is discovered in the cupboard immediately on opening the door, or descends from the ceiling on to the top of your head.[1]

General Morgan, a member of the Theosophical Society, records a miracle he saw performed at the shrine. He visited the headquarters to see the wonderful picture of Koot Hoomi. Madame Coulomb, who was in charge of the shrine, threw the doors open, and a china tray that was leaning against one of the doors fell and was smashed to pieces on the hard chunan floor. While Madame was bewailing this unfortunate accident to a valuable article of Madame Blavatsky's, her husband was collecting the fragments. The General suggested some china cement to repair the damage. M. Coulomb was despatched for some. The broken pieces were collected, tied in a cloth, placed within the shrine, and the door locked. Mr. Damodar K. Mavalankar, Secretary of the Society, was present, and the General remarked that, if the Mahatmas considered it of sufficient importance, they would easily restore the broken article. About five minutes after this remark Mr. Damodar, who during this time seemed wrapped in a reverie, exclaimed, "I think there is an answer." The doors were opened, and sure enough the china tray was found to be whole and perfect; not a trace of the breakage was to be found on it. The tray was accompanied by a note, which ran: "To the small audience present. Madame Coulomb has occasion to assure herself that the devil is neither so black nor so wicked as he is generally represented; the mischief is easily repaired."[2] This was a jocular reproof to Madame Coulomb for suggesting that many of the marvels might be due to the Devil.

The General, who came prepared to see marvels, was quite satisfied, and says: "I at once wrote across the note, stating that I was present when the tray was broken

[1] Edmund Garrett, *Isis Very Much Unveiled*, p. 15.
[2] Podmore, *Studies in Psychical Research*, p. 174.

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and immediately restored, dated and signed it, so that there should be no mistake in the matter." What could be more satisfactory proof for a miracle than this? Witnessed, attested, and signed, all within ten minutes, by a gentleman of the highest integrity and honour!

The report of these marvels soon reached England, and created the widest curiosity. The Psychical Research Society formed a committee to investigate the matter, who, after receiving the oral and written statements of several important witnesses of these modern miracles, decided to send one of their members, Mr. R. Hodgson, to investigate on the spot. Briefly, this is what he discovered. The shrine was fastened against the party wall between the "occult" room and Madame Blavatsky's bedroom. At the back of the shrine there was a sliding panel hidden by a mirror; behind this was a hole in the wall, communicating with Madame Blavatsky's bedroom; this hole being hidden on the other side by a sideboard, which also possessed a sliding panel at the back. So that when M. Coulomb was despatched for the china cement to repair the tray, all he had to do was to slip into the adjoining room, remove the broken fragments from the shrine through the hole in the back, substitute the whole one in its place, accompanied by the note, and the trick was done. "It may be added," says Mr. Podmore, "that Mr. Hodgson was permitted to examine the tray in question; that he ascertained that Madame Coulomb had made purchases at a store in Madras on July 3, 1883, and that two articles of the kind had actually been sold on that day at the cost of 2 rupees and 8 annas the pair—a quite inconsiderable outlay, it will be admitted, for a miracle of this magnitude."[1]

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

N. S. S. Conference.

Executive's Annual Report.

BY THE PRESIDENT.

FOR the third consecutive year the Executive issues its annual report under the shadow of a great European War. In such a period merely to live is an achievement, and it would not be cause for surprise had that been the sum of our accomplishments. But even in the midst of war a Society, such as the N.S.S., cannot stand still; it must either advance or recede, and the Executive felt that the wiser plan was to press forward in spite of many discouraging circumstances.

Events have quite justified that policy. In spite of difficulties in the way of propaganda, such as increased cost of railway travelling, very limited financial resources, the taking away of many of the younger and more energetic of our workers for service in the Army or Navy, and the commandeering of public halls by the military, a deal has been done towards reviving the propagandist energy of Freethinkers all over the country. In addition to the old centres of propaganda, such as Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, etc., new ones have been visited, and the ground for future work prepared. Nottingham, where there has been no active work for many years, was visited by both the President and Mr. Lloyd, large and enthusiastic meetings were addressed, and there are hopes that next autumn may see a Branch of the N.S.S. formally established. Swansea, another place unvisited by the Society's lecturers for many years, has also received attention, and a Branch established with a fairly large and, certainly, energetic membership. Walsall is also new ground that was broken by Mr. Lloyd, and by Mr. Willis, of Birmingham. Freethought meetings have also been held at Gainsborough and Barrow-in-Furness—the first for very many years. Northward a new Branch has been opened at Falkirk, which, it is hoped, will be the first of a number of new Branches north of the Tweed. It is also pleasing to record that a much larger addition to the membership of the Society has been made during the past twelve months than has been the case for some years past.

At Manchester the work had been in abeyance since the opening of the War. Circumstances here made it advisable for the Executive to take the matter in hand, and after some correspondence the Executive requested the President to see what could be done by personal action. After twice meeting Manchester friends in consultation, it was decided that the best plan would be to formally dissolve the old Society and start a new one. This was done, and the new Branch inaugurated its career with two public meetings addressed by the President, which were in every respect satisfactory. A goodly number of members have been enrolled, and it is hoped that the coming autumn will see the work in this important centre in full swing.

Courses of lectures have also been arranged in London at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, South Place Institute, and Avondale Hall, Clapham. Other courses would have been arranged in the metropolis but for the difficulty in securing suitable halls. After the War this difficulty will not exist—at least in so great a measure.

It should be added that these courses of lectures, as well as the operations in new centres, and the special meetings in the large Birmingham Town Hall, have all been financed from the Special Propaganda Fund raised by the President last year. Direct grants of money from the same quarter to the Executive and to Branches of the N.S.S. have also to be acknowledged.

In London the general propaganda has been well maintained, and during the winter a continuous series of meetings have been held by both the North London and South London Branches. A very promising start has also been made with a discussion class, conducted by Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., and held weekly at the Society's office. This is an experiment that might be repeated all over the country; its advantages are manifold, and it may well be the means of developing new speakers, in addition to providing opportunities of education in Freethought for new-comers.

Turning to more general affairs, the Executive has first to congratulate the whole of the Freethought Party on the recent victory achieved in the Law Courts in connection with the Bowman litigation. For more than two years the Secular Society, Limited, has been engaged in litigation which would never have existed but for being anti-Christian in its aims. As it happens, however, the litigation has not been without its good purposes. It has established once for all, and beyond the possibility of further question, that henceforward no bequest can be set aside in English Courts because it will be applied to anti-Christian ends. To have established that principle was well worth all the trouble and expense involved. It marks a very real advance in the history of our movement, and lays down a principle in English law that the courts must in future follow. That this decision will provide the condition for furnishing the Freethought movement with the necessary funds to carry on its campaign is clear, but the moral effects of the case will be even more important than the financial ones. The admitted injustice under which Freethinkers have been placed cannot but have the effect of directing attention to the Freethought position in general, and this must result in both a material and moral gain.

It would be improper for the Executive to dismiss this subject without once more placing on record its sense of the great service done the Cause of Freethought by its late President, G. W. Foote. The Secular Society, Limited, was wholly his creation. He had often characterized it as his legacy to Freethought, and, unlike many legacies, it has turned out more valuable on realization than many had dared to hope would be the case. Its conception was marked by daring and simplicity—two characteristics of real genius; and its final establishment by the judgment of the House of Lords may exert no small influence in clearing away that iniquity of the centuries, the Blasphemy Laws. Finally, the Executive cannot resist pointing out that once more the path has been blazed and the victory achieved by the fighting wing of the Freethought Movement.

It is curious to have to point out that, while the supreme court in this country has been placing liberty of thought upon

[1] Podmore, *Studies in Psychical Research*, p. 176.

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a firmer foundation, very much smaller courts have been ignoring or setting at defiance laws already in existence which affect Freethinkers. Several cases have occurred during the past two or three years of magistrates and officials insulting or declining to hear witnesses and others who wished to affirm in place of taking the oath, and a particularly flagrant instance occurred in the Clydebank Police Court on March 12 last. A witness—a Mr. Charles Stewart—was not only refused the affirmation, but, after being subjected to quite irrelevant "heckling," was informed that his conduct in refusing to take the oath would be reported to the Procurator Fiscal, with a view to proceedings being taken against him, and, the Executive is informed, was actually charged at the conclusion of the case with contempt of court. The Executive felt that this was a matter requiring prompt attention, and an attempt was made to get the witness's address. The officials, however, refused to give this, not only to private individuals, but to a solicitor who was instructed to inquire into the matter. An interrogation was placed on the question paper of the House of Commons through the friendly offices of Sir George Greenwood, M.P., but was met by the Secretary for Scotland with the reply that the witness had not stated the ground on which he wished to affirm This was nothing better than an evasion. It was the duty of the magistrate dealing with a witness who may have been aware only of the bare fact that the law gave him the right to affirm, to explain on what ground the affirmation might be made. This was not done, and the threat to report the matter to the Procurator Fiscal must be taken as an act of sheer intimidation. Still, the matter cannot be allowed to rest here if it can by any possibility be carried further. On this point the Executive may be trusted to do all that can be done.

One moral emerges clearly from this incident. Freethinkers should, under all conditions, and at all times, insist absolutely upon making affirmation. Such cases of injustice as the one just mentioned are only possible because in certain courts the request to affirm is not an everyday affair. This may, of course, be taken as an indication of the peaceful proclivities of Freethinkers, and it may be freely granted that Christians will always be in an overwhelming majority in police and other courts. Still, by those Freethinkers who do appear in courts insisting upon their rights, they will render the frustration of the Oaths Act of 1888 more infrequent, if not impossible.

It will be remembered that the last Conference passed a special resolution condemning the action of the London County Council in prohibiting the sale of literature in the public parks, and authorized the Executive to resist such an interference with the right of propaganda to the utmost of its power. The Executive lost no time in putting that resolution into effect. With the co-operation of other London organizations, very soon between thirty and forty different societies were affiliated, including the London Trades Council, with its membership of some 60,000. Of this Protest Committee Mr. Verinder, a gentleman who bears an honoured record as a champion of freedom of thought, is chairman, Miss Vance acts as Secretary, and your President is a member as representing the N.S.S. Perfect unanimity has characterized its proceedings, and we venture to prophesy that this unanimity will continue.

The contest from the date of the last Conference until now may be briefly described. The resolution of the L.C.C. was to take effect from September 30. Despite that prohibition literature was sold in the parks right through October and part of November, until the bitter winter weather forced a desistence, if, for no other reason, because there were no people to whom literature could be sold. Literature has again been sold right through the present month, and although the names and addresses of the sellers have been taken, nothing has been heard from the Council save a letter received some months back by the N.S.S. Secretary from the Council's solicitor pointing out that literature had been sold in November last, and that unless an undertakirg was given not to repeat the offence proceedings would be taken. The undertaking was not given, the "offence" has been repeated, and no proceedings have been taken.

The Council was warned from the outset that this resolution

(Continued on p. 346.)

Acid Drops.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward protests against the extension of the suffrage to women on the ground that the real ground of the vote is physical force. But this is sheer nonsense. Physical force never was, and is not now, the ground of the vote. We even venture to say that it has never been secured on that basis. The ground of the vote is the moral—or social—right of people to have a deciding voice in their own destiny. That physical force is more or less present in all human affairs goes without saying, but it is not decisive and ultimate. But one wonders why, if Mrs. Ward believes that the question of the vote for women should be decided on the ground of mere physical strength, why she objects to the doctrine of physical force as applied to the world by certain German writers? If physical force is to settle matters *within* the State, why may it not be permitted to settle matters *between* States? Mrs. Ward's sociology appears to be as unsatisfactory as her theology.

Billy Sunday, the American evangelist, who is out to convert New York, appears to be a great favourite with heaven. The other day he asked the Lord for thirty converts, and at once the Lord gave him forty-eight. Surely, Billy Sunday woefully neglects his duty. While at it, why did he not ask for the whole population of the United States? He would have got Canada and the South American Republics into the bargain. If Sunday and the other revivalists did their work properly, there would not be a Freethinker on the earth.

The *Daily Chronicle's* piety is notorious, but it sometimes takes quaint shapes. Writing of St. Mark's Church, Venice, it adds "which Ruskin's ghost has doubtless protected from destruction from Austrian bombs." Doubtless, Ruskin's "ghost" is as potent as any other Christian bogey.

Many things appear in the press which might have been expressed differently. A Sunday paper, under the headline "Lunatics on the Land," says that patients from the London County Council Asylum at Brunswick House are working on agriculture under the supervision of the chaplain.

The Rev. C. R. Purser, a Rangoon missionary, says Bibles are sold for reasons which were not Christian. A New Testament was sold for a rupee with promises that the possessor would obtain houses, fields, and cattle.

A daily paper remarks on the changed appearance of the frequenters of the May meetings. Instead of the "well-nourished vicar" and "the coloured evangelist," oddly reminiscent of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," we see instead "the Church militant in the person of the khaki-clad Army Chaplain, hardly distinguishable except by his clerical collar." Yet these khaki-clad clergymen do not fight, and they draw pay in pounds instead of shillings.

The newspapers are publishing paragraphs concerning an English lady of title who is working as a saleswoman in a New York millinery shop. There is nothing startling in this, for Christians profess to believe that the "King of Kings" worked at a carpenter's bench.

Dean Inge has the reputation of telling his hearers unpleasant truths. This was his offence at St. Paul's when, preaching on Ascension Day, he said that "all must agree there had been something wrong with the Christianity of Europe, otherwise the present hideous calamity, the War, would not have happened." Unfortunately, all Christians do not agree with him; but he is perfectly right. We are at one with the Dean; but we go further and assert that Christianity in Europe has been not only a gigantic failure but a fundamentally fraudulent system, resulting in scarcely anything but harm to the countries wherein it has borne sway.

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Principal Sir George Adam Smith, preaching before the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland, on retiring from the Moderatorship, declared that "the more patiently we regarded the War the more it not only proved to embrrass faith, but to correct the faults of faith, and to supply a fuller and more thorough theology." Then he added: "Never in history had God's way been clearer to the people." The puzzling fact, however, is that never in history has God's way been clearer to the German people. So their professors and pastors have persisted in affirming ever since the War began. Are they, as well as we, not fighting in the name of the Lord, and is not their Emperor constantly thanking Heaven for successes achieved, and passionately praying for the final victory? Of course, clergymen cannot afford to admit that the War is fatal or confusing to faith; but the fact remains that, in spite of all their specious arguments, multitudes of their hearers are losing their faith because of the War.

A touching example of war-time economy is recorded by an evening paper, which mentions that an earl and his countess travelled third-class on the railway recently, and asks indignantly where this sort of thing is to end? We may soon expect to hear that the bishops are discarding their carriages and motors, and are journeying on the lowly animal on which their Master entered Jerusalem.

At the Church of England Zenana Meeting, at Queen's Hall, it was stated that many missionaries were prevented from going out because the Government will not, at present, grant passports. It appears as if religious folk have lost the art of walking on the water, as practised in Biblical days.

Mrs. Flora Anna Steel writes that "we are up against the bread habit of the poor," Unfortunately, the poor cannot emulate King Nebuchadnezzar, the Biblical hero, who ate grass.

In the announcement of a meeting at the Albert Hall to protest against the manufacture of alcohol during the War, the name of Harry Lauder, who was among the speakers, was printed three times as large as the names of the Bishop of London and Dr. Clifford. Doubtless, the organizers of the meeting knew which was the star-turn.

"Pain *plus* God," says the Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury, "may be be understandable because, if we bring in God and the cross of Calvary, pain may be seen to be the cost of progress." But pain is the cost of progress whether we believe in God or not. Dragging God in does not help to an understanding; it only makes the fact morally revolting instead of its being an unpleasant and natural one. If our belief is *minus* God, pain is just one of the facts we have to face as we face other natural facts, and see how we can wrest it to our advantage. If our belief is *plus* God, we have to overcome the healthy repugnance to a Deity who deliberately arranged matters so that the progress of one generation should be purchased at the expense of the suffering of another. Pain without God is a natural fact; pain with God is a moral nightmare. And it is to the credit of human nature that it has been so largely felt to be such.

The following is from the *Evening News* of May 26:—

> Bread and wine being unavailable for a communion service at the Front, Chaplain Major Miles, D.S.O., tells of substitutes in the form of chips of Army biscuits, and some watered apple jam strained off with a little rum added.

We wonder which ingredient was the most attractive in this war-time communion mixture? May we suggest to Chaplain Miles that if he can see his way to add a bottle of Bass's beer to each administration of the sacrament, his congregation is likely to be the largest ever held.

The *Methodist Times* is not pleased with the description of the soldiers' attitude towards religion as described by the Rev. N. S. Talbot. Mr. Talbot says that although the men "do not formulate it to themselves, the glories of human nature go beyond anything they know of the Divine. For them God is less wonderful than man." Naturally so. And how could it be otherwise? God is always less wonderful than man if for no other reason than because man makes God, and is always capable of more than he puts into that work. And as all the gods of a civilized people are inherited, it follows that they are usually a long way behind their worshippers. Hence the number of people who are always engaged in god-repairing, which is about as wasteful as repairing a worn-out machine. The scrap-heap is the proper place for both.

A Sunday paper has been calling attention to the drones in the West-end of London, and suggests that such people are useless to the nation in the present strenuous time. But what about the 50,000 clergy who are exempted from military service, many of whom only work about one day weekly?

A lady has written a book with the quaint title, *The Swine Gods*. One cannot imagine a rasher inscription.

Canon Carnegie, preaching at St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, called attention to the need of stricter economy in the consumption of bread. He might have suggested the abandonment of the use of bread in Communion services.

Where is the religious revival to be found of which we read and hear so much? It is not in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, for in that communion, according to statistics for the past year, there were notable decreases in both Church membership and Sunday-school scholars. "The principal net decreases are: Membership, 3,870; members 'on trial,' 187; junior members, 4,516; Sunday-school teachers, 730; Sunday-school scholars, 20,396; Wesley Guild, 13,154." Similar losses have taken place in other Free Churches during last year. It is estimated that the Free Church Sunday-schools lost about a hundred thousand scholars. To a writer in the *Christian World*: "The facts are distinctly disturbing," while to us they are not disturbing but distinctly illuminating.

Preaching at St. Peter's Church, Vere Street, London, Dean Inge said "real Christians would always be in a small minority." No wonder pious folk call him "the gloomy dean."

A fortune of £156,354 was left by the late Prebendary Moss, of Shrewsbury. The deceased had small opportunity of estimating the blessings of poverty mentioned in the Gospels.

Speaking at the Albert Hall on the drink question, the Bishop of London said it was solemn hypocrisy to read the King's Proclamation in church if people were not going to live up to it. The Bishop ought to be a good judge of "solemn hypocrisy."

The Turner drawings at the Victoria and Albert Museums are not on view on Sundays, and Mr. Mark H. Judge explains that the donors made it a condition of their gift that they should not be shown on that day. Mr. Judge remarks on this that "so long as we accept gifts thus restricted in their promises, Sunday opening can never point to the complete triumph that it otherwise has won, and the Sabbatarian can boast their victory over the spirit of the times." We would add to this that, in our opinion, it is quite unworthy a modern State to accept gifts bequeathed in so narrow and so *mean* a spirit. A gift to the State should be a gift to the State. For a Government to connive—even unknowingly—at the perpetuation of individual narrowness because it takes the form of a gift is dishonourable to all concerned. It is a striking example of the power of the dead over the living.

Father Bernard Vaughan has fallen foul of Mr. H. G. Wells's theology, and describes the novelist's deity as a "brand-new god." In plain English, the faithful are asked to patronize the old firm.

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To Correspondents.

QUERIST (Morton).—Certainly the Church dominates in such matters as Births, Christenings, Marriages, and Deaths, but there is no reason whatever why this should continue so. If we take "passing" as the equivalent of christening, all these functions are essentially of a civic nature, and are, in many cases, celebrated as such. Children may be publicly named, there is the civic ceremony of marriage, and there is the civic, or secular, ceremony over the grave.

L. R.—Pleased to have your appreciation of our notices of new books. We hope to make this a more regular feature, and we have not forgotten our intention to issue a monthly literary supplement—one day.

C. JORTAN.—Order handed to Shop Manager. Thanks for congratulations on our conduct of the *Freethinker*.

STUDENT.—Two very noteworthy recent works on the subject are Durckheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, and Wundt's *Elements of Folk Psychology*, but both are expensive works—15s. each.

A. C. WELLS.—Thanks for *English Mechanic* reference to the Bowman Case. The Editor thinks the Lords "took the right view." So does everyone else.

MISS VANCE, General Secretary of the National Secular Society and Secretary of the Secular Society, Ltd., writes: "Could you find space in your columns to allow me to thank the many friends who continue to send congratulations to both Societies, through me, on the glorious victory achieved in the Bowman case? not the least important of these being a resolution from the Annual Congress of the Union of Ethical Societies and a congratulatory letter from the Directors of the Rationalist Press Association. It is in no small degree a compensation for the long and weary years of waiting to know that our welfare lay so near to the hearts of our friends."

J. ROBINSON.—Thanks for copy of the letter you have written to your representative on the Council concerning the sale of literature in the parks. The letter is an excellent one, and to the point; and we should like to see thousands of our readers equally energetic along the same lines.

R. MCLAUGHLIN.—Glad to learn that you secured two new readers this last week. We hope all the rest of our readers will go one better.

G. RULE.—We should have been pleased to have published your notes on the N. S. S. Conference but for the scant space at our disposal this week. We note, however, your appreciation of the Society's work and vitality, also the complimentary references to its officials. As you say, there is plenty of enthusiasm in the Party, and, we believe, plenty of good material, if it can only be developed and utilized.

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.

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

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

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.

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.

This week's *Freethinker* is largely a society issue. The report of the Bowman Case, the N.S.S. Annual Report, and the report of the demonstration on Sunday last, fill a great deal of our space, and some articles and other matters have had to be set aside. But we think our readers will quite agree that few numbers have been issued of greater general interest than this one. Next week we publish the report of the morning and afternoon sittings of the Conference.

Readers will be able to judge the quality of the speeches at the evening meeting by the summary given elsewhere in this issue. All we feel impelled to say is that from the beginning to the end the meeting never flagged. All the speakers were in fine form, and the audience cheeringly responsive. A very cordial welcome was given to Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, and Mr. A. Howell Smith's maiden conference speech brought to an end a successful, even a remarkable meeting.

We referred last week to the general impression that, as a result of the victory in the Bowman Case, the Secular Society, Limited, would receive a bequest of £10,000. We should have been pleased to say that this was so; but, unfortunately, it is far from the truth. As we said, the gross value of the estate was represented by that figure, but there are considerable deductions to be made, both in the way of charges on the estate and expenses of litigation, in addition to clearing off certain debts incurred by the Society. What remains will represent the sum available for the Society's work. What that will be exactly, it is impossible to say. It is only safe to say that it will be a long way off the original sum.

In the circumstances, the Board of Directors is of opinion, and in this we quite concur, that the clearest and best plan is to outline the general situation. So far as the Board is concerned, what it had to do was to watch the case, and find the necessary funds to carry on the fight. The lines of defence were marked out by Mr. Foote, in consultation with the solicitors, before the first hearing, and these lines have been adhered to throughout. The difficulty was to find the funds. This was done in various ways. In the first place, all the members of the Board did what lay in their power in the shape of advancing loans to the Society. But much more was needed. At the request of the Board, Mr. Cohen undertook to raise £250 by private loans to meet pressing legal charges in connection with the hearing of the case before the Court of Appeal. In response came offers, not of £250, but of nearly £700, while two gentlemen separately offered to find the whole of the £250 if needed. The Society was thus assured that the fight would not languish for want of money. In addition to this, an offer of help came from another quarter. The Rationalist Press Association, recognizing that the case was one which struck at its charter no less than that of the Secular Society, and that our cause was theirs, very kindly offered to assist the Secular Society with a loan to the extent of at least £500. Very properly the Board accepted this offer, and £350 was borrowed to meet legal expenses. We wish to specially acknowledge this loan, as there was a tacit understanding that had the verdict gone against the Society, the money advanced by the Rationalist Press Association would have been as good as lost.

Thus, in addition to the two sums of £250 and £350 respectively, there are legacy duties on the estate, certain other legacies to be paid, two years' very heavy legal expenses to be met (the Society's costs were given in the House of Lords, although how much will be received remains to be seen), and the repayment of loans advanced by the members of the Board. Further, there is a sum of nearly £300 to be paid that was owing to Mr. Foote at the date of his death, which will be paid to Mrs. Foote, and about three years' salary owing to the Secretary, Miss Vance. (It would, perhaps, be more accurate to say that this is owing to those friends from whom Miss Vance has been compelled to borrow the amount due, but that will not affect the Society's indebtedness.) When all these charges are met, what is left will represent the net residue. How much that will be no one can yet say. On a rough guess, we should be inclined to put it at somewhere about a third of the gross value of the estate. We hope we under-estimate the value of the residue.

There is one other matter that should be mentioned. Ostensibly the fight was for a bequest; actually we were fighting for a principle. But it is difficult, apparently, to persuade Christians that there is nothing higher to fight about than money; and on four occasions—once verbally and

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thrice by letter—the Board was approached with an offer of compromise. The last offer came only a few hours before the case came on for hearing in the House of Lords. But on each occasion the reply was the same. A compromise would not be accepted on any condition whatever. We would either establish our right to the bequest or lose it altogether. To have acted otherwise would have been to commit a fatal blunder. It would have exposed the Society to blackmail every time a legacy matured, and it would have left the question of our legal position still undecided. Besides, Secularists are not built of the stuff that compromises easily. We are a fighting Party, and when we cease to fight we may as well cease to exist. So the case was fought, and won. If it had taken every penny of the legacy, and more beside, to win that fight, it would have been worth it. It means the opening of a new chapter in the history of Freethought.

Mr. Eden Phillpotts writes:—

> Let me be among those who join the chorus of satisfaction at the issue of the Secular Society's two years' struggle. The verdict can never again be challenged and a grievance of long standing is righted. One could almost wish there *was* another world that G. W. Foote's ghost might learn this great victory!

Newcastle friends are requested to note that the time of meetings have been changed to 6.30. On Sunday, June 3, Mr. J. W. Mee gives his first Freethought address in Newcastle at the Collingwood Hall on "Why I left the Christian Religion."

(Executive's Annual Report—continued from p. 343.)

of theirs would meet with the most determined opposition. A deputation from the Protest Committee placed the position before the Parks Committee, but without effect. Thanks to the activity of Councillor Jesson—to whom we are all indebted for the gallant fight he has made, also to the Rev. Stewart Headlam—the matter has been twice referred back by the General Council to the Parks Committee for reconsideration, but without result. There is, therefore, nothing left but for the Committee to proceed with its resistance, and, if necessary, to carry the matter into the High Courts, where it is to be hoped a keener sense of the sanctity of public right will be shown than has been exhibited by a body of men whom the accident of an election has placed in a position of temporary power.

Of one thing we may all rest assured. It is not merely the sale of literature the Council is aiming at—although that would be serious enough. It is the right of public meeting that is being attacked, and that this move should have been made during the progress of an European War only serves to make the attack more dastardly. Fortunately, public attention was called early to the matter. The article in the *Freethinker* for June 11, 1916, was the first call to the advanced movements of London to defend their threatened right, and there is some reason for believing that had the Council realized how strong the resistance would be, the resolution would not have been passed. Having passed it, the Parks Committee mistaking obstinacy for strength, sees fit to adhere to its resolution. It cannot plead in extenuation public demand, since, on its own admission, no complaints have been made. It cannot urge trouble to park officials, it is confessed that there has not been the least annoyance or friction over the sales. It is nothing but sheer reaction, and to that there can be but one answer—determined resistance against the abrogation of a public privilege that was enjoyed in many places long before the London County Council came into existence.

The Executive regret that during the year it has not found it possible to put into operation the resolution passed at the last Conference concerning the organization of a systematic press propaganda. To be well done, it would require a person specially selected for the work, and during the past year the opportunity of arranging this has not offered itself. Perhaps something in this direction may be attempted in the near future.

The Executive has to report with regret the death of one of its Vice-Presidents, Mrs. M. E. Pegg, of Manchester. Mrs. Pegg had been for over thirty years a devoted worker in the cause of Freethought; although illness during the last three or four years had prevented her being as active in its service as of old, her devotion to the Cause never faltered, and, till the end, her concern for the future of the work in Manchester was as keen as ever. Her death removes a very familiar and respected personality from both the city in which she resided and from these Annual Conferences.

Two other familiar names in the world of Freethought removed by death are those of William Platt Ball and W. J. Ramsey. Both names are well-known to the older generation of Freethinkers. Mr. Ball was always of a quiet and retiring disposition, but his scientific frame of mind and scholarly character made him a valuable asset to the Party in its earlier and more strenuous times. His one ideal was truth, his one aim the benefiting of his fellows. Unselfish in his death as in his life, no cause ever claimed a more worthy or more devoted follower.

Mr. W. J. Ramsey had dropped out of the public view of late years, owing to ill-health having robbed him of his activity. But he was a well-known figure over thirty years ago, both as a worker and a lecturer. He was associated with G. W. Foote in the foundation of the *Freethinker* in 1881, and was one of the indicted persons in the *Freethinker* prosecution in 1883. His sentence was nine months' imprisonment, and he served that term without fear. In his death we salute the passing of one of the many who have suffered through Christian bigotry and malevolence.

Sir Hiram Maxim was a name better known as the inventor of the Maxim gun than that of a Freethinker—Christians being far more appreciative of a weapon that would blast bodies than of a thought that would elevate minds. But his death deserves recording as that of a well-known public man who never hid his heresy, and refused to do even the homage of silence to conventional religion. His funeral, which was a Secular one, attracted wide public attention, although the newspapers, in their biographies, strangely overlooked the existence of his heretical opinions.

Apart from the specific work of the National Secular Society during the year, the Executive feels it advisable to say a word on the general position of Freethought in this country, and also on the immediate outlook. It is now admitted by the Churches that the expected revival of religious belief, consequent on the War, has not transpired. On the contrary, the position of organized religion was never so low and so desperate as it is at the moment. Whether the Churches, by means of combination with other reactionary forces, will retrieve themselves remains to be seen. But, for the moment, the fact is undeniable that the War, by destroying the traditional authority of the Churches, has led thousands of men and women to consider the validity of those beliefs upon which they were based—with consequences disastrous to them.

It would be idle to assume that so soon as the War is concluded, if not before, strenuous efforts will not be made by the Churches to regain their lost prestige. They are, indeed, hard at that work already, and we must never lose sight of the fact of their enormous latent power and of the prestige bestowed upon them by their position and financial resources as well as by the influence of the interests these institutions subserve. Religion, we must remember, is still established in the schools, in the Senate, and in most of our public institutions. It is still to the fore in all Civic and State ceremonials. The Blasphemy Laws, with their potentialities for evil, remain, despite the recent decision in the House of Lords, which may even be used by our enemies as an argument against their abolition. And there is always the vast mass of superstition latent with the general public ready to be quickened into activity when a favourable opportunity offers itself.

Your Executive feels that the present moment is one pregnant with the possibilities of reaction, but it is not less full of the possibilities of advancement. If the Churches are nerving themselves to recover ground lost during the War, it should be our task to see that that effort meets with the failure it deserves. The call of the moment is for concerted effort and effective organization. A serious attempt should

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be made to organize the very many thousands of Freethinkers in this country whose opinions are ineffective only through lack of co-operation. There ought not to be a single large centre of population but that should have its Secular Society carrying on a regular and an effective propaganda. In this direction the industrial North, and the large towns and cities of the West of England, offer promising ground. South Wales is also a field ripe for work, and one that would well repay exploitation. Those who share our opinions were never so numerous. The weapons placed in our hands by science, by philosophy, by literature, were never so keen, so finely tempered, as they are to-day. The present is admittedly a time of unsettlement—a moment when old institutions are being subjected to a keen, almost a fierce, scrutiny. And it will be largely the fault of Freethinkers themselves if they allow so favourable a moment to pass without a serious and united endeavour to divert human aspiration and energy into those channels which alone can make for Enlightenment, Freedom, and Progress.

Demonstration at South Place.

NOTABLE SPEECHES BY FREETHOUGHT LEADERS.

DESPITE the shadow of the European War there was a note of quiet jubilation at the public meeting in connection with the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society, held on Whit-Sunday evening at South Place Institute; the President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, being in the Chair. The reason was not far to seek, for the long-contested action concerning the validity of the Bowman legacy to the Secular Society, Limited, had resulted in a splendid and decisive victory for the Freethinkers, and henceforth the worst shackles which have hampered intellectual liberty in this country will be things of the past. Freethought has had very severe trials during the past three years, and has suffered more directly, perhaps, from the consequences of the War than any other advanced organization; but the winning of the Bowman Case will open for it a new epoch of greatness as one of the principal torch-bearers of civilization.

The platform was a representative one, and beside the President, included Messrs. J. T. Lloyd, A. B. Moss, W. Heaford, F. Willis (of Birmingham), A. D. Howell Smith, and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner.

MR. CHAPMAN COHEN had a most enthusiastic welcome, and his speech was punctuated throughout with applause. He opened by remarking that the fifty-first annual demonstration of the National Secular Society put that organization in some little danger of being counted respectable. In all the previous half century there was never a more important and critical moment than the present. For three years the Christians of Europe have shown the value of Christian love and sentiment. Freethinkers have always had two main charges against the Christian religion; first that it was not true, and second that it was not useful, and we have to thank Christians themselves for showing that the charges were correct by three years' war. Christianity was not even a good policeman. When men's passions rose, religion fanned them; when atrocities were committed, religion sanctioned them. The War had driven home the vital truth that there was not a villainy of which the human mind was capable which religion would not endorse if it suited its purpose. Religion has lost the chance of being regarded as the champion of right, truth, and justice. The War has unsettled men's minds, and thousands were examining the foundations of religion, and turning their backs on it.

For over two years the Secular Society, Limited, had been engaged in litigation, which had resulted in an epoch-making judicial decision. The Churches had, through the law, robbed Freethought of thousands of pounds, and then calmly asked the Freethinkers where was the money stolen from them. Now, however, money left for Freethought was as safe as money left to a tin tabernacle or for the purpose of providing South Sea Islanders with socks. It was a belated recognition that Freethinkers were human beings. The judges were unanimous that religion could be criticized provided that it was done decently. Blasphemy is talking about a man's religion in a way he doesn't like. If Freethinkers were tried by Mohammedans or Jews, they might get a fair trial, but they were dragged before a Christian jury. The Blasphemy Laws only punish honest people, who tell what they think. Liars and knaves were never in any danger. This explains why outspoken heresy was scarce, for such laws put a tax on honesty and a premium on humbug and hypocrisy. Freethinkers must use victory as a stepping stone to greater things.

Religion was enthroned in our civic life, in Parliament, in law courts, civic ceremonials, and in schools, where minds of little children were poisoned. Fortunately, Freethinkers were in never so fine a position to attack religion. The weapons to-day are so much more powerful and effective. We can deal a thousand blows where our predecessors could only deal one; we can give a deadly wound where our ancestors could only scratch. The present War was really a small matter compared with the battle between Reason and Unreason, which had been going on for three hundred years, and even longer. For the greatest explosive forces in the world are ideas. It was the force of an idea that in 1789 made the downtrodden peasants of France propagandists of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity throughout the world. It was the force of an idea that sent tens of thousands in Russia to dungeons and to exile. It was the force of an idea that shattered the great Catholic Church of the Middle Ages, and made despots and tyrants tremble. Victory was certain. Freethinkers had only to carry on until they planted the flag of freedom on the dismantled fortress of superstition.

The veteran, MR. A. B. MOSS, followed, and said that the National Secular Society had passed through a half century of hard work, and commenced the second half century by a great achievement. The law now recognized the Freethinker as a citizen. This was a great advance on the position years ago when a Freethinker could not even sue for debt. Let us never forget the work of the pioneers. It was the splendid courage of the great Charles Bradlaugh that led to Freethinkers being able to give evidence by affirmation instead of using the barbaric Christian oath, and it was G. W. Foote who devised the instrument which made the Bowman victory possible. Christians are now giving up the fundamentals of their religion. They do not preach of the Fall and of the Atonement, and the parsons only concern now is their deity. They begin to realize that if they no longer foster a belief in a Heavenly Father religion goes. Mr. Wells has found a new god—an invisible king. If invisible how does he know that he is a king? Even, then, kings are at a discount, and gods will soon be so. A deity who meant well and cannot accomplish his purpose is useless to mankind. Hence Christians find it so difficult to explain what God is doing in the present War. What they want is a wonder-worker. Not all the troublous tribe of priests can perform one little miracle to mitigate the horrors of this War. What treasures in blood and money had been squandered on War. What could not have been accomplished if the money and energy had been devoted to the welfare of the rising generation.

MR. J. T. LLOYD was eloquent and forceful. He said he was proud of the title of Freethinker, a name at which our opponents made merry. They taunted us with the name of loose thinkers, whereas the fact remained that we were the most careful, precise, and logical thinkers in the world. We were free in the sense that we were unbound, untied, unshackeled, loosened from the bonds of superstition and the terrors of tyrannical authority. We think for ourselves, and our thoughts were unrestricted by dogmas. In the service of Freethought such men as Bruno and Servetus were burnt alive. Richard Carlile spent over nine years in gaols. He was proud to be a humble servant in so great a cause. Our crime was attacking religion, a crime of which the early Christians were themselves guilty. Why do we assail it? We do not force ourselves into private houses, or buttonhole strangers in the street. We address ourselves to those who choose to come and hear us. Our open-air speakers are often targets for insults. We attack Christianity because it is false and a source of harm to mankind. Its miracles are untrue; its foundations are false, yet multitudes have been put to death for denying their truth. No religion has had such a triumphant career, because she ruthlessly suppressed her opponents. In the fourth century Christians destroyed

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the magnificent library of Alexandria. In a nutshell that is the historical attitude of the Christian Church towards heresy. It was simply a triumph of brute force. She won Europe, not by loving her enemies, but by crushing them. In the awful massacres of the Albigenses and Huguenots over a million persons were murdered. The Protestant reformers were also persecutors; and the Christian superstition has ever relied on coercion. Religion still stands in the way of progress, but doomsday is coming. The Bowman case judgment has proved it, and a leading church paper sorrowfully admits that the result of the litigation is that "England is no longer in law, as it has long ceased to be in fact, a Christian country." Freethinkers appeal to humanity, and, in the end, will come out more than conquerors.

MRS. BRADLAUGH BONNER made a telling speech, and said that our opponents, in the conduct of the Bowman case, hoped to injure us and to enrich themselves. Fortunately, the law acted like a boomerang, and the action resulted in their being impoverished. The result was that in these black days of national suffering new gleams of hope had appeared for Freethought. It was remarkable that in days when national liberties were being sacrificed, that Freethinkers should secure liberty denied to them for five centuries. During the whole of its history Christianity had never replied to argument by argument, but always relied on the stake and the prison. But things are changing. A great judge has declared that the boast that Christianity is part and parcel of the law of England is "mere rhetoric." The result is due to the growth of Humanism. The Blasphemy Laws still disgrace the Statute Book, and there is always a danger that they may be used. We have to set to work to get these laws repealed, and strike off the last of the fetters on intellectual liberty. The Churches have captured the schools, and Freethinkers must see that they fight for the children no less than for adults. Fifty years ago the National Secular Society held its first Conference, and the pioneers who bore the heat and burden of the day handed to us a precious inheritance. Let us see that we, in our turn, hand it on unimpaired to our children.

Another veteran, MR. W. HEAFORD, followed with a lively speech. He expressed the hope that he would be preserved to attend the next fifty one Conferences, to give full expression to his irrepressible juvenility. His youthfulness was due to the fact that he had ever sought inspiration from Freethought. Over forty years ago he frequented the London Hall of Science, and listened to the great men of the past. It was good to know that that their devoted labours had not been in vain. If Bradlaugh and Holyoake were alive to-day, they would rejoice at our great victory, which promises a richer legacy of liberty to our children. It was significant that the republics were all fighting on one side in the present War, and that the reactionary nations were all on the other side. A new era in European politics had been opened by the revolution in Russia, and he saluted the new era of Liberty which sheds its rays of hope on 170,000,000 people, and that so great a nation had been gained for the cause of Freedom. We are the heirs of Liberty, and we must see to it that priests no longer trample on the happiness and liberties of mankind.

MR. F. WILLIS, of Birmingham, had a most cordial reception. He said that at the recent Holyoake Centenary celebrations the press had slurred over or ignored the great reformer's association with Freethought. This was part of a press campaign against liberty. Secularism had been declared to be dead again and again, but he had never seen such a lively corpse. Freethought leaders were always credited with absurd and ridiculous actions, and all of them had been declared to have taken out a watch and asked an offended deity to strike them dead. It was the clerical method of avoiding dangerous argument. The clergy, however, were compelled to change their position. The hell of Spurgeon was now handed over to the care of the Salvation Army orators. Priests were now getting ashamed of their deity, who was resolved into a Divine Immanence. If Freethinkers were bolder Freethought would grow ten times more rapidly. The clergy were the veriest weathercocks. In times of quiet the Prince of Peace was pushed into the foreground, but in War time he was superseded by the God of Battles. If men would see what religion does for civilization they had only to look at the Catholic countries of Europe. The Freethinker had no hell to be afraid of, and no heaven to be bribed with. He warmed both hands before the fire of life, and when it sank was ready to depart.

MR. HOWELL SMITH made an excellent impression in a maiden speech. He said he was proud to stand in a building around which clustered so many memories of great men as South Place Institute. When Bradlaugh died he was himself a boy of eleven, and had been brought up in a very religious household. He was told a great infidel had passed away, and heard the hope expressed that God had spoken to his soul. Now Christians express the hope that Bradlaugh had gone to heaven—not that the great Freethinker would be happy in such a place. Few people take their religion seriously to-day. Like Mrs. Gamp with her gin, they say "Put it on the mantelpiece until I am so disposed." The clergy welcome any help, and annex extraordinary allies. They claim Eucken, Bergson, and others as Christians when they know these men have little regard for God and immortality. The clergy will stick to Christianity so long as there is money and power left in it, and to-day it was simply an organized hypocrisy. Let the Churches keep their God they took from a printed book while they can. Their doom was nearer than they thought, for Freethinkers could say with the old Protestant martyr: "Play the man, Master Ridley, and we shall light such a candle in England as shall never be put out."

C. E. S.

Bowman and Others
V.
Secular Society, Limited.

(LORD PARKER OF WADDINGTON—*continued from p. 334.*)

THE Secular Society, Limited, was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Acts 1862 to 1893, and a company so incorporated is by Section 17 of the Act of 1862 capable of exercising all the functions of an incorporated company. *Prima facie*, therefore, the Society is a corporate body created by virtue of a Statute of the Realm, with statutory power to acquire property by gift, whether *inter vivos* or by will. The Appellants endeavour to displace this *prima facie* effect of the Companies Acts in the following manner. If, they say, you look at the objects for which the Society was incorporated, as expressed in its Memorandum of Association, you will find that they are either actually illegal or, at any rate, in conflict with the policy of the law This being so, the Society was not an association capable of incorporation under the Acts. It was and is an illegal association, and as such incapable of acquiring property by gift. I do not think this argument is open to the Appellants even if their major premise be correct. By the 1st Section of the Companies Act 1900, the Society's certificate of registration is made conclusive evidence that the Society was an association authorized to be registered—that is, an association of not less than seven persons associated together for a lawful purpose. The section does not mean that all or any of the objects specified in the Memorandum, if otherwise illegal, would be rendered legal by the certificate. On the contrary, if the Directors of the Society applied its funds for an illegal object, they would be guilty of misfeasance and liable to replace the money, even if the object for which the money had been applied were expressly authorized by the Memorandum. In like manner a contract entered into by the Company for an unlawful object, whether authorized by the Memorandum or otherwise, could not be enforced either in law or in equity. The section does, however, preclude all His Majesty's lieges from going behind the certificate or from alleging that the Society is not a corporate body with the status and capacity conferred by the Acts. Even if all the objects specified in the Memorandum were illegal, it does not follow that the Company cannot on that account apply its funds or enter into a contract for a lawful purpose. Every company has power to wind up voluntarily, and moneys paid or contracts entered into with that object are in every respect lawfully paid or entered into. Further, the disposition provided by the Company's Memorandum for

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its surplus assets in case of a winding up may be lawful, though all the objects as a going concern are unlawful. If there be no lawful manner of applying such surplus assets, they would on the dissolution of the company belong to the Crown *bona vacantia* (Cunnack *v.* Edwards, 1896, 2h ch. 679).

My Lords, it follows from what I have already said that the capacity of the Secular Society, Limited, to acquire property by gift must be taken as established, and all the conditions essential to the validity of the gift being thus fulfilled, the donee is entitled to receive and dispose of the subject-matter thereof, unless either (1) the gift was obtained by duress or undue influence, or (2) there is something which in a Court of Equity imposes on the donee the character of a trustee. Admittedly there is no question of duress or undue influence, and in my opinion it is impossible to hold that the donee was intended to take or, in fact, takes the subject-matter as trustee, or in any other character than that of absolute owner. It should be observed that the testator says nothing as to how he desires his residuary estate to be applied in the hands of the Society, nor is there any evidence that he made any communication to anyone on behalf of the Society with regard to such application. The only possible argument in favour of the testator's intention to create a trust rests upon this: The Society is a body corporate to which the principle of your Lordships' decision in Rich *v.* Ashbury, etc. Company, Limited (7 H.L. 653), is applicable. Its funds can only be applied for purposes contemplated by the Memorandum and Articles, as originally framed or altered under its statutory powers. A gift to it must, it may be said, be considered as a gift for those purposes of the subject-matter of the gift. This argument is, in my opinion, quite fallacious. The fact that a donor has certain objects in view in making a gift does not, whether he gives them expression or otherwise, make the donee a trustee for those objects.

My Lords, I will next proceed to consider whether a trust for the first object specified in the Memorandum would be a valid trust. The Society's first object is "to promote the principle that human conduct shall be based upon natural knowledge and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action." A trust to promote or advocate this principle would certainly not be a trust for the benefit of individuals. But could it be established as a charitable trust? It is certainly not within the preamble of the Statute 43 Eliz. c. 5. This is not conclusive, though the Courts have taken such preamble as their guide in determining what is or is not charitable. It is not a religious trust, for it relegates religion to a region in which it is to have no influence on human conduct. The principle may have its attractions for certain types of mind, but on analysis it appears to be extremely vague and ambiguous. The first branch does not prescribe the end to which human conduct is to be directed. It merely says that whatever aim a man has in view, he is to base his conduct on natural knowledge rather than on supernatural belief. This may merely mean that if, for example, we desire to defeat our enemies, we should avail ourselves of all known scientific means, and not rest idle in the belief that there is a special providence looking after our interests. The meaning intended must necessarily be obscure until the terms "natural knowledge" and "supernatural belief" are more narrowly defined. Passing to the second branch of the principle, it is, I think, equally obscure. It lays down dogmatically what ought to be the end of all human thought and action, "so think and act as to secure human welfare in this world." No hint is given as to what constitutes human welfare—a point on which there is the widest difference of opinion, or as to why anyone should act on the precept unless it be assumed that altruism is merely enlightened egoism. It would in my opinion be quite impossible to hold that a trust to promote a principle so vague and indefinite was a good charitable trust. Even if the principle to be promoted were as definite as Kant's Categoric imperative, I doubt whether a trust for its promotion would be charitable.

My Lords, it remains to consider the question (which formed the chief topic of argument at your Lordships' Bar), whether the promotion of the principle specified as the Society's first object is either illegal or against the policy of the law. A trust for the promotion of the principle being unenforceable on other grounds, this question could only arise on a criminal prosecution for blasphemy, or in an action to enforce a contract entered into for the purpose of promoting the principle. In discussing it I shall assume that the principle involves a denial of, or an attack upon, some of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion.

My Lords, on the subject of blasphemy, I have had the advantage of reading, and I entirely agree with the conclusions arrived at by my noble and learned friends, the Lord Chancellor and Lord Buckmaster. In my opinion to constitute blasphemy at common law there must be such an element of vilification, ridicule, or irreverence, as would be likely to exasperate the feelings of others, and so lead to a breach of the peace. I cannot find that the common law has ever concerned itself with the opinion as such, or with expression of opinion, so far as such expression is compatible with the maintenance of public order. Indeed, there is express authority that heresy as such is outside the cognizance of a criminal court, unless the heretic by setting up conventicles or otherwise endangers the peace (see Hawkins's Pleas of the Crown, vol. i., p. 354). The contrary view appears to be based on various dicta (I do not think they are more than dicta), to the effect that Christianity is part of the law of the land, the suggested inference being that to attack or deny any of its fundamental doctrines must, therefore, be unlawful. The inference, of course, depends on some implied major premise. If the implied major premise be that it is an offence to speak with contumely, or even to express disapproval of existing law, it is clearly erroneous. If, on the other hand, the implied major premise is that it is an offence to induce people to disobey the law, the premise may be accepted, but to avoid a *non-sequitur* it would be necessary to modify the minor premise by asserting that it is part of the law of the land that all must believe in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and this, again, is inadmissible. Christianity is clearly not part of the law of the land in the sense that every offence against Christianity is cognizable in the courts.

A good deal of stress was laid in this connection upon the Blasphemy Act (9 and 10 Will. III. c. 32), and its provisions, undoubtedly, give rise to certain difficulties. I think, however, for reasons which will appear later, that this Act should be construed as imposing in the case of persons educated in or who have at any time professed the Christian religion, certain additional penalties for the common law offence rather than as creating a new statutory offence. The fact that there has, so far as can be discovered never been a prosecution for an offence under the Act points to this view having been generally accepted.

My Lords, on the question whether the promotion of the principle in question is against public policy as opposed to being illegal in the criminal sense the Appellants relied principally on two authorities, namely, Cowan *v.* Milbourn (L. R. 2 Exch. 230) and Briggs *v.* Hartley (L. J. N. S. Chanc. 416). In the former case the Court consisting of Chief Baron Kelly, Baron Martin, and Baron Bramwell, refused to enforce a contract for the hire of rooms, the purpose of the hirer being to use the rooms for certain lectures, one of which, as advertised, was to be on "The Character and Teaching of Christ; the Former Defective, the Latter Misleading," and another on "The Bible Shown to be no More Inspired than any other Book." Chief Baron Kelly was of opinion that the first of these lectures could not be delivered without blasphemy. He referred especially to the fact that Christianity was part of the law of the land. Baron Martin agreed. Baron Bramwell quoted the Blasphemy Act, and said that the rooms were clearly intended to be used for a purpose declared by the Statute to be unlawful. It appears, therefore, that all three Judges considered that the purpose was unlawful in the strict sense, though Baron Bramwell referred to the distinction between things actually unlawful in the sense of being punishable and things unlawful in the sense of being contrary to the policy of the law. This, however, appears to have been unnecessary for the decision. The Court refused to enforce the contract. In the case of Briggs *v.* Hartley, the testator had created a trust to provide a prize for the best essay on natural theology, treated as a science, and sufficient when so treated to constitute a true, perfect, and philosophical system of universal religion. Vice-

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Chancellor Shadwell held the trust void as inconsistent with Christianity. In my opinion the first of these cases might possibly be supported on the footing that the lectures intended to be given would involve vilification, ridicule, or irreverence, likely to lead to a breach of the peace. In so far as it decided that any denial of or attack upon the fundamental doctrines of Christianity was in itself blasphemous either at common law or under the Statute, I thing it was wrong. The second case, however, appears to be a direct authority on the point at issue, for the trust was clearly a good charity unless it could be held contrary to the policy of the law.

The Revolution of 1688 was followed by the Toleration Act of that year, which exempted Protestant Dissenters from the penalties imposed by the earlier Acts, but provided that nothing therein contained should afford any protection to Roman Catholics or persons denying the Trinity. From the date of this Act all trusts for the religious purposes of any Nonconformist body entitled to the benefit of its provisions have been held good charitable trusts, and inasmuch as the provisions of the Act do not deal with the validity of trusts, but merely give exemptions from penalties, I think we are safe in assuming that in the equitable rule as to trusts for the purposes of religion being charitable, religion includes all forms of religion which accept, as the exempted Nonconformists may be said to have done, the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

But subsequent decisions enable us to go a step further. The Unitarian Relief Act, 1812, repeals so much of the Toleration Act, 1688, as enacts that nothing therein contained should extend to give any ease or benefit to persons denying the Trinity and also so much of the Blasphemy Act as relates to persons denying the Trinity. As from the passing of this Act trusts for the religious purposes of Unitarians have always been held good charitable trusts. The repeal of the Blasphemy Act, which did not itself affect the common law, could not alter the common law. These decisions proceed therefore on the footing that a mere denial of the Trinity is not criminal. The Unitarian Relief Act containing no provisions as to trusts, they also proceed on the footing that but for the statutory penalties to which, prior to the Act, persons who denied the Trinity had been subject to a trust for a religion which rejects the doctrine of the Trinity would have been a good charitable trust. A denial of or attack on the doctrine of the Trinity can never therefore have been either actually illegal or contrary to the policy of the law.

Further, whatever may have been the case with the Unitarians of 1812, it is quite certain that in more recent years many Unitarians have not only denied the Trinity, but have disputed the "Divine authority" of the Old and New Testament in the sense in which that expression is ordinarily used by persons professing the Christian Faith. If there is any doctrine vital to Protestant Christianity, it would appear to be that of the divine authority of the Scriptures, and yet in the case of trusts for the religion of Unitarians no distinction has been drawn between those who do and who do not hold this doctrine. It would seem to follow that a trust for the purpose of any kind of Monotheistic Theism would be a good charitable trust, and that it is not illegal or contrary to public policy to deny the authority of the Old or New Testament.

(To be continued.)

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

While visiting the Zoo in Washington, a little girl saw a great white bird in a cage standing on one leg. She threw in a piece of candy; the bird gobbled it up eagerly, and thrust its head through the wire for more.

Presently the child's mother came along.

"Mother," cried the youngster; "see here! What kind of a bird is this?"

The mother pointed to the sign on the cage, which read, "The Stork."

"The Stork!" cried the child enthusiastically. "Oh! mother, do you know, he actually recognized me?"—*Harper's Magazine*, February, 1917.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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Views and Opinions.

The Writing of Books.

In the days when life was less hurried and thought more leisurely than now, writing a book was an important matter. It was, usually, undertaken only after careful preparation and mature reflection. The writer might just as easily have been wrong then as now, but his opinions, whatever they were, were clear —to him. Nowadays, when books are born in a week and die in a month things proceed differently. Writers with a public turn out three or four books a year, and their readers admire the output, much as they would admire a new machine manufacturing sausages or printing copies of a daily paper. In these circumstances many books appear to be written not so much to express their author's ideas as to help him to find out what his ideas are. They seem to be written on the principle of "I fancy I have several good ideas on this subject and will write a book and see how they work out." And there is always the chance that some discerning critic will explain to the author what his ideas really are.

* * *

God and Mr. Wells.

What has been said above represents our first impression on reading Mr. H. G. Wells' *God the Invisible King*. In that work Mr. Wells has, in truth, seized a useful and, within limits, a true idea. It is not at all a new one, it constitutes the essence of Positivism, and it has been both implicit and explicit in all Freethought propaganda for a century or more. What Comte called the "Religion of Humanity," or, Cotter, Morrison the "Service of Man," or others "Social Service" is what Mr. Wells really has in view when he talks about the worship of God. He personifies the life of the race and calls it God. Certainly this collective life is real enough. It requires little reflection to show that the life of the tribe, the nation, the race, is more comprehensive and more enduring than the life of the individual. It antedates and postdates individual life. It takes hold of the individual at birth and continues to fashion his life until it ushers him into the grave. It provides the texture of his thinking as well as the fashion of his clothes. It furnishes him with ideals, beliefs, purposes. It is more than an aggregate, it is, as Mr. Wells says of his God, a synthesis. It may be as impalpable as gravity, but it is, none-the-less, real. Only—it is not God, and it is no use calling it God. That word has a fairly definite historic connotation, and it is quite beyond the power of Mr. Wells to successfully give it an entirely new one.

* * *

Sociology and Religion.

Now, if Mr. Wells had tried to show—what he might easily have done—that all the good with which religion has been, at any rate, associated, really sprang from this collective racial life, that the source of the best ideals of the more humanistic of religionists was social, that improvements in religion had been consequent on a developing social sense, in short, that religion owed its strength to an exploitation of man's social nature, he would have been doing a much needed and a valuable work. He might have gone further and shown clearly that social life, as it is the root of what are called religious virtues, provides the only theatre for their profitable exercise, and their only intelligible end. But to call this "God," and to break into peans of exultation about this worship of God, is to leave his readers as confused as he finds them. The service of man we can all understand, even though we may not be always certain that we are so acting as to benefit humanity. The worship of God we can also understand, even though people quarrel over forms of worship. We may even say that one involves the other, and some do say so, just as others say and believe that the service of man will one day replace the worship of God. But you cannot identify the two. In other words, you may have God *or* humanity, or God *and* humanity, but you cannot have God *as* humanity. Mr. Wells' excursion will leave the really religious untouched; it will only cause a smile with informed Freethinkers.

* * *

An Evil Word.

Granted that the world needs some formulæ which will organize and synthesize its energies and aspirations, it is certain that the word God will never perform that function. The word has too old and too bad a history for that. The belief in God does not unite, it divides. The widest religion rests on a basis of exclusion, it binds some together only to shut others out. Throw the word God into any community and it has the disruptive consequences of a high explosive shell. On the other hand, the word humanity everywhere unites in proportion as the appeal is made intelligible. It was not the belief in a God—whether of the new or of the old kind—that brought about the revolution in Russia. It was the appeal to the common instincts and feelings of a common humanity. And it will be neither God nor religion,

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when this War is at an end, will help to smooth over the ill feeling and level the mountain of hatred they have evoked. Wherever and whenever that is done it will be by an appeal to a humanity in which all share, and to which all are in some degree able to respond.

* * *

A Shock for the Faithful.

We have treated Mr. Wells' new religion as being the equivalent of the old "Service of Man." And it seems to us it is either that or nothing. For Mr. Wells distinctly disowns anything and everything that is properly understood as religion, and explicitly repudiates Christianity. His belief, he says, "is not Christianity at all." Christian beliefs, in fact, "merit only disrespectful attention"; the orthodox Christian Deity is described as "that stuffed scarecrow of divinity"; and in a letter to the *Times* he distinctly rejects all belief in personal immortality. There is, of course, nothing new in all this. It is only what Freethinkers have said over and over again. But it is good to see how these very advanced writers have to follow in our steps sooner or later, almost whether they will or no. Christians will not be pleased with Mr. Wells' statement of religion. Many of them may have been expecting something different—something more in line with their own creed. Let us hope that the discovery of another public man openly disavowing Christianity will put some courage into their own timid souls.

* * *

God or Humanity?

Mr. Wells' weakness as a writer is a want of psychological insight and a lack of historical perspective. These shortcomings are evident in most of his writings, and we venture to say they are responsible for what we consider the cardinal fault of his latest work. For you simply cannot take old words like "God" and "religion" and divest them of their historic and legitimate connotations. To the overwhelming majority of people they will mean what they have always meant. And, fundamentally, God, as we have said, is a symbol of division, not of union; and it is union that Mr. Wells requires. On the other hand, humanity never has had, and never can have, this divisive connotation. The realization of all that the word means may be presented by the narrower and separatist ideals of religion or nationality, but it remains as an indestructible ideal. It is the only power against which any or all of the Churches are ultimately powerless. It is an ideal that over a hundred years ago sent the manhood of France over Europe as the evangelists of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, as it is now firing the minds of the masses of the Russian people. It is true the ideals of the revolutionaries of 1789 suffered an eclipse, as may those of the Russian people of to-day, if the reactionaries of Europe have their way. But it is only an eclipse. The idea, the ideal, remains. It is nascent in the nature of each; it is implicit in the common life of all. And one great step toward its realization is to clear from the mind of man those verbal shibboleths which prevent their consciously realizing the real tendency of social evolution.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

THE NEW GODLING.

Said H. G. Wells, I think you'll find
My God has fresh and charming features.
At any rate He knows *my* mind,
And doesn't talk about "His Creatures."
Better He'll stand harsh Reason's strain
Than Jaweh, Zeus, and other swells,
Though not, of course, quite on the plane
Of one and only H. G. Wells.

—*Eden Phillpotts, "Cambridge Magazine."*

The Eternal Christ.

ONE of the chief characteristics of present-day theology is its vagueness. Terms are used the meanings of which constantly vary and often contradict one another. The two words which seem to have suffered most in this respect are "Jesus" and "Christ." Time was when both were but two names by which the hero of the Four Gospels was generally known. In the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles he is usually called Jesus Christ, or Christ Jesus, and all these documents treat him as a super-human being. Latterly, however, the tendency has been to regard the Gospel Jesus as an entirely different being from the Christ of the Orthodox Churches, the former being an historical character, and the latter a creation of the theological imagination. As a matter of fact, the distinction between the two is more fanciful than real. The Gospel Jesus is not an historical personage. The Virgin Birth and the Resurrection, if there were nothing more, exclude him from the list of human beings, and his life is replete with unnatural, impossible, events. Even those who believe that he was only a man, admit that the Gospel narrative is largely legendary, and their critical work consists almost wholly in endeavouring to rescue the purely historical elements from the mass of baseless fables. To us, therefore, the Gospel Jesus is fully as unhistorical as the theological Christ. Principal Griffith Jones discerns no line of demarcation between Jesus and Christ; Jesus himself being the Christ: "the Desire of all Nations, the Crown and Essence of Humanity, the Saviour of the World, who by the loftiness of his teaching, the beauty of his character, the sufficiency of his atoning sacrifice, is able to save to the uttermost all who will come to him and trust in him." No being has ever lived who answered to that extravagant description, and no one is more fully aware of the fact than the Principal himself. The new minister of the City Temple assures his congregation that his creed, his only confession of faith, and the keynote of his ministry, as summing up the Christian Gospel, are to be found in Paul's famous declaration: "Christ is all, and in all."

Dr. Newton is a born orator, an emotional rhetorician, and there lies before him, as a preacher, no doubt, an exceedingly prosperous and happy career. We do not know where he stands theologically, although there are indications in his inaugural discourse that he is in no narrow sense orthodox. In his estimation Jesus is Christ, but what Christ is he tells us only in painfully loose, indefinite, hazy terms. To call him "the image of the invisible God, by whom all things were created, and in whom all things hold together," is not to convey any definite and intelligible information concerning him, for God is unknown as well as invisible. No one possesses a single grain of knowledge of anything beyond and above Nature. The supernatural is a visionary realm touching which knowledge is absolutely unobtainable. Multitudes of people believe in its existence, and describe it with the utmost cocksureness. The Gospel Jesus claims it as his own peculiar sphere, from which he has descended to earth, and to which he will soon return. He prides himself upon being God's only begotten Son, and takes full credit for having made the Father known to mankind. Dr. Newton asserts that "the spirit of God, his purpose, his pity, and most of all his character, are unveiled in the life of Jesus Christ," and that this "is all that we really know of God, as he is all that we need to know for nobility of life and hope in death." Hence Christ is "the crown, the climax, the consummation of all things, the whole finding focus in a Single Luminous Life."

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Such, then, is Christ in himself, and such is what he may become for humanity. Now, in Dr. Newton's first sermon, as reported in the *Christian Commonwealth* for May 30, occurs the following eye-opening passage:—

> What kind of a nation would the American Republic be if every man in it were such a man as Lincoln, to whom the Prime Minister has referred so often and with such complete understanding—Lincoln, so true of heart, so clear of mind, who lived with malice toward none and charity for all, seeking the safety and sanctity of his nation? First of all, social slavery and industrial brutality would cease to exist. No woman would be made desolate, no little child forlorn, by grasping greed or grinding cruelty. Laws would be wise and just and merciful, in fact as well as in ideal, leaving every one free to stretch his arms and his soul and look up at the stars. It would be the nation it was meant to be, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the service of humanity. Because this mighty and tender spirit took form in Lincoln, his life was a revelation of the genius and purpose of the Republic, its reason for being, and its prophecy of times to come.

We agree with every word in that extract, but are utterly unable to perceive what object Dr. Newton intended it to serve, for the one thing it does not illustrate is that "Christ is all and in all." The passage might have been written by the great Atheist, Colonel Ingersoll. Undoubtedly Lincoln was one of the greatest philanthropists that ever lived, whose one purpose in life was to secure the welfare of his fellow-beings, especially those who were down-trodden and oppressed. *But Abraham Lincoln was not a Christian.* It is well known that the French philosopher, Volney, published a famous book, entitled *Les Ruines*, in which he manifested strong antipathy to religion in general, and to Christianity in particular. Everybody knows Paine's *Age of Reason*, which is a vigorous attack on the Bible and the Christian religion. Lincoln read those books with the greatest care, and then composed a long and critical essay, in which he expressed identical convictions. It should be borne in mind that Lincoln never disavowed those sceptical conclusions; and we have the assurance of Mrs. Lincoln that "Mr. Lincoln had no hope and no faith in the usual acceptance of those words." It is admitted by all that he never identified himself with any denomination. And yet, as John Nicolay puts it:—

> Benevolence and forgiveness were the very basis of his character; his world-wide humanity is aptly embodied in a phrase of his second inaugural: "With malice towards none, with charity for all." History must accord him a rare sagacity in guiding a great people through the perils of a mighty revolution, an admirable singleness of aim, a skilful discernment and courageous seizure of the golden moment to free his nation from the incubus of slavery, faithful adherence to law, and conscientious moderation in the use of power, a shining personal example of honesty and purity, and finally the possession of that subtle and indefinable magnetism by which he subordinated and directed dangerously disturbed and perverted moral and political forces to the restoration of peace and constitutional authority to his country, and the gift of liberty to four millions of human beings.

Dr. Newton's eloquent eulogy of Christ as the supreme revelation of God and the only hope of humanity, his passionate outbursts of emotional loyalty to God made manifest in the flesh, his expressions of confidence in "a democracy founded upon the spiritual unity and essential divinity of humanity as revealed in Christ," and his perfervid declaration that "the profoundest fact about humanity is not that it is Jew or Gentile, English or American, bond or free, male or female"—all such pronouncements become practically valueless beside the cordial asseveration that if every man in the United States were such a man as Lincoln the mighty Republic of the West would be ideally perfect in every respect. And yet Lincoln made no religious profession, had neither hope nor faith in the popular acceptation of those words, but was a Humanist, pure and simple, whose social sense proved his guiding-star.

Does Dr. Newton verily believe that Christ is a revelation of a God of justice and love? Does he really think that the world is hopelessly dead in trespasses and sins, doomed to suffer for ever in hell, unless it accepts and puts its trust in Heaven's mercy as disclosed in the Cross? If he does, how does he account for several facts which cannot be gainsaid? Does he regard the conditions of life in Christendom as a compliment to the Eternal Christ? If he honestly compare Christian America with Heathen China, can he truthfully affirm that the former is socially and morally superior to the latter? If not, why should we move heaven and earth in an endeavour to convert China to Christianity? If it be argued that Christendom is in such a corrupt state because Christianity has not been tried, the question forces itself upon us, Why has not Christianity been put to the test of experiment? The truth is that the religion of the Cross has totally failed to transform the moral character of the nations which profess it, and that this world-war is a practical result and demonstration of that failure. The Eternal Christ is absolutely impotent simply because he has never existed except in the imagination of ardent believers. The belief in him yields unspeakable joy to those in whom it has acquired a high degree of development, and this sense of enjoyment is not always accompanied by moral elevation and social service. What the world needs is, not Christ, but man, not saints, but reformers, not sentimental evangelists, but men like Lincoln, inspired by love for their fellow-beings, and a passionate desire to serve them.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Captious Colporteur.

> The kind wise words that fall from years that fall—
> Hope thou not much, and fear thou not at all.
>
> —*Swinburne.*

> I claim no place in the world of letters; I am, and will be, alone, as long as I live and after. —*Landor.*

IT was one of fate's little ironies which imposed on the Pagan, George Borrow, the function of colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The story of Borrow's introduction to the suave officials of the Society is very characteristic of this remarkable man. Hearing of the possibility of work for the Society, the young man tramped from Norwich to London, walking one hundred and twelve miles in twenty-seven hours, and spending less than sixpence on the journey. On arrival he told the surprised secretary that he could translate Manchu, and this was his first work for the Society.

Borrow went to Russia, and facing great difficulties, translated the New Testament into the Manchu-Tartar dialect. Ever a man of resource, there was nothing he was not ready to do, even to setting up type, teaching wooden-headed compositors, buying paper, and hustling leisurely Muscovite officials. Later he went to Spain on behalf of the Society, and the adventurous career he led in the Peninsula while hawking Bibles in this most bigoted of Roman Catholic countries forms the groundwork of *The Bible in Spain*, one of the most vivacious travel-books ever written. "*Gil Blas*, with a touch of John Bunyan," the volume has been called, wittily. For the author pays small attention to the purely evangelical

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business of the organization that dispatched him, and he writes of thieves, murderers, gipsies, bandits, prisons, wars, and other wordly subjects, with all the gusto of a Le Sage, or Burton. Addressed to the straight-laced and narrow-minded Victorian religious public, it was a wonderfully stimulating drink to unaccustomed palates. It was the time when strict evangelical parents forbade secular books on Sundays, and Mr. Augustine Birrell has told us how, as an eager boy, he rejoiced in the old Pagan's writings, the innocent title of which had passed the unsuspecting critics on the hearth.

As may be imagined, readily, the correspondence between the Bible Society authorities and George Borrow is delicious reading. For the colporteur worshipped at many shrines from that of the pacifist Jesus Christ to that of the pugilist Tom Sayers. We see the old Adam peeping out in the evangelist, as Dr. Jekyll changed into Mr. Hyde, and the growing impatience and distrust of the pious officials who saw their employee boxing the compass, and forgetting the exceedingly narrow channel they wished him to pursue. At times, indeed, Borrow quite forgot the theological jargon and business patter of Earl Street, and it all ended in his being recalled and being given no further employment.

This strange agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society commenced his literary career in London by writing the *Newgate Calendar*, which bears so marked a resemblance to the earlier part of the Holy Scriptures sold by the Society. Borrow was ever a fighter, even when his Flaming Tinman days were over, and his animosities extended from Popes to parsons. When a highly respected canon of St. Paul's Cathedral ventured to criticize adversely *The Bible in Spain*, Borrow sent a saucy note to his publishers, calmly stating that the ecclesiastic was a jackass, and that he would be doing better by minding his own petty business in his ugly cathedral.

Borrow had a real passion for adventure, and a sincere love of language. Whilst an articled clerk to an obscure solicitor at Norwich, he translated a volume of ballads from the Danish. Later, at Petrograd, he published his *Targum: Translations from Thirty Languages and Dialects*. Nor was this all, for in the course of his travels in France, Germany, Russia, and Eastern Europe, he learned languages and dialects as he went. With the exceptions of Sir Richard Burton and Prince Lucien Bonaparte, he was, probably, the most enthusiastic linguist who ever lived. During a few years of travelling activity he made translations in a score of languages, and he produced a Turkish version of *Bluebeard*, and rendered a number of Danish, Russian, and Welsh tales into English.

For the last fifty years of his life he lived on "emotions remembered in tranquillity," passing his existence between Oulton Broad, Norfolk, and London. His famous books, *Lavengro*, *The Romany Rye*, and *Wild Wales*, were all written amid the peaceful surroundings of the Broads, and his tranquillity was only broken by fierce paper warfare with publishers, critics, and other folk who aroused the old lion's wrath. Borrow was always furious at the want of public appreciation; but his fame has grown since he died at Oulton, and the town of Norwich did well in purchasing Borrow's house as a memento of a remarkable man and notable citizen.

Nature mixed George Borrow in a moment of magnificence. Only those who have realized for themselves the inadequancy of a pen when brought in contact with the rich and tumultuous glow of life can appreciate to the full the wonder of his achievement; the potent imagination, the keen insight, which are required to bring before us those unforgettable incidents of human life. Besides these great gifts, he possessed in an extraordinary degree the sense of the significance of life apart from any personal liking or disliking, of the beauty and continuity of the great stream of human existence. A little aloof, a little inscrutable, he will ever remain, but magnificent because of his greatness as a literary artist. Borrow's life was an example of the square peg in the round hole. A son of Nature, he was impatient of the petty and narrow standards of civilization and society, and loved the men and women of the wayside. He recognized in these vagrants the true sons and daughters of "the great mother who mixes all our bloods." Listen to his exquisitely phrased Pagan glorification of existence: "Life is sweet, brother. There's night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon, stars, brother, all sweet things; there's likewise the wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother, who would wish to die?"

MIMNERMUS.

Science and Spiritualism.

XIII.

(Continued from p. 342.)

"Excuse me," I said more than once to Helena Petrovna (Madame Blavatsky), "you are thoroughly compromising your master. This mighty sage, having drunk his cup of milk—his daily portion of nutriment—lies down in the depth of Thibet, so to speak on the very threshold of Nirvana. His marvellous intellect is directing the fate of the world. Suddenly you call to him from here, 'Ting-ting.' He immediately effects an 'expenditure of vital force,' slips out of his coarsely material body, leaves that body in Thibet to digest its cup of milk, dons his astral form, and in the twinkling of an eye he is suddenly before you. 'Ting-ting.' 'What are your commands, *upagika* (mother)?' 'Oh, look here, my good man, write a letter to Miss A; and drop it on her head in an hour.' 'All right.' 'And look here, my good man, write, "Certainly I was there; but who can open the eyes of those who will not see?" And slip this note into Olcott's pocket.' 'All right.' 'And look here, my good man, appear to Mary F.' 'All right.' Is all this possible? Why, it turns out that he is not your 'master' after all, but a footman who used to run your errands." Oh, how angry she used to get with me for such speeches! How she used to glare, her great eyes the colour of pale turquoise! And all the time not one, positively not one, even the apparently most sensible Theosophists, was disturbed by this pitiful part played by the great mysterious teacher, the "master" who availed to snatch Helena Petrovna from death.—*V. S. Solovyoff, "A Modern Priestess of Isis"* (1895), pp. 217-218.

IT should be stated that while Madame Blavatsky was being lionized in Europe in 1884, a quarrel broke out at Adyah, and M. and Madame Coulomb were dismissed, partly for having hinted to outsiders secrets connected with the shrine. An agitated telegram from Madame Blavatsky at Paris failed to heal the rupture, and in revenge Madame Coulomb gave to the press "a long series of letters in Madame's hand teeming with veiled instructions to the Coulombs, which fitted in at every point with their accounts of jugglery at Adyah."[1]

Dr. Hodgson also inquired into the precipitated Mahatma letters. Says Mr. Edmund Garrett:—

> These precious documents, which had been rained among the faithful with a copiousness almost amounting to garrulity, had been discredited already. The prosy and sometimes illiterate verbiage of the Tibetan sages was a severe trial to the enthusiasm of the more critical Theosophists even where it was apparently original. But it was too much of a good thing when a long doctrinal treatise, which Koot Hoomi had addressed to Mr. Sinnett, was found to be a gross plagiarism from a lecture by an American gentleman which had been reported in a Spiritualist paper a few months before. Nor did it mend matters when, after considerable delay, the illustrious Koot condescended to the newspaper arena, and

[1] Garrett, *Isis Very Much Unveiled*, p. 18.

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> wrote—we mean precipitated—an explanation which for evasiveness and general "thinness," is probably unique even in the records of convicted plagiarists.[1]

And worse was to follow, for the same criticism which identified Madame Blavatsky as the writer of the unblushing letters to Madame Coulomb, found exactly the same characteristics in the compositions of the Mahatmas. "In a word," says Mr. Edmund Garrett, "it was declared that Koot Hoomi Lal Sing and Mahatma Morya were the same person, and that person Madame Blavatsky. When a missive from the Himalayas floated down into the neophyte's lap, it was Madame's own hand which had prepared it, though it was the no less useful if humbler function of M. Coulomb to jerk it from the ceiling at the critical moment with a string, or deftly pass it through the sliding panel into the closed Shrine."[2]

It only needs to be added that in the opinion of the two experts on handwriting, Messrs. Netherclift and Sims, both the Coulomb and Mahatma letters were "indisputably the authentic production of Madame Blavatsky."[3]

As Madame Blavatsky, when she was a Spiritualist, had protested that the Katie King exposure was "neither more nor less than a plot (now almost proved) of the Protestant Jesuitical Society called the Young Men's Christian Association," so now she declared the publication of the incriminating Coulomb letters "was due to a conspiracy on the part of certain Christian missionaries, who had (as again was "almost proved") paid 40,000 rupees to suborn false witnesses."[4]

Madame Blavatsky certainly must have had but little acquaintance with either the Y.M.C.A. or Christian missionaries; for the Y.M.C.A. never plotted anything more serious than how to provide amusements to divert its members from thinking, and keeping them in the fold. And as for missionaries parting with 40,000 rupees for any purpose whatever, the idea is too wildly improbable to be entertained.

"Whatever Theosophists may say now," says Mr. Edmund Garrett, "the Society for Psychical Research was certainly not a hostile tribunal." Dr. Hodgson, who conducted the inquiry, "declared that whatever prepossessions he may have had 'were distinctly in favour of occultism and Madame Blavatsky.'"[5] Mr. Podmore, who was also a member of the Society, in explaining the Society's attitude towards the Theosophic miracles, says: "When we found that some of these occurrences were vouched for by witnesses of good repute and good intelligence in other matters, we held that we should not be justified in summarily dismissing their evidence.....It seemed also not impossible that the accounts which had reached us of the *astral* journeys might prove to be slightly distorted versions of actual occurrences, analogous to those cases of thought transference with which we were already familiar. Moreover, to reject the evidences for these occurrences was, as it then seemed to us, to impute fraud to Colonel Olcott as well as to Mr. Damodar. Colonel Olcott we believed to be an honourable man, and Mr. Damodar was credibly alleged to be a Hindu of high caste, who had voluntarily sacrificed his patrimony on account of his connection with the Theosophical Society."[6] In the event, it was found that there was collusion in the fraud on the part of Damodar, and that: "If Colonel Olcott's honesty has not been impugned, the limits of his credulity have proved elastic beyond our anticipation. In fact, many of the leading members of the Theosophic cult present, in the light of this inquiry, have a pleasantly ambiguous blend of charlatanry and simplicity."[1]

Since the publication of Dr. Hodgson's report, M. Solovyoff, a Russian of good social position and an author of some repute, has published, under the title of *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, an account of his connection with Madame Blavatsky, which emphatically confirms Dr. Hodgson's exposure.

While in Paris, engaged in a study of the occult, in which he was inclined to believe, he came across a book by Madame Blavatsky, and, seeing a notice in the *Matin* of the arrival in Paris of Madame herself, he obtained an introduction to her from a friend, and called a few days later. He received a frank and kindly greeting. "At the end of a quarter of an hour," says M. Solovyoff, "I was talking to Helena Petrovna as though she were an old friend, and all her homely, coarse appearance actually began to please me. And her eyes gazed at me so graciously, and at the same time pierced me so attentively."[2]

"She looked me straight in the eyes, and caressed me with her glance and her kindly smile." Says M. Solovyoff: "I involuntarily liked her more and more. I was attracted to her by a feeling of instantaneous sympathy." That, as in the case of Home, was the secret of her success. Further on, the same writer records: "In her quiet and good moments she was eminently sympathetic. There was within her a certain fascination, a kind of magnetism, which attracted to her with an irresistible force. Sympathy! it is a quality which you cannot translate into words; yet all men and women, old and young, on whom those great strange eyes had looked graciously, experienced the same thing."[3]

During his first visit, M. Solovyoff was favoured with the sound of the "astral bells." This was upon the return of Madame Blavatsky to the room after a few minutes' absence upon domestic duties, as she explained. During a later visit, Madame dropped the little silver instrument responsible for these sounds. M. Solovyoff picked it up, but Madame snatched it out of his hand.

Finally, in the autumn of the following year (1885), at her invitation, he visited her at Wurzburg. He found her in ill-health, and depressed by the publication of the Hodgson report. She was alone, and seemed in need of sympathy. An accident precipitated the crisis. Going to a drawer, by Madame's direction, to get a photograph, M. Solovyoff discovered a packet of Chinese envelopes, already familiar to him as those in which the "astral" messages were conveyed from Thibet! Then Madame Blavatsky broke down and confessed all. "What is one to do," she said, "when in order to rule men it is necessary to deceive them?" We have quoted the rest of this confession previously, so will not repeat it. Finally, she produced the "astral bell," and invited M. Solovyoff to co-operate with her in the manufacture of "astral" messages. "When she had found a man whom she wished to win over and turn into her obedient tool, she worked on him by cordiality and sincerity. She tried to convince him of her devotion, her warm affection and friendliness; and then by virtue of these feelings, she got him to do this or that for her. Everything was founded on personal relations and on feelings. With women these tactics worked wonders" (p. 73).

Her moral ideas were most primitive. Says the same writer:—

> I am convinced that she honestly did not understand why I had parted with her and appeared among the number of her accusers. Her moral notions were so

[1] *Ibid*, pp. 19 20.
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 20-21.
[3] Podmore, *Studies in Psychical Research*, p. 172.
[4] Podmore, *Studies in Psychical Research*, pp. 188-9.
[5] *Isis Very Much Unveiled*, pp. 17-9.
[6] *Studies in Psychical Research*, pp. 186-7.

[1] *Ibid*, p. 187.
[2] V. S. Solovyoff, *A Modern Priestess of Isis* (1895), p. 13.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 220.

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radically perverted that she had lost all grasp of certain ideas. She imagined that everything in the world was founded on personal relations, and that to this there was no exception. "What have I done to you—you?" "Others," that is to say, "I may cheat and ruin; I may abandon myself to every sacrilege, and huckster the greatest truths, but if I like you personally, and cannot take you in because you have seen through me, if it may yet be in my power to serve you in one way or another, then why do you betray me, and that to foreigners?" That is what she insinuated.[1]

Even her writings were a fraud. Her *Isis Unveiled* appears to be a work of amazing erudition and research. It is crammed with quotations from the ancient classics of Greece and Rome, from the early Church Fathers, from the old mystics and Cabbalistic writings. But a competent scholar, Mr. Emmette Coleman, in an analysis of the work, says:—

> In *Isis Unveiled*, published in 1877, I discovered some 2,000 passages copied from other books without proper credit. By careful analysis I found that in compiling *Isis* about 100 books were used. About 1,400 books are quoted from and referred to in this work; but from the 100 books which its author possessed, she copied everything in *Isis* taken from and relating to the other 1,300. There are in *Isis* about 2,100 quotations from and references to books that were copied, at second-hand, from books other than the originals; and of this number only about 140 are credited to the books from which Madame Blavatsky copied them at second-hand,—the truth being that these originals had evidently never been read by Madame Blavatsky. By this means many readers of *Isis*, and subsequently those of her *Secret Doctrine* and *Theosophical Glossary*, have been misled into thinking Madame Blavatsky an enormous reader, possessed of vast erudition; while the fact is her reading was very limited, and her ignorance was profound in all branches of knowledge. The books utilized in compiling *Isis* were nearly all current nineteenth-century literature.....Our author made great pretensions to Cabbalistic learning; but every quotation from and every allusion to the Cabbala, in *Isis* and all her later works, were copied at second-hand from certain books containing scattered quotations from Cabbalistic writings.
>
> The *Secret Doctrine* is ostensibly based upon certain stanzas, claimed to have been translated by Madame Blavatsky from the *Book of Dzyan*,—the oldest book in the world, written in a language unknown to philology. The *Book of Dzyan* was the work of Madame Blavatsky,—a compilation, in her own language, from a variety of sources, embracing the general principles of the doctrines and dogmas taught in the *Secret Doctrine*. I find in this "oldest book in the world" statements copied from nineteenth-century books, and in the usual blundering manner of Madame Blavatsky.[2]

So Madame Blavatsky first had the audacity to forge a whole book and claim it to be the most ancient book in the world, and then found another book upon the teaching contained in this literary forgery! I do not know of any more impudent imposture in the whole of literature.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

"COMMON TATERS."

A clergyman was much surprised one day at receiving a basket of potatoes from an old woman in his parish, with a message saying that as he had remarked in his sermon on the previous Sunday that some "common taters" (commentators) did not agree with him, she had sent him some real good ones.

[1] Solovyoff, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, pp. 185-6.

[2] The Society for Psychical Research translated and published Solovyoff's *Modern Priestess of Isis*, and included Mr. Emmette Coleman's analysis of Madame Blavatsky's work in an appendix at the end, from which I have quoted.

Ruth.

SEATED at the fireside one very stormy night recently, a conundrum was launched at my unsuspecting head by my little daughter. Daughters have a tendency to regard their fathers as being general storehouses of knowledge, a kind of walking encyclopædia, a very present help in time of trouble. And no self-respecting parent cares to dispel the illusion if it can be kept up with any show of decency. He may try to fob them off with some kind of an evasion, but it is not usual to adopt the downright Agnostic position so long as a metaphysical dug-out is available. The poser for me that stormy night was: "Who was the father of Ruth?"

Now, although I had read my Holy Bible with some care in my callous youth, yet I was scarcely prepared to give the gentleman's name offhand to an inquisitive minx, so I parried the question by asking her to reach the Bible and I would soon enlighten her. Alas! the trouble was to find the short history of the lady, for her record is only a little one, and she is sandwiched with Judges and Samuel. I became interested in her story, and was entranced with her four chapters. The snowflakes were whirling fast outside, but I was helping her to glean in the open fields of Boaz, way back in the long ago. I searched carefully for her father's name, but had to admit ruefully that I couldn't find it, though if the patriarchal title of her father-in-law would do the same, I could furnish it at once. That was the best I could do to save my reputation, and I am not sure that I succeeded.

But I want to speak a good word for Ruth in these bloodthirsty times. Perhaps it would do no harm if Christians were persuaded to read their Bibles with more diligence. We scarcely ever hear Ruth mentioned. Moses and David, Solomon and Isaiah, are continually to the fore. Even Ezekiel, with his peculiar rations, is occasionally mentioned, while Paul, with his lugubrious letters, holds far too high a position in the religious world. I never could stand Paul with his interminable epistles. He wrote more notes than President Wilson. But Ruth, with her romantic love-affair, is lost sight of. We can see her busy in the sun-lit fields gathering the corn that was purposely left for her, and returning at night with a good armful, "while the Syrian stars looked down." Says Shakespeare:—

> Oh, who can hold a fire in his hand
> By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?
> Or wallow naked in December snow
> By thinking on fastastic summer's heat?

But the picture of Ruth at the time of barley-harvest can do something to mitigate the severity of an Arctic winter. I am glad I looked for the name of Ruth's pater.

We must admit that her mother-in-law, Naomi, knew most of the points in the game of matchmaking. She was a practised hand at the business. And, of course, the touching fidelity of the young widow to the older one deserved the fullest recognition. Boaz was evidently the catch of the season. Most of the young ladies around Bethlehem had given him the "glad eye" to no purpose. He had withstood all the wiles and the snares that Eve's daughters had planted for him, until the young Moabitish widow appeared, backed by her mother-in-law. Then he fell, like many a good man since, to womanish strategy. It was a case of love at first sight. Whether it was the colour of her hair, or the tilt of her nose, or the archness of her eyebrows, history does not say, but she must have been a winsome lass for to "find favour in his sight" so readily. I do not defend

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all the machinations of the mother-in-law. We know this much abused class have a grievous lot of inuendoes to answer for, but when a rich young farmer was in the net, it was only right that he should be hooked. He had to be secured either by hook or by crook. In the matter of landing a shy Lothario, I think Naomi could give points to George Bernard Shaw. Naomi was, undoubtedly, a super-woman.

Ruth was somewhat in the position of the young woman of the story who brought a slightly "elevated" young man to be married. The parson declined to go on with the ceremony owing to the state of the bride-"Take him away," said he, "and bring him back when he's sober." But the reply of the bridegroom elect threw a search-light on the many devious devices which the feminine mind can resort to in tracking the marked man. Her reply was: "But he won't come when he's sober." I do not say that Ruth was quite so determined as that, but in any case she managed him. The joy-bells rang, and they had a happy wedding. The other girls might call her a Moabitish minx, and question her bona-fides, but there is every reason to think they lived happily after. For unto them a son was born, and old Naomi became the nurse and dandled the rising hope on her knee. They Christened the boy Obed, and he, in later years, became the proud father of Jesse, who, as everyone knows, followed in his dad's footsteps, and who was the means, under grace, of starting on his great career the gentle David, whose heart was fashioned on the pattern of his Maker's, who could throw a pebble with the best of them, and who upheld with such strict impartiality the rights and the liberties of small nations.

ALAN TYNDAL.

Acid Drops.

It is astonishing how easily and how glibly the clergy arrive at the *true* moral of the European War! Thus Canon Scott Holland, preaching at the meeting of the Universities Missions to Central Africa, pointed out that we had trusted to education, commerce, and science to provide the means for better relations between peoples; and the best educated, the most scientific, and the most commercial nation in the world had disturbed its peace. Everything had failed—except religion—and we must get back to that. But Dr. Scott Holland forgets that over and above all being scientific, educated, and commercial, these nations were religious. They had almost as many parsons as commercial travellers, there were far more churches than schools, and certainly parsons are better paid than scientists, and monopolize a larger share of public attention. And religion has claimed to direct the moral energies of men in a supreme degree. Dr. Scott Holland's plea strikes one as lacking in "reality," to use a cant phrase.

The cant of Dr. Scott Holland's pronouncement is the more marked because of its silence with regard to religion. In not a single country engaged in the War has the clergy acted as a restraining or moralizing force. Whatever incentive was needed to go to war, whatever justification was required to go to war, whatever incentive was required to continue the War, was supplied by the clergy in Germany, in Britain, and elsewhere. Of course, they were championing a *righteous* War; but was there ever in the world's history a war that was not righteous to those engaged in it, and while they were engaged in it? If the clergy were ever in earnest about their preaching, it was their duty to stand aloof from the War, and to hold those ideals of justice and humanity which are always endangered during a war. It is neither science, nor education, nor commerce that are condemned by the War. Its real moral is the utter and complete breakdown of religion. Thousands have realized this already, and many more thousands will realize it before we reach the end of the conflict.

The Rev. A. M. Snadden, a Presbyterian minister, of Johannesburg, South Africa, has been telling his flock some plain truths. He pointed out that the emptiness of some places of worship in that city showed that rot had set in in the Church. The "rot" in the Churches is nothing to the "rot" uttered in the pulpits.

Christians are not all satisfied that the War is helping their faith. The *Church Times* is not altogether pleased that so many men in the Army are "nominally Church folk," and says bluntly that "only a small percentage of this vast multitude has anything but a faint glimmer of what the Church stands for." If the soldiers did know what the Church really stands for, there would be fewer Christians than ever.

A belated poster in the City announced that the 263rd festival of the sons of the clergy would be held at St. Paul's Cathedral. A waggish onlooker pointed out that the "sons of the clergy" seem to be as long-lived as the Old Testament patriarchs.

General Smuts says, in dealing with the coloured races there must be the maintenance of the Christian moral code. Coloured Christians, who have been insulted for generations by their white brethren, will best appreciate the unconscious irony of this remark.

We are indebted to a *Church Times* review of McFarlane's *Reminiscences of a Literary Life* for the information that Shelley would have "ended by becoming a Christian if his life had been prolonged," and that Godwin, after all his "changes in matters of faith or unbelief, must at last have died a Christian." We see no reason why Mr. McFarlane should have stopped with Shelley and Godwin. Such a charmingly simple method is applicable to every Freethinker that ever lived. It is none the less applicable to every Christian who might also die a Freethinker—if he lives long enough. Christians may not be always humorous in themselves, but the most solemn of them are often the cause of humour in others.

Lord Bryce estimates that 69,000,000 soldiers and civilians have been killed and wounded in the present world-war. What a commentary on the civilizing effects of two thousand years of Christianity.

The Rev. W. T. Fullerton, the new President of the Baptist Union, suggests that parish churches should be used for all creeds. This would mean continuous performances, with day and night shifts.

A chapel dedicated to Our Lady and St. Dunstan has been opened at St. Dunstan's Hostel for blind soldiers. We could understand this better if those exalted personages had restored sight to any of the unhappy patients.

"All mankind is seeking God," says Mr. H. G. Wells. There is a mistake here, for the Bishop of London and his friends have found three deities already.

The Vicar of Ramsgate told his flock that reliance on God is better than reliance on the "season." The clergy generally find trust in God a very good thing, for they are almost the only professional men whose incomes do not depend on the "season."

Schoolboy humour is often refreshing. A very handy, if unorthodox, explanation of the three Christian Creeds was given by a young student. "First of all there was the Apostles' Creed. But some people didn't believe it. So then they made the Nicene Creed, but still men wouldn't believe that. So at last they made the Athanasian Creed, which was so complicated that nobody could understand it."

In the issue of the *Truthseeker*, from which the above is taken, we see that Billy Sunday is credited with having taken,

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during the past seven years, the following sums of money from the towns and cities named :—

Boston, Mass.	...	...	$55,000.00
Philadelphia, Pa.	...	...	51,136.85
Paterson, N. J.	...	...	25,000.00
Omaha, Neb.	...	...	20,000.00
Syracuse, N. Y.	...	...	25,000.00
Trenton, N. J.	...	...	35,000-00
Baltimore, Md.	...	...	40,000.00
Kansas City, Mo.	...	...	32,000.00
Pittsburgh, Pa.	...	...	46,000.00
Scranton, Pa.	...	...	22,398 00
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.	...	...	22,288.90
Columbus, O.	...	...	20,939.58
Wheeling, W. Va.	...	...	17,450.00
Toledo, O. ...	...	...	15,423.00
Johnstown, Pa.	...	...	14,000.00
McKeesport, Pa.	...	...	13,438,00
Des Moines, Ia.	...	...	13,000.00
Canton, O. ...	...	...	12,500.00
Springfield, O.	...	...	12,000.00
Erie, Pa. ...	...	...	11,565.00
South Bend, Ind.	...	...	11,200.00
Wichita, Kan.	...	...	10,111.00
Denver, Colo	...	...	10,000.00
Beaver Falls, Pa.	...	...	10,000.00
Lima, O. ...	...	...	8,050.00
Portsmouth, O.	...	...	7,100 00
Colorado Springs, Col.		...	5,611.58
	Total	...	$566,114.91

The above sums represent what are called "Free Will Offerings," given for the personal benefit of the evangelist. And America is also a civilized country. With this kind of thing, and the War, one is inclined to look with a certain sympathy on the flood story.

That the Christian superstition has little to do with civilization is shown by the Annual Report of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which during last year dealt with 129,089 cases of neglect and starvation. British Christians ought to send missionaries abroad, with such things taking place at home.

A witness in a recent law case swore a novel oath on "her mother's grave." In another case a Chinaman took an oath by breaking a saucer. There are tribes in India that swear by the head of a tiger, while others chop a dog in two as emblematic of the fate of the perjurer. The countrymen of the Bishop of London swear on a greasy Testament. And the simplest method is that of the Freethinker, who swears not at all, but just tells what he knows.

A curious religious manifestation is reported from Los Angeles, where a saint and prophetess (coloured) named Ella is sued for the return of property conveyed to her by followers. Saint Ella, posing as a virgin, announces that she is to bear a son to be called "the White King Emanuel." In the trial the plaintiff's attorney offered to prove that the prophetess had been to Nevada and consorted with or married a white man. Saint Ella has had a large following, organized as the Church of the Invisible God, and is said to exercise a remarkable influence over members. Such scepticism as is now shown about her divine motherhood would have robbed the world of some "saviours" in the past.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Bishop of Chichester says that "in every sense of the word we are slackers in religion." The Bishop had better make the best of the situation. We can assure him there are much worse times ahead.

At Stratford Police Court, on May 30, James Orpen, clerk in holy orders, was charged with attempting to procure two boys to commit an act of gross indecency. When arrested, the accused asked if the matter could be settled if he paid for it.

It is characteristic of our Government's interest in education that, so soon as offices are needed for other purposes, a descent is made on the Ministry for Education. Perhaps the bitterest satire of all is the banishment of Mr. Fisher and his staff to a *museum!*

In crowded Fleet Street all sorts of newspaper offices get jumbled up together. On one window the announcements run: "The Independent Methodist" and "Our Cats."

The Salvation Army announces a flag-day in order to raise money. Certainly it is a more efficacious manner of "raising the wind" than the Christian method of relying on prayer.

Mr. H. G. Wells's "conversion" is extending. He has written an introduction to a translation of M. Loyson's reactionary book, *The Gods in Battle*, which is chiefly remarkable for its denunciation of present-day Socialists. Mr. Wells has "found God" with a vengeance.

Some of the newspaper comments on Mr. Wells' theology are ironic. The *Daily Mirror* remarks that the author of *God the Invisible King* "politely introduces mankind to a new deity." Just so! And popular prejudice runs in favour of three Gods.

Dr. Newton, the new minister of the City Temple, told his congregation that America must do the work that Emerson assigned to her. He forgot to mention that Emerson was a Freethinker.

The Bishop of Oxford thinks "there is no department of educational history which is more lamentable than the almost complete collapse of religious education in the secondary schools." It may never have occurred to his lordship that one reason for this collapse is that secondary school teachers generally regard the subject as of little or no importance, and for that reason reduce it to a minimum. This is the case even where the teachers are themselves formally religious. Naturally, the Bishop of Oxford would like to see this altered, and one way of effecting an alteration would be to more carefully train the teachers themselves in religious subjects. We are afraid that to carefully train means here carefully select, with a boycott of those who show disinclination to being made a catspaw of the parsons.

The war on German trade after peace is concluded is to have its counterpart in the war on German missionaries. The Rev. Dr. Ogilvie told the Church of Scotland Assembly that "no German missionary would be allowed for a long, long period of years to work in any British possession." One may always trust the parsons to look after their own trade interests. Competition is always keen between missionary societies, and one could hardly expect this favourable opportunity to be overlooked. But what a lesson in Christian charity and brotherhood!

Our sympathy is extended to the ghost of the late V. F. Wilson, Organizing Secretary of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, who died leaving behind him £229,880. We do not assume that Mr. Wilson intended leaving so much behind him. He would probably have preferred taking it with him.

We see that the death is reported of Chief Constable Mackay, one of the officials concerned in the Clydebank case, where a witness was refused affirmation, and threatened with contempt of court for refusing to take the oath. It appears that Chief Constable Mackay was really unaware of the terms of the Oaths Act, which is evidence of the careless preparation of officials for the discharge of functions attaching to their office.

The Vicar of Ramsgate says that for two years that town has been "miraculously protected" from air raids. What a pity God did not extend his protection to Folkestone? And we wonder what the relatives of the people recently killed at Folkestone think of God's partiality?

"General Booth," of the Salvation Army, is making a modest appeal for a paltry £200,000 for the central funds alone. Some other generals are not so easily satisfied.

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To Correspondents.

W. REPTON.—It appeared in these columns some time ago. Your desire to get back to a more civilized life is, we think, shared by all. The sooner we see you again, the better.

J. S. CAPEWELL.—We cannot tell you where a copy of Howard Evan's *Price of Priestcraft* may be obtained. Perhaps one of our readers may oblige with the information.

A. M. NEILSON.—Thanks for the information, which we have already received from other quarters. Your inference is doubtless the correct one.

R. OGILVIE.—Perhaps one effect of the War may be to compell friends of the Labour Movement to see the folly of pandering to religious leaders. Labour will never capture the Churches; it is more likely to be the other way about. We intend republishing Mr. Mann's articles, also other pamphlets. But at present the paper question is in the way.

QUERIST (Moston).—The only legal way in which the name of a Freethinker's child can be given is when it is registered. The ceremony of publicly naming it is often performed at a Freethought meetings. The Secular ceremony over a grave may be performed by anyone, and consists of a suitable reading or speech. Any help that is possible and is required may be obtained by writing to the N. S. S. Secretary. We do not think the matter can be made plainer.

T. C.—Your second guess is, we think, the correct one. We cannot say more publicly.

H. LEESON.—You may rely absolutely on what we have said on the subject.

Y. O. C.—We have no doubt that money could be raised in the way you suggest to make good the loss on the *Freethinker* during the War, but it is a method we do not care to adopt.

MAJOR GEO. WARREN.—We cordially endorse your opinion of the *Cambridge Magazine*. Thanks for cutting.

W. G. PUGH —It is not *too* political, but we are so badly pressed for space, and shall be for some weeks to come.

W. GREEN.—We do not think that the late Mr. J. Chamberlain or Mr. A. J. Balfour ever called themselves Agnostics, although it is a fair assumption from the writings of the latter that he has no genuine claim to the name of "Christian."

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—E. T. Brewster, 5s.

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.

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

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

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.

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 find that our readers are so interested in the report of the Bowman Judgment. Its far-reaching importance is generally recognized, and, even as articles, the judgments are well worth reading. We hope to complete publication in another two issues, and that will give us space for articles that we have been compelled to hold over meanwhile. Mr. Palmer's pen, for one, has been absent from these columns solely from this cause.

To-day (June 10) Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures at the Fife Hall, Fife Road, Kingston-on-Thames, at 7 o'clock. The lecture is to be delivered before the Kingston Humanitarian Society, and we trust to hear that Freethinkers in the western suburbs will take full advantage of the opportunity offered.

We are asked to announce that a meeting will be held to-day (June 10) at the Emerson Club, 19 Buckingham Street, Strand, at 4 o'clock, to consider the formation of a Society for a discussion of the Principles of Morality as set forth in M. Deshunbert's *Morale Fondee sur les Lois de la Nature*. We understand that this is part of an international movement, and M. Deshunbert, who is resident in London, will be present. Mr. Heaford will also be among the speakers. We wish the attempt all success.

Presidential Notes.

ON Whit-Sunday the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society did me the honour of again unanimously electing me as President for the ensuing twelve months. Pressure of work and want of space combined to prevent my writing anything on the subject last week, and to say that, little as I care for honours of any kind, how much I appreciate the confidence shown in the vote itself, and in the letters received from Branches and individual members before the Conference took place. I forbore printing these *before* the Conference, lest it should appear that I was seeking to influence votes, and I only mention them now as an acknowledgment to the writers. Twelve months ago, when I was first elected, I made but one promise and expressed but one hope. I promised to do my best, and hoped that no one would regret voting for my election. I am quite certain that the promise has been kept, and have no reason for assuming that the hope has not been realized.

Years ago, when supporting the re-election of Mr. Foote, I said that the Presidency of the N. S. S. was a post that no one who loved an easy life and possessed judgment would strive after, but it was one that no man with courage and a sense of duty would refuse. It is an unpaid post and, I think, should remain so. It is well that the leadership of the Militant Freethought Party should be free from fiduciary considerations. In this respect I cordially agree with the policy of my predecessors in giving their services free, and in making no claim upon the Society even to the extent of certain inevitable out-of-pocket expenses. The one advantage of the post is the opportunity for work, and although I am no lover of work for work's sake, I hope that I shall never be found wanting in effort where the interests of Freethought are concerned. To labour for a cause one loves is something, to feel that one has behind him the confidence and respect of thousands of earnest men and women turns that labour into a pleasant occupation and provides a payment that no monetary consideration could equal.

The National Secular Society has now been in existence for over fifty years, and there was never greater need for a strong and efficient organization than now. In many respects I think the time is ripe for a complete overhauling of the machinery of the Society, and a readjustment suitable to altered conditions. To that aspect of the Society's work I may return on some future occasion. At present I desire to say that whatever line this readjustment takes—and I have several plans more or less definitely in mind—it will be the easier for a larger membership and a greater number of Branches than the Society possesses at present. Two new Branches were formed last year and, I believe, the ground prepared for others, besides a large increase in membership; but this

only whets one's appetite for more. The North of England has been deplorably quiescent of late years, and I am quite sure that if Freethinkers will bestir themselves the general public will respond. It is no use waiting for the public to make the first move, that must be made by those interested in the work. Any half-dozen people in one of the large towns in the country who will arrange a meeting can hardly fail to secure enough of an audience to encourage them to go on with the work. I earnestly beg Freethinkers everywhere to at least make the experiment.

I have said it often before, but at the risk of wearying will say it again, *the present is a golden opportunity for the Freethought Movement*. The War has everywhere lowered the clergy and the Churches and the creeds in the estimation of the general public. The public mind is breaking away from its old moorings, the shock of the European upheaval has shattered the formal assent which people gave to conventional religious shibboleths. Everywhere audiences have been more sympathetic, more responsive to the Freethought message. As editor of the *Freethinker* I have the best of reasons for knowing into how many fresh hands the paper has found its way, and how appreciatively it has been received. If we are wise we shall take full advantage of this season of unsettlement and create a new orientation of the public mind. If we are unwise, or slothful, we shall allow the present opportunity to pass, to find when the War is over that the Churches have to a considerable degree re-established themselves in virtue of a few new shibboleths which only thinly disguise the old evils.

I told the Conference on Whit-Sunday, and was pleased to find the remark generally endorsed, that in my opinion the N.S.S. had not and never had possessed an office organization suited to a propagandist Society. The office itself ought to be an active centre and source of propaganda, with a properly equipped secretariat. Effective organization along these lines would take time; but I made one suggestion which I hope to see the Executive deal with as early as circumstances will allow. Very little use is made by the N.S.S., as an organization, of the press. There are scores of papers in the country continually publishing articles or letters bearing upon our propaganda, which would insert brief communications either by way of comment or reply. The cases continually cropping up about the Oath is one instance; the widely reported Bowman judgment is another. Yet, so far as the N.S.S. is officially concerned, not a line appeared in the press by way of correction or supplementation. The office is dumb, and the public unaware of our existence or of our interest in these matters. I am quite certain that were someone appointed whose business it should be to look after this side of the work—call him Corresponding Secretary, or Press Secretary—the result would be very beneficial to the Society. The only difficulty is to hit on a suitable person for the work; but if one can be found, I am convinced that the appointment will soon justify itself.

There are other suggestions I have in mind as opportunities offer for their realization. But it is useless offering them without prospect of materialization. Before I close these notes, however, this seems a fitting occasion to mention another matter. It will be remembered that in April, 1916, a Special Propaganda Fund was raised, to be spent as my judgment directed. At my own initiative I asked Mr. Lloyd and two members of the Executive to act as a committee to watch the expenditure of the money, and at my own initiative I am offering a general statement of the expenditure so far. Up to date about £175 has been expended. Of this sum, about £80 has been given, in the shape of grants, to the N.S.S. Executive and to Branches of the N.S.S. The balance of the £175 has been spent in organizing lectures in London and the provinces. Perhaps I ought to say that of this expenditure a little over £30 has been credited to myself in connection with my own lecture work. As this £30 includes railway expenses—with a fifty per cent. increase—and hotel bills, I do not think it can be said that I have used that Fund to add materially to my own income. It is possible that I have received some seven or eight pounds above my out-of-pocket expenses during the past fourteen months. It is not, perhaps, necessary that I should make this statement, but there is no reason that I can see why I should not. And seeing that the Fund has kept the propaganda active during a time when it would otherwise have languished, I think it will be admitted that it has quite justified its existence.

CHAPMAN COHEN,
President National Secular Society.

Bowman and Others
v.
Secular Society, Limited.

(LORD PARKER OF WADDINGTON—*continued from p. 350.*)

THE Roman Catholic Relief Act, 1832, and the Jewish Relief Act, 1846, expressly validate trusts for the purposes of the Roman Catholic and Jewish religions. No inference can, therefore, be drawn from any decision since they were placed on the Statute Book. But the case of De Costa *v.* De Paz, to which I have already referred, is important in this connection. It was decided before the Jewish Relief Act, and Lord Hardwicke held that a trust for the purpose of the Jewish religion was bad on the ground that it was against Christianity, and Christianity was the law of the land. It would have been enough to say it could not be enforced on the ground that the practice of the Jewish religion was subject to statutory penalties. On further consideration, however, Lord Hardwicke upheld the gift on the ground that it was for a charitable purpose, and that the testator's general charitable intention ought not to be defeated because the fund could not be applied in the way the testator desired. He left it to the Crown to direct a *cy pres* application. As I have already said, the Crown applied it for the purposes of the Christian religion. This case seems to show that the Jewish religion is within the equitable rule and that, apart from the statutory penalties, there was never anything inconsistent with public policy in enforcing a trust for the benefit of the Jewish religion. De Costa *v.* De Paz was followed in Isaac *v.* Gompertz (7 Ves., 61). Lord Thurlow there held that a trust for the maintenance of a Jewish synagogue was charitable, and directed an application to the Crown with a view to its *cy pres* application.

My Lords, apart from the question of religious trusts, there is one authority directly in point. In Pare *v.* Clegg (29 B. 589) the plaintiff sued the trustees of a friendly society known as the Rational Society for moneys lent to the Society. The trustees objected that the Society had illegal objects, and that the money could not be recovered on that account. The object of the Society included the promotion of the following propositions: "(1) That all facts yet known to man indicate that there is an external or internal cause of all existences by the fact of their existence; that this all-pervading cause of motion or change in the universe is the power which the nations of the world have called God, Jehovah, Lord, etc., but that the facts are yet unknown to man which define what that power is; (2) That all ceremonial worship by man of this cause whose qualities are yet so little known proceeds from ignorance of his own nature, and can be of no real utility in practice; and that it is impossible to train men to become rational in their feelings, thoughts, or actions, until all such forms shall cease." These propositions are clearly anti-Christian. If they point to religion

at all, it is a kind of negative Deism, if I may use that expression, and not a theistic religion. Nevertheless, it was held by the Master of the Rolls, Lord Romilly, that they contained nothing "irreligious or immoral," and that, therefore, the defence failed. It follows that he cannot have thought that there was anything against public policy in advocating Deism or (*a fortiori*) any form of Monotheism.

My Lords, in my opinion, the authorities I have mentioned are sufficient to establish that the first object of the Society's Memorandum is not open to objection as contrary to the policy of the law. It is not illegal, for it does not involve blasphemy. It is not irreligious, for it is, any rate, consistent with that negative Deism which was held not to be irreligious in Pare *v.* Clegg. It is not immoral or seditious. It is, no doubt, anti-Christian; but, to adopt the words of Mr. Justice Coleridge in Shore *v.* Wilson (9 C. and F at p. 536): "There is nothing unlawful at common law in reverently doubting or denying doctrines parcel of Christianity, however fundamental. It would be difficult to draw a line in such matters according to perfect orthodoxy, or to define how far one might depart from it in believing or teaching without offending the law. The only safe and, as it seems to me, practical rule is that which I have pointed out, and which depends on the sobriety, and reverence, and seriousness, with which the teaching or believing, however erroneous are maintained."

My Lords, I am glad to be able to come to this conclusion. It would be a serious matter for your Lordships' House, unless clearly compelled by authority to lay down a principle which would not only lead to the anomalies pointed out by Lord Buckmaster, but would preclude the courts of this country from giving effect to trusts for the purposes of religions which, however sacred they may be to millions of His Majesty's subjects, either deny the truth of Christianity or, at any rate, do not accept some of its fundamental doctrines.

On all these grounds I think the Appeal fails.

LORD SUMNER.

(READ BY LORD DUNEDIN.)

My Lords, the question is whether an anti-Christian Society is incapable of claiming a legacy duly bequeathed to it merely because it is anti-Christian?

If the Respondents are an anti-Christian Society is the maxim that Christianity is part of the law of England true, and, if so, in what sense? If Christianity is of the substance of our law, and if a court of law must, nevertheless, adjudge possession of its property to a company whose every action seeks to subvert Christianity and bring that law to naught, then by such judgment it stultifies the law. So it was argued, and if the premise is right, I think the conclusion follows. It is not enough to say with Lord Chief Justice Lord Coleridge in Ramsey's case (48 *Law Times*, 735) that this maxim has long been abolished, or with my noble and learned friend, the Master of the Rolls, in the court below that "the older view" based on this maxim "must now be regarded as obsolete." If that maxim expresses a positive rule of law once established, though long ago, time cannot abolish it nor disfavour make it obsolete. The decisions which refer to such a maxim are numerous and old, and although none of them is a decision of this House, if they are in agreement, and if such is their effect, I apprehend they would not now be over-ruled, however little reason might incline your Lordships to concur in them. In what sense, then, was it ever a rule of law that Christianity is part of the law? The legal material is fourfold: (1) statute law; (2) the criminal law of blasphemy; (3) general civil cases; (4) cases relating to charitable trusts. From statute law little is to be gleaned. During the sixteenth century many Acts were passed to repress objectionable doctrines, but plainly statutes were not needed if the common law possessed an armoury for the defence of Christianity as part and parcel of itself. Indeed, who but the King in Parliament could then say whether the Christianity, which, for the time being, formed part of the common law, was the Christianity of Rome, or of Geneva, or of Wittenberg? Certainly the courts could not.

After the Revolution of 1688 there were passed the Toleration Act "to give some ease to scrupulous consciences in exercise of religion," which, upon conditions, relieved certain Dissenters (Papists and those who denied the Trinity excepted) from the operation of various existing statutes, and the Blasphemy Act, which recites that "many persons have avowed Blasphemous doctrines contrary to the doctrines and principles of the Christian religion, and may prove destructive to the peace and welfare of this kingdom." That the Blasphemy Act simply added new penalties for the common law offence of blasphemy, when committed under certain conditions, was held by Lord Hardwicke in Da Costa *v.* De Paz (2 Swanston, 487 n), and by the Court of King's Bench in Richard Carlile's case (3 B. and Ald., 161), and Lord Eldon in A.-G. *v.* Pearson (3 Merevale, 393) said that the Toleration Act left the common law as it was, and only exempted certain persons from the operation of certain statutes. Such, indeed, is the clear language of the statutes, nor can the fact that persons are singled out for special punishments, who deny the Godhead of the Three Persons of the Trinity, the truth of the Christian religion, and the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, or who maintain that there be more gods than one, be accepted as showing that the common law offence of blasphemy consists in such denials and assertions and in nothing else. Later Acts have relieved various religious confessions from the burthen of the Blasphemy Act and other statutes; but, except in so far as they deal with charitable trusts for the purposes of such confessions, on which I do not now dwell, they seem to carry the present matter no further. The common law as to blasphemous libels was first laid down after the Restoration, and here the statement that Christianity is part of the law is first found as one of the grounds of judgment. Earlier opinions of the same kind are curiously general in character.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century a considerable change of procedure took place in reference to religion. Legate was burnt at Smithfield in 1612 upon a writ *de haeretico comburendo*, and another heretic named Wightman, at Lichfield, about the same time; but they were the last persons to go to the stake in this country *pro salute animae*. No doubt this process was moribund. Before the Restoration the Court of Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission had been suppressed, and at length, by the Statute 29 Charles II., c. 9, the writ *de haeretico comburendo* itself was abolished, with all process and proceedings thereupon and all punishment of death in pursuance of any ecclesiastical censures. It is to be noted that the Act, in saving the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical Courts over "atheism, blasphemy, heresy, and schism," distinguishes blasphemy from the profession of false doctrines, whether atheistical or heretical. The time of Charles II. was one of notorious laxity both in faith and morals, and for a time it seemed as if the old safeguards were in abeyance or had been swept away. Immorality and irreligion were cognizable in the the ecclesiastical Courts, but spiritual censures had lost their sting, and the civil Courts were extinct, which had specially dealt with such matters viewed as offences against civil order.

The Court of King's Bench stepped in to fill the gap. In 1664 Sir Charles Sedley was indicted for indecency and blasphemy (1 Siderfin, 168; 17 Howell's State Trials, 155). The indecency was so gross that little stress was laid on the blasphemy, which was probably both tipsy and incoherent. The Court told the prisoner that they would have him know that, although there was no longer any Star Chamber, they acted as *custos morum* for all the King's subjects, and it was high time to punish such profane actions, contrary alike to modesty and to Christianity. Then follows Taylor's case in 1676, when the indictment was for words only, though ribald and profane enough. This is the earliest trial for blasphemy. Attwood's case in 1617 is not an instance (Rolle's Abr., 78).

Now, Taylor's case is the foundation-stone of this branch of the law, and for a century or so there is no sign of carrying the law beyond it. The case repays scrutiny. The objection that the offence was an ecclesiastical one lay on the very face of the words charged, and in directing the Jury, Lord Chief Justice Hale found it necessary to show why it was also a civil offence. He said that such kind of wicked blasphemous words, though of ecclesiastical cognizance, were not only an offence to God and religion, but a crime against

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the laws, State, and Government, and "therefore punishable in this Court, for to say religion is a cheat is to dissolve all those obligations whereby the civil societies are preserved" (1 Ventris, 293; 3 Keble, 607, 621). It is true he added that Christianity was parcel of the laws of England, "and therefore to reproach the Christian religion is to speak in subversion of the law," but this does not really enlarge the previous statement. Speaking in subversion of the law, without more, in the sense of saying that particular laws are bad and should be mended, has never been a criminal offence, and agitating against them has often led on to fortune. Woolston's case, in 1728, supplies the completion of the doctrine. Upon a motion in arrest of judgment (2 Str., 834; Fitz., 64), the Court followed Taylor's case as settled law. The argument was that Woolston's crime, if any, was of ecclesiastical cognizance (he was a clergyman who joked about the miracles), and that "mere difference of opinion is tolerated by law." Lord Raymond's answer was, "I would have it taken notice of that we do not meddle with any difference in opinion, and that we interpose only where the very root of Christianity is spoken of.....To say that an attempt to subvert the established religion is not punishable by those laws upon which it is established is an absurdity." True it is that the last words somewhat invert Lord Hale's reasoning, for they seem to treat an attempt to subvert the established form of Christianity (not any other) as an offence, because it attacks the creature of the law, not because that form is the basis of the law itself and the bond of civilized society. At any rate, the case leaves untouched mere difference of opinion, not tending to subvert the laws and organization of the realm.

Curl's case, heard about the same time (2 Str., 788; 1 Barnardiston, 29), was a case for publishing an obscene libel, but it is of some incidental importance. The Courts were chary of enlarging their jurisdiction in this regard, and in Queen Anne's time judgment had been arrested in such a case for supposed want of precedent, and the offence was treated as one for ecclesiastical cognizance only. On a motion for arrest of the judgment on Curl it was argued that the libel being only *contra bonos mores*, was for the spiritual Courts. The motion was refused, the Chief Justice saying: "If it reflects on religion, virtue or morality, if it tends to disturb the civil order of society, I think it is a temporal offence." He said, too, "religion is part of the common law"; but Mr. Justice Probyn clears this up, adding, "It is punishable at common law as an offence against the peace in tending to weaken the bonds of civil society."

At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries various publishers of Paine's *Age of Reason* were prosecuted. The words indicted were chosen for their scoffing character, and indeed are often really blasphemous, but the idea throughout is that the book was the badge of revolution and tended to jeopardize the State. Thus during the trial of Williams (26 State Trials, 654), Mr. Justice Ashurst said of it that "it was an offence against law and government from its direct tendency to dissolve all bonds and obligations of civil society," and again in passing sentence on him in the Court of King's Bench, he states the ground of this offence thus: "All offences of this kind are not only offences to God, but crimes against the law of the land, and are punishable as such, inasmuch as they tend to destroy those obligations whereby civil society is bound together, and it is upon this ground that the Christian religion constitutes part of the law of England."

(To be continued.)

N.S.S. Annual Conference.

Report of Business Meeting.

THE Annual Conference was held at South Place on Whit-Sunday.

Delegates present were as follows: T. H. How (Bethnal Green), F. G. Willis (Birmingham), J. T. Lloyd (Glasgow), E. Neary (Kingsland), J. T. Lloyd (Liverpool), Mrs. Rosetti (Manchester), R. Chapman (Newcastle), T. F. Palmer and W. J. Downing (North London), L. Brandes and P. S. Wilde (South London), R. Chapman (South Shields), H. Spence and T. Thurlow (West Ham).

Vice-Presidents attending as such were: Messrs. Baker, Bowman, Dobson, Gorniot, Heaford, Leat, Moss, Neate, Nichols, Pitt, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Shore, Silverstein, and Wood, and Mesdames Kough, Stanley, and Rolfe.

Amongst other familiar figures were noticed Messrs. Brewster, Bury, Clifton, Harrison, Hollamby, Henley, Judge, Lazarnick, Miller, Hanmer Owen, Howell Smith, Schindel, Shaller, Storey, and Mesdames Lane, Owen, and Brandes.

The President (Mr. C. Cohen) in opening the proceedings said he hoped the discussion would be carried on with good temper and with profit to the Cause. Many provincial delegates had been prevented attending by the difficulties of travelling, and by the fact that very many members were engaged on War work; but it was satisfactory in the circumstances to see so many present.

The Minutes of the previous Conference, as reported in the *Freethinker* last year, were passed on the motion of Mr. Willis (Birmingham), seconded by Mr. Thurlow (West Ham).

The President then read the Annual Report.

The Report was adopted on the motion of Mr. Roger seconded by Mr. Miller.

Mr. Willis (Birmingham) in supporting it said it was a record of good work for the Freethought Party. He was pleased that mention was made of the debt of gratitude they owed to G. W. Foote in connection with the Secular Society; at the same time it was a matter of deep regret that he did not live to witness the successful fruition of his efforts. The Executive were to be congratulated on their action against the London County Council who had attempted to rob the citizens of their rights. Had the Council succeeded in stopping the sale of literature, it would only have been the first step to further action.

Mr. Heaford said he missed from the Report some reference to the progress of Freethought throughout the world. He thought the revolution in Russia opened out a wide field for the activities of Freethought—it inaugurated a new era of civil and religious liberty. He would like to suggest that a resolution be passed congratulating the Russian Government and the Russian people on the great step which they had taken for themselves and for us along the path of liberty and progress. (Agreed).

Mr. Brandes said he did not notice any item in the financial report for the lectures run by the N.S.S. at South Place and Queen's Hall.

The President said that these expenses were met in another direction.

The financial report was then taken as read, and passed.

The next item on the Agenda being the election of President, Mr. Cohen vacated the chair, and Mr. Spence was elected to occupy it. He said there was a motion on behalf of the West Ham, Bethnal Green, and Birmingham Branches for the re-election of Mr. Chapman Cohen as President. Mr. Cohen's apprenticeship under Mr. Foote for so many years especially fitted him for the position of President in these trying times.

Mr. Neary (Bethnal Green) formally moved the election of Mr. Chapman Cohen as President.

Mr. Thurlow, in seconding the motion, said he was heartily glad that the Society possessed such a successor to the two distinguished men who had preceded him. He (the speaker) had watched Mr. Cohen's career from the start, and he did not know anyone in the movement who would make a better standard-bearer.

Mr. Willis (Birmingham), in seconding the motion, said Mr. Cohen showed marked ability, intellectuality, courage, and tact, and was a worthy successor of the great men who had preceded him in the presidential chair. They required such a man in these troublous times of reaction, and they would also need him at the outbreak of peace.

The motion was then put to the meeting and carried with acclamation.

Mr. Cohen thanked the meeting for the honour they had conferred upon him, and said he only valued the position of the Presidency of the N.S.S. for one reason, namely, the opportunity it gave for doing work for the cause. If the holding of that position meant merely an honour, he assured

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them he would not take the trouble to stand as candidate. He reminded the Conference that he had said last year he hoped when twelve months had elapsed no one who voted for him would feel sorry that they had cast their vote. He had not given cause for regret by any slackening of energy. In all the years of Freethought advocacy he thought there had never been a more trying and troublesome period.

On the motion of Mr. Cohen, seconded by Mr. Willis, the Vice-Presidents were re-elected. Mr. H. B. Savill and Mr. Harry Jones were re-elected Auditors.

After some discussion the revised Rules of the Society were adopted on the motion of Mr. Roger seconded by Mr. Shore.

With respect to motion No. 9 standing in the name of Mr. Cowell *re* the abolition of the Presidency, Mr. Cowell wrote regretting that severe illness kept him away from the Conference, and asked leave to withdraw his motion. This was done, and the Conference passed by a unanimous vote to "next business."

Mr. Willis, in proposing resolution No. 10 on the Agenda, said the Birmingham Branch had instructed him to bring forward at the Conference the question of the disposal of any monies bequeathed to the Secular Society, Limited. They thought that some of these funds should be given to the Provincial Branches.

Mr. Shore pointed out that this was no part of the business of the N. S. S.

After considerable discussion the Resolution No. 10: "That in the opinion of this Conference the earliest opportunity should be taken of publishing the judgment of the House of Lords in respect to the Bowman case," seconded by Mrs. Rosetti, on behalf of the Manchester Branch, was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Mr. Howell Smith in proposing Resolution No. 11: "That, having in view the elaborate preparations being made by all sections of the Christian Church to meet post-War conditions, and the possibility of reaction resulting from such activities, this Conference urges Freethinkers throughout the country to counteract the tactics of the Churches by effective organization on their part, and suggests the formation of Branches of the N. S. S. wherever possible," said that in view of the strenuous efforts being put forward by all the Churches, both in this country and on the Continent, he would like to see as many centres of ferment as possible (to use a phrase from chemistry) set up in the movement. The problems for Freethinkers to tackle were greater than in the past. Their path became harder, and demanded greater intellectualism and greater self-discipline. They had now to deal with all sorts of mysticisms, and it was very necessary that Freethinkers should not only understand all the theological issues, but also the great moral issues which cropped up in our national and international relations, and he wished to see these questions taken up by N. S. S. Branches throughout the country.

Mr. Heaford thought Mr. Smith's resolution an epoch-marking one. The post-War conditions would, in his opinion, be the most remarkable that the world had ever seen. New forces would be brought into play, and it would be the duty of Freethinkers to meet those forces, adapt itself to them, and endeavour to control them for the progress and well-being of mankind.

Mr. Palmer (North London Branch) also strongly supported Mr. Smith's resolution. He thought Freethinkers should make a greater study of science, so as to combat the arguments put forward by the ever-increasing sects.

Resolution No. 12, proposing (*a*) that an extra Conference should be held during the autumn, and (*b*) requesting the Editor of the *Freethinker* to insert brief weekly reports of meetings in that journal, was then put with a slight amendment, and carried.

Mr. Lloyd, on Motion No. 13, said that the interest in religion was lessening materially, and the Churches, knowing this, were drawing together to secure certain things after the War; and one of their aims was to enforce religious education in the State schools. Freethinkers must do their utmost to resist these attempts, and to abolish religion from the nation's schools.

On Motion No. 14, that the same person shall not hold the office of President for more than two consecutive years, Mr. Brandes said he only proposed to read it, and would reserve his speech until the end of the discussion.

Mr. Wylde seconded the motion, and said that in his opinion it was of a democratic nature. It was necessary to keep the Society in a state of flux, and the constant changing of President was best calculated to produce a healthy and vigorous condition.

The President said that if Mr. Brandes would not state his reasons for bringing the motion forward he, as President, should rule that he could not be heard at the end, when no reply to his reasons for bringing forward the motion could be made.

Mr. Willis said he did not think the mover of a resolution was bound to give his reasons for bringing it forward; but if he did not do so, he had no right later on to bring in new matter.

The President (adhering to his ruling) put the resolution to the meeting, and on a show of hands declared it lost. Only two voted in its favour.

The remaining resolutions on the Agenda being of a non-controversial character, and the time for the closing of the Conference having arrived, were moved and carried with only brief comments.

In bringing the Conference to a close, the President said that he was quite in accord with those who desired to build up a strong organization upon a thoroughly representative and democratic basis. The stronger, the more democratic, the better, and nothing would please him more than to find next year three or four suitable candidates for the presidency. He was doing his best to attract young and capable men to the Movement; he had already secured the support of many, and he hoped to get more.

The proceedings then terminated.

Correspondence.

"THE VOLTAIRE OF AMERICA."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—When travelling in the West Indies in 1887 I met a Colonel Smith of the United States Army. As I was a great admirer of Colonel Ingersoll, then in his prime, I asked Colonel Smith if he knew of him. "Know of him?" he replied, "Why there is not a man or woman in the U.S. who does not know of Robert Ingersoll. I not only know of him, but have the honour of being a close personal friend of his. Let me tell you something that will give you a better knowledge of him than most people have. Of course you know that Ingersoll is a most successful barrister, and therefore a very busy man. One day a young lady called at his office to see him, and, on being admitted, he asked her to say what she wanted as shortly as possible. She told him that she was the daughter of a doctor who had recently died unexpectedly and left her mother and sister and herself very badly off. They had been regular attendants at one of New York's most fashionable churches, but on her father's death were obliged to move to a much more poorer neighbourhood and go to a more modest place of worship. Now they were trying hard to make a living by needlework and painting Christmas cards, but the mother had broken down, and they were almost starving. She had applied for help to the rector of the fashionable church they attended and helped to support in the days of their prosperity, but he said that as they had ceased to be members of his church he could do nothing for them as he had so many other calls on his purse. She had heard of Colonel Ingersoll, and in her dire need she had reluctantly come to ask for his help." Ingersoll at once said: "I knew something of your father, and I believe what you have told me. There is $50 to help you over this difficulty, and should you want more do not hesitate to ask me.

G. O. WARREN (Major).

A QUESTION OF STYLE: HEBERT AND THE *FREETHINKER*.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I was unable to get into the breach a fortnight ago to defend Hebert against Messrs. Arch and Underwood, and

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their "authorities"—"the police" and "inebriated racing touts"—for the simple reason that I have been too busy defending *myself* against the *Military Service Act* of 1917. But—*revenons a nos moutons!* I do not pretend to have an infallible memory, and it appears to have between 1909 and 1911 when I last saw the *Pere Duchene*. I make this statement, however, as the "law" says, "without prejudice." However, as I am many miles from London, I cannot do as Mr. Underwood suggests, and make a "faithful English version" of No. 102 of the *Pere Duchene*, which, I take it, is the very worst of Hebert's "wanton obscenities." But I ask if Mr. Underwood will transcribe in the *Freethinker* the worst of this number for us, *in the original French*, and then I will do what he requires of me. I am sure the readers of the *Freethinker* will survive the shock! As to the susceptibilities of Mr. Arch's "police," or the blushes of Mr. Underwood's "inebriated racing touts," we need not trouble. Will you oblige us, Mr. Underwood? The *Pere Duchene* is history! and we ought to know it fully.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

A Thirsty Soldier's Lament.

WHEN you come to the end of a putrid day,
Handling your last—last "brown"!
You take a stroll in the Y.M.C.A.,
And you feel like a ship—going down!
No drink can be had elsewhere for a "D,"
So you crush to the counter and wait,
A penny well spent is spent on hot tea;
Yet you know that its only a bait;
Yes, you know it is only a bait!
For while you are drinking your penny in tea,
A puffy-face comes to your side, [prayer,
And whispers: "Dear comrade, a moment for
A moment with Jesus to hide!"
And your tea turns to tannin—
It burns in your throat;
You gulp, and can't finish it quite,
For you realize now—to the harmonium's burst—
How the puffy-faced parson will gloat
On the fact that the men, forced in by their thirst,
The wreck of "Religion" will float.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Death of Lorenzo Portet.

WE regret to learn from a correspondent of the death of Lorenzo Portet, an old revolutionary and Freethought fighter. Portet, who will be remembered by Liverpool Freethinkers, in which city he lived for some time, was a rebel from his youth upward. Intended for the Church, he entered commerce, and spent some time in South America. Returning to Spain, he joined Francisco Ferrer in his work of emancipation, and was compelled to flee to France. Expelled in turn from France, he came to England, where all his children were born, and where he gained a livelihood by the teaching of Spanish, continuing meanwhile his work as propagandist.

After Ferrer's death, Portet continued the former's work in the publication of numerous educational and freethinking works. He was arrested in Barcelona, and finally returned to Paris, where he died, and was buried in the Pavtin Parisien Cemetery. Addresses were delivered at the graveside by his old friend Malato, by Dr. Clauzel, and others.

Like many ardent reformers, Portet died penniless, leaving behind him a widow and four children, who for some time will be dependent upon the good will of those who sympathized with Portet's work.

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.

EMERSON CLUB (19 Buckingham Street, Strand): 4, Meeting to consider the formation of a London Society for the Promotion of the Principles of Morality founded on the Laws of Nature. Various speakers.

KINGSTON HUMANITARIAN SOCIETY (Fife Hall, Fife Road, Kingston-on-Thames): 7, J. T. Lloyd, a Lecture.

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, June 14, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, H. J. Stenning, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, Percy S. Wilde, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, Mr. Thurlow, "About the Bible."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, "Our Conversion to Freethought," R. Miller, H V. Storey, A. H. Wortman, and others.

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, F. Shaller, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Burke, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Kells; 6.30, Messrs. Beale, Hyatt, and Yates.

Population Question and Birth-Control.

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I shall be glad to receive a post card from all willing to help the inauguration of a journal relative to the above. State any views on the subject, and say if willing to become a subscriber or contribute articles.—E. ANDERSON, 11 Salisbury Road, Forest Gate, E 7.

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THE
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Views and Opinions.

The Christian Revival.

If a revival of religion could be brought about by prophecy the Christian Churches in this country might look forward to a great increase in power after the War. For despite the now generally admitted neglect of religion during the War, and the many confessions that among the soldiers themselves for one that has had his religious beliefs strengthened a dozen have had theirs shattered, there is still plenty of talk about the revival of religion that is ahead. True, most of these prophets are careful to inform us that this revival is contingent upon certain happenings. If the Churches drop their sermonizing upon subjects that are without interest to the mass of the people, if class distinctions are ignored in church, if more attention is paid to sociology and less to theology, if the Churches interest themselves in the state of the cities and cease troubling about the new Jerusalem, if, in short, the Churches cease to be Churches and throw their Christianity overboard, there will be a great revival of religion. Only in that case it doesn't seem that there will be much—from the point of view of the Churches—left to revive. Attempting to revive a corpse is never a profitable operation.

* * *

The Churches and the Social Sense.

The immediate duty of the Christian Church, we are told, is to create and develop a social consciousness. The statement is quite in line with clerical arrogance and duplicity. The Churches cannot divest themselves of the idea that the direction and the control of society rests with them, and that if they fail, all fail. And, at the same time, their traditional fatuity prevents their realizing that the statement of the need carries with it a condemnation of Christianity. When Ruskin was told that the only friends of the poor were the clergy, he replied that that was the hardest thing he had ever heard said against them. For if they had done their duty there would be a sufficient sense of responsibility with all to make particular championship needless. We have had the Christian Churches in power for centuries. They have enjoyed great power and controlled enormous wealth. What education existed was largely under their direction, and they have made a profession of religion the condition of an easy life or of promotion to office. If they could not command belief they have been able to enforce silence, and have manufactured hypocrites in their dread of intellectual honesty. If, then, our social sense is in so rudimentary, so unsatisfactory a state, what amount of confidence in the Christian Churches does that fact inspire? What have they been doing during the past? And are they likely to reverse their history in the future?

* * *

The Policy of the Churches.

Fortunately for everybody, the creation of a social sense is not dependent upon the Churches. Neither is its development. A social conscience is one of the cardinal facts of human history. Man, as we know him, is its embodiment. What *is* needed to day is its development with a greater consciousness of its nature. At present its manifestation is—on any general scale—on the lower and less profitable level. In war, because that is quite impossible without co-operation and an appeal to "the consciousness of kind," we have driven home the lesson that every member of a human society is irrevocably committed to a share in its good or evil fortunes. In other matters it is conspicuously absent. And, in this respect, the evil influence of the Church is plain. From the moment War broke out it has preached vociferously in favour of co-operation in pursuit of the War, but it has remained significantly silent concerning other matters on which it might well have been vocal. Eloquent on the necessity for sacrificing human life, it has been dumb on the shameless plunder that has been going on in the supply of the people's food. It has preached the planting of our back gardens with potatoes, it has said nothing on the larger questions of the English land system—one of the worst in the whole of Europe. In the matter of education it has seen only the opportunity to more firmly establish sectarianism in the schools. And its leading representatives have openly welcomed the transference of human energy and ideas from the fruitful sphere of politics and sociology to the inconclusive theatre of war as offering an unprecedented chance of advantage to religion. We are not disputing the soundness of its instinct in all this, in a sense we admire it. For if there is one thing certain it is that the development of social life involves the decline of religion. Retard man's intellectual development and you maintain the strength of the religious idea. Prevent social development and you sustain the authority of religious institutions. These are generalizations which defy disproof.

* * *

Narrowing the Social Outlook.

Two things may be here said with perfect safety. The first is that the whole influence of Christianity has been in the direction of narrowing the scope of the social consciousness, and so hindering its development. In early societies where a religion includes the whole of the tribe there is less harm than when it includes no

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more than a section of the people. In these circumstances—which become more important with the intellectual development of life—the welfare of society tends to become synonymous in the minds of religious believers with the acceptance of particular doctrines, and the orderly growth of the social sense is checked and diverted into positively injurious channels. We see this in the many generations during which heretics have been excluded from political office, and openly disfranchised as enemies of the State. Naturally, then, the social consciousness, instead of operating over the whole of society, is circumscribed in its application. The welfare of society becomes identified with the interests of a church, and a narrow, exclusive type of mind perpetuated. Nor is it without significance that side by side with the breaking down of religious barriers there has gone on a marked development in the sense of a community of interest as a prime condition of social well-being.

* * *

Parasitic Religion.

The second important fact is that religion has all along maintained a parasitic existence. Feelings are claimed as religious that have no more vital connection with religious belief than has the multiplication table. The sense of right and wrong, care for others, the whole cluster of ethical sentiments and feelings are really social in origin, although ignorance often expresses them in terms of supernaturalism. How religion plays the parasite in social life is seen in the familiar phenomenon of "conversion." For this emphatically belongs to the period of adolescence. And the whole significance of adolescence is the development of a larger social self, the bringing of the young man or woman into a deeper and closer communion with the life of the race. Then we see enacted on a smaller scale what has taken place historically. The awakening social consciousness is interpreted as the "voice of God in the soul," a formative period that under wise guidance would be utilized in training serviceable citizens for the State, is seized upon by this or that church, with the result that the best years of youth are wasted, the community robbed of an intelligent self-reliant unit, and a mere sectarian created in place of a fully developed individual. The exploitation of the social sense in the interests of theology does not furnish so spectacular a page in the world's history as deaths at the stake, but it has had a more disastrous effect on the welfare of the race.

* * *

The Beginning of the End.

Those who study the matter closely are at no loss to account for this emphasis on social duty by present-day religionists. It represents the final stage of a lengthy process. Preachers are to-day forced to profess an interest in social topics, because whole masses of the population have lost interest in religious ones. Some may take up such topics willingly because of their strong human sympathies. Others do so because they are cute enough to observe that unless they modify their creed in accordance with the spirit of the age they and their religion will soon be left far in the rear. It is the last stand of a form of belief that once dominated life from the cradle to the grave. With many these tactics are obviously successful. But the number of those who see through the policy grows steadily. If religion means social service, the sooner it is called by its right name the better. Society gains nothing by squandering its energies in upholding, even indirectly, a system of beliefs which owe their origin to the ignorance of primitive savagery, and which were brought to maturity during the darkest and most deplorable period of European history.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Glory of God.

THE *Shorter Catechism* declares that "man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever," the natural inference being that God's supreme ambition is to be the recipient of the never-ending praise and adoration of mankind. He hungers and thirsts after the magnification of his name, and those who gratify his selfish desire are promised ample reward. Joshua glorified the Lord by all his military conquests; and we read that, in return, "the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel" (Josh. iv. 14). The curious thing is that, although Jehovah is called the God of glory, whose glory is in himself, we are exhorted to make him glorious by bestowing glory upon him, with the assurance that if we regard his glorification as our chief end we shall enjoy him for ever. Such, briefly stated, is the teaching of the Bible concerning the glory of God, and the duty of glorifying him. In the *Church Times* for June 1 we find a remarkable sermon, entitled "The Glory of God," by the Ven. Cyril Hallett, M.A., Archdeacon of Rovuma, of which we can honestly say that it is thoroughly scriptural. The Archdeacon says:—

> First in order, supreme in position, unrivalled in importance, stands the Glory of God.....Nothing that we can offer or do can contribute to his glory, for it is complete; nothing that finite man can give or withhold may augment or diminish his glory, for it is perfect. And yet it is the will, the gracious purpose, the Divine yearning of the Creator that we, his creatures, should give him glory.

The sheer absurdity of such a statement is undiscerned by the preacher, who tells us that God wants us to glorify him, not in order to add to his glory, which is impossible, but that "we may increase in his glory, that we may be 'changed from glory to glory,' that the refulgence of the glory which is of him and through him, may, through us, illumine the hearts of men in our homes and in our cities, throughout our country and colonies, to the uttermost parts of the earth." That is to say, we are to become glorious as the result of telling God how wonderfully glorious he is. God's glory is both complete and perfect, so that nothing we can offer, give, or withhold may either augment or diminish it, and yet we must glorify him in order to secure our own highest good.

According to Archdeacon Hallett there are three ways by which we may glorify God, namely, "praiseful thanksgiving, penitential propitiation, and prayerful pleading." In order to fully appreciate those points, we may state that the Venerable gentleman belongs to the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, which has built a beautiful cathedral at Zanzibar, and possesses several stations of considerable importance on the mainland. In June, 1913, a Conference of Protestant Missions with the Church Missionary Society was held at Kikuyu, British East Africa, the object of which was to consider a scheme or schemes of federation "with a view to ultimate union of the Native Churches in that section of the Dark Continent." At the close of the Conference there was a celebration of the Lord's Supper. There being no Anglican Church building in the place, the observance took place in a Presbyterian church. Four Protestant Missionary Societies were represented, and two bishops and the Heads of the Missions pledged themselves to recognize common membership between Federated Churches; to establish a common form of Church organization; to admit to any pulpit a preacher recognized by his own Church; to admit to communion a recognized member of any other Church; and to draw up and follow common courses of instruction both for candidates for baptism and candidates for ordination.

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To outsiders such pledges seem eminently reasonable, but to the Bishop of Zanzibar every one of them was like a red rag to a bull. He published a long document, addressed to the Bishop of St. Albans, in which he gave forcible expression to his vehement disapproval of the findings of the Conference, and submitted the thesis that the Anglican Church, "at the present time, having regard to her exceedingly chaotic system of Truth, is entirely unfit to send missionaries to Heathen or Mohammedan lands." The Bishops of Mombasa and Uganda, who were present at the Conference and gave their support to the proposed scheme of federation, were charged with "depreciating the Ministry of which they are consecrated Heads." He is convinced that Episcopacy is the only Divinely appointed form of Church polity. He said :—

> Episcopacy, and all that flows from it, is either God's Gift, or a terrible curse. If it be his Gift, dare we pretend that we have nothing to hand on to others? If it be not his Gift, had we not better renounce the Church that cherishes it as her life, and cast in our lot with those who long ago decided to go on without it? I can see no sin of the kind more terrible than that of preserving an outward form and organization of religion that offends many thousands of sincere believers in Christ, unless it happens that the outward is essentially filled with the Spirit of God. I have charged the Bishops of Mombasa and Uganda with heresy in their teaching of the meaning and value in Episcopacy.....On the day that a Bishop can communicate with a Protestant minister, deliberately and of set purpose, one of them is, it seems to me, bound in conscience to surrender the outward form which means so little to him, and yet so powerfully hinders the work of reunion.

Everybody remembers with what signal force and in what bitter spirit the ball of controversy was set rolling by the Bishop of Zanzibar's notorious pamphlet, a controversy which divided the Anglican Church into two stingingly hostile camps. Now, the sermon under review was delivered at the anniversary service of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa at St. John's, Red Lion Square, London, and the Archdeacon maintains that for the work done by this Mission we owe God praiseful thanksgiving. Evidently his Lordship of Zanzibar represents the Catholic party in the Anglican Church. Many years ago, two Catholic priests and the present writer were taken, through a mistake of their guide, to the Aglican cathedral instead of the Catholic at Zanzibar, and the former was outwardly so similar to what those priests had expected to see that they had expressed strong approval of it before the mistake was discovered. Then they very severely criticized the Catholic Party in the Anglican Church, making no effort to hide their contempt for it. The Anglican Bishop of Zanzibar denies the validity of the orders of non-episcopally ordained ministers, conveniently forgetting that the validity of his own orders is wholly repudiated by the Pope. The fact to be borne in mind is that each Mission believes that its own credentials are superior to those of all other Missions, while unprejudiced judges are doubtful whether much really useful work is done by any Mission whatever.

Speaking generally, we are profoundly convinced that no Church can sincerely call itself a displayer of God's glory; and there is no getting away from the fact that every Church spends much of its time in finding fault with and discrediting other Churches. Archdeacon Hallett fails utterly to show wherein or whereof God's glory consists, either in the Church or in the world. He tells us that the Deity is "Supreme in majesty, incomparable in power, unapproachable in perfection, infinite in knowledge, all-seeing and all-loving, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"; but neither the Church nor the world has ever supplied the slightest evidence of the existence of such a Being. Mr. H. G. Wells's *Invisible King* is finite, of whom it may legitimately be said that he has doubtless done his best, but that his best falls far short of the ideal. The Christian God *can* do everything and actually *does* nothing. He is omnipotent, and yet man, the creature of his hand, defies and thwarts him at every turn. He sits as King for ever, and yet the world he is supposed to govern in righteousness and truth is a veritable shamble. By a strange slip of the tongue the Archdeacon speaks of "this man-made world," thus giving the lie direct to a fundamental article of his own creed. We frankly aver that the world is wholly man-made; but we do not believe in an omnipotent Being of infinite knowledge, wisdom, and love, whose glory would be in his shame. In the Old Testament, Jehovah often showed his glory by putting his enemies to death, and he was often glorified as Lord of Hosts or Man of War. In Ezekiel, chapters xxxiii.-xxxix., there is a wonderfully vivid portrayal of his relation to Israel and Israel's enemies. He is even represented as commanding Gog to muster against the chosen people in order that he might manifest his glory in his defeat, whose overthrow he thus predicts :—

> And I will call for a sword against him unto all my mountains, saith the Lord God; every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him and upon his hordes, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing shower, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. And I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will make myself known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am the Lord.

Comment would be superfluous. All we need to say is that, with all the vehemence at our command, we repudiate such a Deity and positively decline to glorify him, preferring a man-made and a man-governed world, however imperfect the making and unsatisfactory the governing.

J. T. Lloyd.

How to Break the Boycott.

> Rough work, Iconoclasm, but the only way to get at Truth.
> —*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

It has been pointed out repeatedly in these columns that the Freethought Movement suffers from a boycott which is applied by Christians in the press, booksellers' and newsagents' shops, and at the municipal and private libraries. With rare exceptions, Freethought publications are ignored in the former, and kept out of the latter. Hence, it becomes increasingly necessary that every Freethinker should assist actively in the propagation of the literature of the Movement. Christian organizations spend annually tens of thousands of pounds in furtherance of their faith, and, incidentally, no small part of their propaganda is the vilification and misrepresentation of Freethought. A glance at the capacious catalogues of such organizations as the Religious Tract Society, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Christian Evidence Society, and the many publishers who cater for the orthodox public, will be sufficient to show how complete are their methods, and how large is their success. These books, periodicals, and pamphlets, are distributed throughout the English-speaking world, and they penetrate into countless homes where Freethought works are never seen.

The clergy are past-masters at circumventing any

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movement likely to prove dangerous to their superstition, and they have rare noses for heresy. The original Sunday-schools were initiated by laymen with the sole and laudable idea of imparting education to poor children on the one day in the week on which, in the dark days prior to the passing of the Factory Acts, they were free to receive it. Nowadays the Sunday-schools are not concerned with other than theological instruction, and the average Sunday-school teacher cares as much for real education as a pigeon cares for hydrostatics. Similarly with the public library movement, which was started with the idea of bringing serious and informative literature within reach of the poorest citizens. The clergy, of whom there are 50,000 in this country, have great influence on the local committees of these libraries, and their one and constant aim is to render such institutions, from their narrow and sectarian point of view, entirely harmless and innocuous. So long as the shelves of these libraries are stocked with the harmless volumes of the brothers Hocking, Miss Marie Corelli, Charles Garvice, Mrs. Barclay, and other purveyors of "the smooth tale, generally of love," they are quite content. The instant any attempt is made to place before the public works which make for sanity or for ordered thought, they at once display their animosity. The boycott is introduced, and the modern *Index Expurgatorius* contains the names of practically every author who is worth reading, from Bernard Shaw to Algernon Swinburne. None of the "intellectuals" escape, and Robert Blatchford suffers in the company of Eugene Brieux.

With the idea of combating this state of affairs, Freethinkers should ask for Freethought publications at the libraries which they use, and see that they are supplied. An excellent beginning could be made with Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Free Will?* and with Vivian's *Churches and Modern Thought*. In extreme cases, the books might be presented to the library; but care must be taken that the volumes are not placed on a top shelf and quietly forgotten. So far as pamphlets are concerned, it is, perhaps, better to hand or post them to likely readers. Orthodox persons are often interested in controversial literature, and such introductions often means that regular readers of Freethought publications are obtained. Remembering that, in spite of a most rigorous boycott, many thousands of pamphlets are already in circulation, it must be apparent that, with the additional publicity, these figures may be largely exceeded in the immediate future. Literature should also be sold at all indoor and open-air meetings, and the sale entrusted as much as possible to the ladies of the Movement, who will thus find an outlet for their energies.

With regard to the *Freethinker*, it is useful to order the paper with other publications, so that the tradesman is faced with the dilemma of accepting or refusing a good customer. Another timely suggestion is for Freethinkers to join in any likely discussion in local papers. These organs often give far more space to readers' opinions than the large London newspapers. Letters should be terse, strictly to the point, and courteous, and should be written on one side of the paper only, and authenticated with the name and address of the sender, not, necessarily, for publication. Back numbers of the *Freethinker* should never be wasted, but should be left in trams, trains, and 'buses, or otherwise distributed. In order to prevent an improper use being made of these copies, it is wise to clip a piece from one of the corners, so that they may not be used as returns by unscrupulous newsagents. If these few hints are acted upon by our readers, it should prove of permanent benefit to the Movement. We should be pleased to hear from any readers who have any useful suggestions to offer in this connection.

Freethinkers must see to it that Freethought publications are circulated. Humility is a rare and fragrant virtue, but Freethinkers cannot surrender their rights at the behests of the clergy, however saintly. Let Freethinkers everywhere insist on their rights, and not only show that they are grateful for the work of the pioneers who suffered so much in the past, but that they are determined to extend their principles far into the future. After the long darkness of oppression the dawn has come:—

> Not by eastern windows only,
> When daylight comes, comes in the light,
> In front the sun climbs slowly, how slowly!
> But westward, look, the land is bright.

MIMNERMUS.

Climate as a Factor in Organic Change.

AMONG the multitudinous forces of Nature which operate in the transmutations of living matter the conditions of soil and atmosphere play a prominent part. It is a firmly established fact that changed conditions of life, constantly co-operating with the responsive powers of plants and animals, soon produce marked modifications in organic Nature. These organic responses to modified stimuli evolve those pronounced variations which superficially appear to arise spontaneously.

That the influences of climate exercise a powerful and permanent sway over the specific characters of floral and faunal organisms is demonstrated by a considerable amount of evidence. In his celebrated volumes dealing with the *Variation of Plants and Animals*. Darwin brought forward numerous instances of changes wrought by the effects of climate on cereals and other plants. The rapid changes displayed by the maize plants, introduced into Europe from America, afford striking proof of this. As Darwin states:—

> During the first year the plants were twelve feet high, and a few seeds were perfected; the lower seeds in the ear kept true to their proper form, but the upper seeds became slightly changed. In the second generation the plants were from nine to ten feet high, and ripened their seed better; the depression on the outer side of the seed had almost disappeared, and the original beautiful white colour had become duskier. Some of the seeds had even become yellow, and in their now rounded form they approached the common European maize. In the third generation nearly all resemblance to the original and very distinct American parent was lost.

Nor are the marked influences of climatal conditions confined to grasses. The same phenomena are revealed by a study of forest trees. Twenty-nine different American trees when compared with their nearest European allies disclosed similar changes, although these trees were grown close together, and, so far as possible, under identical conditions. In the New World forms the leaves fell earlier, while their autumnal tints were brighter. The shapes of the leaves became different, and various other modifications occurred. All these variations Darwin attributed to the sustained action of another climate.

Botanists are agreed concerning the vast range of variation in the vegetable world, when floral forms are removed from their native surroundings to new conditions. Romanes doubted (*Darwin and after Darwin*, vol. ii., p. 206) whether a single plant species exists "whose distribution exposes it to any considerable differences in its external conditions of life, which does not present more or less considerable differences as to its characters in different parts of its range." The chemical nature of the soil, its organic constituents, the

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atmospheric conditions of the growing season of the year, the amount of moisture available to the vegetation, are a few only of the innumerable phenomena which are conveniently summed up in the term climatal causes.

Climatic variation is plainly not restricted in its local manifestations to any special group of plants, because all the various forms of floral life participate in large measure in the changes observed. Moreover, unrelated floral structures display in numerous instances degrees of modification which correspond to the length of time to which they have been exposed to the modified conditions.

Distinct species growing on similar soils, elevations, and latitudes, present similar variations. One has only to compare plants growing on chalky land with plants found on fatter soils to observe pronounced variations. Various plants, again, are so influenced by sea-salt that they develop red-tinted fleshy leaves. That these and many other changes are due to differences in soil content and other external factors has been demonstrated experimentally.

In a humid atmosphere, such as that of Western Ireland—the most emerald part of the Emerald Isle—the green colour of the vegetation is wonderful. The same plants growing in England, particularly in our Eastern Counties, seldom, except in an unusually warm and moist spring, display the freshness of colour so noticeable in the Irish vegetation. Plants cultivated in permanently damp surroundings develop smoother leaves and darker blossoms. Aridity of soil and atmosphere, on the other hand, conduce to the appearance of paler flowers, and rougher and yellower leaves. Journeying through our own small island in an average season, it is easy to infer from the general character of the landscape the nature of the soil, the humidity of the atmosphere, and the normal rainfall of each particular district.

An imposing array of evidence has been accumulated proving how the combined influences of external Nature affect the various aspects of life. And as it has never been proved that organic changes, once they have become firmly fixed in an animal or plant structure, are not transmitted through heredity to descendants, we opine that such transformations must play, and, presumably, have ever played, a primary part in the drama of evolution.

Taking the animal kingdom as a whole, it is, perhaps, less susceptible to climatic influences than the more pliable plants. Yet, even among animals, proofs of external agency in the modification of organisms are quite numerous. It certainly seems absurd to suppose that the hairy coverings acquired by animals to resist the cold conditions of the Glacial Period were not transmitted through heredity from parents to progeny. But be that as it may, we possess in living animals salient examples of groups of creatures representing distinct genera, families, orders; or, for that matter, classes, which show clear signs of their combined response to the influences exerted by their environment. And it is also true that the degrees of specific change are more or less proportional to the amount of climatic change experienced by the organisms in question. Evidences of progressive animal modification may be plainly seen in the gradual changes which creep over animal forms as we pass from one part of a large land surface to another.

Dr. J. A. Allen prosecuted most extensive researches in connection with climatal variation in America. The birds and mammals were found to vary in size and colour with the changing climates of the larger areas investigated. Dr. Allen was compelled to consider these phenomena as the consequence of the powers wielded by external conditions. Gould's studies in the distribution of bird life in Australia forced him to similar conclusions.

The seasonal variations shown in the summer and winter forms of certain butterflies lend themselves to the same solution as it has been shown that the action of cold or heat on the caterpillar or pupa influences the appearance of the perfect insect very materially. Weismann subjected the chrysalids of lowland butterflies to very cold conditions, and the mature butterflies were like those of alpine areas, thus proving that the northern "species" are really climatic or seasonal varieties. Edwards has obtained even more remarkable results.

Professor Packard, the eminent American naturalist, is of opinion that it is quite probable that nearly one-third, or, perhaps, one half, of the museum species, and species described in biological writings, are climatic or local varieties or species. And he points out that:—

> Introduced species tend to vary much more than in their native lands. Children born of British, German, or French parentage become in the United States slightly taller than their parents; the soldiers of the United States Army during the Civil War of 1861-65 were found, by measurements made on 1,110,000 individuals, to average taller than those of the British Army.

Cave-dwelling animals yield testimony of environmental influence in several ways, and the direct influence of climate is shown in many organisms, such as the dog, cat, horse, cattle, sheep, &c., when these are taken to a foreign land.

Pronounced modifications are soon set up, and the animals depart more or less widely from their ancestors. One of the finest illustrations of this phenomenon is afforded by the changes undergone by the descendants of a common rabbit in Porto Santo. A doe rabbit and her litter were set free on that island in the fifteenth century, and their descendants are now one-third smaller, have considerably changed in colour, and vary greatly in other respects. Yet, when some of these rodents were returned to England, they soon commenced to resume their original colour.

The changes wrought in a few centuries in a new environment were truly astounding. As Darwin wrote:—

> If the history of these Porto Santo rabbits had not been known, most naturalists on observing their much reduced size, their colour, reddish above and grey beneath, their tails and ears not tipped with black, would have ranked them as a distinct species. They would have been strongly confirmed in this view by seeing them alive in the Zoological Gardens, and hearing that they refused to couple with other rabbits. Yet this rabbit, which there can be little doubt would thus have been ranked as a distinct species, has certainly originated since the year 1420.

T. F. PALMER.

Christianity and the Way Out.

IN modern times Christianity is adjusted to many tests by being dressed up in many colours of varying hues. The man who has imbibed evolutionary ideas, but does not wish to give up Christian essentials, drops the story of the Fall, and the Old Testament legends generally, but clings to New Testament doctrines, subject to certain omissions, such as the Atonement or the Trinity. How the play of Reason can be allowed to operate within certain limits only is a question which is not seriously taken into account, but the advantage of these

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wriggling, elastic, views appears to be plain enough. Concessions can be allowed at will, so long as there are other essentials within easy mental reach. The rigid old Calvinists of earlier days would scarcely recognize Christianity in its modern garb, without the necessary label or labels to explain and differentiate. Biblical Inspiration is not acceptable to many within the fold of the Christian Church. Scientific explanations of the growth of the universe, the forces of nature and their varied manifestations, the evolution of animal and man, textual criticism, and the keen rapier thrusts of Rationalist critics, have destroyed the possibility of further belief in the Inspired Word. Many cling through ignorance still, or with lingering regrets stronger than the measure of their enlightenment.

To give up the idea of Biblical Inspiration equals throwing the whole array of Bible doctrines into the melting-pot of criticism and analysis. The glamour departs, giving Reason and sense a chance to become busy. Old Testament history, with its impossible stories, repetitions, glorifications of war, revenge, murder, and obscene passages in the record, are soon disposed of. Like other ancient writings, it is a reflection, more or less obscure, of the tone, temper, and events of those times, with all which that involves, but nothing more. Prophets spoke and wrote, but the fulfilment of their prophecies, vengeful or benignant, depended, as to-day on the growth of events and human intelligence. Those portions of the New Testament which are outgrowths of the Old, naturally go the way of their predecessor. But a formidable list of doctrines remains to be tackled by the newly fledged opponent of Biblical Inspiration.

The central figure in the New Testament narrative is Jesus, the miraculously born, miracle working idealist with his Sermon on the Mount teaching, claim to be the Son of God, and opposition to temporal powers, terminating in his death by crucifixion, followed by his mysterious resurrection. If one be not prejudiced and timid, it becomes impossible to accept the story of the miraculous birth, especially as similar stories form part of other religions, and if one account be true, then all are acceptable. The miracles, subjected to critical examination, become incredible, if mental reservations are rigidly excluded. The doctrine of the Trinity, with its implications, is no more reasonable than the Virgin birth for one who has cast off the bondage of mental fear and subservience to priestcraft—Roman or Ptotestant. Christ's substitutionary death is an untenable theory, since human bloodshed (martyr or propitiatory) has no relationship whatever to human error, slight or grave, points of contact being absent, as the independent thinker readily perceives. Prayer to a personal God, whose existence cannot be postulated, becomes an unnecessary performance, however sincere the suppliant may be, as it is perceived that natural laws are not subject to the desires or caprice of individuals. Human aspiration does not come within the category of Christian prayer. The doctrines of Christ's intercession, founded on the contradictory statements regarding his mysterious rising from the tomb, the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper—really Pauline—and the supremacy of the life of faith in God, vanish into very thin air when rational tests are applied. The whole ingenious structure rests on acceptance of the Personal prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God-idea, with his antagonist the Devil, and their abodes of bliss and torment.

If, for many reasons often recounted by Secularist writers, these latter beliefs vanish or assume vague, abstract, impersonal form, the superstructure falls to pieces. When a man says he is an Atheist or Agnostic, he expresses, by implication, complete opposition to Christian doctrine, and it is because many doubters of Biblical inspiration do not travel so far on their journey from orthodoxy that they remain doubters, adjusters, searchers who fail to really find. They renounce the more glaringly ludicrous doctrines—hell fire, the Trinity, or even the Virgin birth—but cling to others, altering the make-up to deceive the eye without satisfying the intelligence, and finding a comfortable half-way house—Unitarian or some other—ready to accommodate them. But the greater all-embracing detachment involves too much mental heroism and social ostracism. Readjustment of mental outlook, social relationship, walking in new paths, become necessary.

How can the way be cleared without being made too easy? The Bible in the schools and in the home requires to be secularized so as to form part of the whole secular teaching. This can be best accomplished by the exclusion of Bible teaching altogether from the school curriculum, to the joy of many a schoolboy, and its possible introduction later, in an amended form, with the supernatural elements eliminated or rendered harmless; for the Bible, as a record, has its place in history, and the means of studying both sides of a subject enable us to form judgments, besides supplying argumentative weapons. School Board candidates who do not favour Secular Education should be opposed or voted against. Social ostracism and its accompaniments must be met philosophically so long as there is no other way, but the possibilities of life in its richness and fulness open up new channels of endeavour and new fields of enquiry; for the world we live in, and the realms of wonder that surround us, the kingdoms of this world, our fellows and their ways, crooked and straight, possess meaning and interest hitherto unexplored. Restrictions are removed, a sense of freedom of action braces us up. All types, tastes, and inclinations can be accommodated within the confines of the non-supernatural. The greatest stumbling-block of all consists of Church vested interests. Church and commercialism, with incidental props, are linked together by congenial, strengthening, contacts, notwithstanding other worldliness. Churches and churchmen depend upon rich benefactors for patronage and support. War and the Sermon on the Mount can be squared by the followers of Christ. Disprove Christian doctrines, explain Secularism as an alternative, and you do much to clear away the fogs of superstition that have blinded the mental vision of thousands. Reason secures her rights, and much mental rubbish disappears. But the gateway to life's problems has been opened, and the problems await solution. Only by getting into close touch with these problems, studying them, and joining with the forces contributing to their solution, can Secularist effort reap its full reward.

ALFRED RUSSELL.

Let Us Prey!

LET us pray, aye! let us pray;
So chant the glib-tongued priests;
Now just what for, let us pray
To *look* upon the feasts
Which our masters make away.

Let us pray for their long living,
For their safety from all tolls,
That they may be spared for giving
A little to us poor souls,
And our many sins forgiving.

Let us *prey*, aye! let us *prey*;
'Tis time we now regained our own;
Arm thou for the righteous fray,
To fight for more than meatless bone,
No more of "let us pray"—nay, *prey!*

C. B. W.

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Acid Drops.

The Dean of Durham, Dr. Hensley Henson, says that "on many devout minds the dark shadow of doubt has fallen," and the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare agrees that the Dean has "correctly expressed the wide difficulties which are felt to-day by many earnest and troubled minds." So are leaders of opposing Churches drawn together in the face of a common danger. Of course, doubt of Christianity has to be represented as something "dark"—that is part of the game. These people hover between describing disbelievers in religion as foolishly hilarious or suffering miserably under the shadow of an eclipse of faith. But we wish they would decide what we are.

For our own part, we feel neither elated at finding out that Christianity is ridiculously untrue, nor grievously castdown over the discovery. It is *so* ridiculous that we feel grown-up people ought to be ashamed of being suspected believing in its truth. And it is so useless, that requiring a great European War to prove it, so demonstrates the great lack of serious thinking on the part of the general public.

Mr. Shakespeare says it is perplexing to religious people to find that Germany, so largely under the influence of Lutherism, should have acted as it has done. But is that really surprising? Some of the most brutal things in human history have been done in the name of religion, and under the influence of religion. The massacre of the Huguenots, the crusade against the Albigenses, the age-long torture of the Jews, were all motived by religion. One hardly knows whether this expressed surprise at religious people acting brutally is real or assumed.

Mr. Shakespeare says the great problem is "Why a God, and an omnipotent God, should permit such a world-horror as this War?" And he does "not think any adequate answer can be given at present." By adequate answer Mr. Shakespeare plainly means an answer favourable to his religion. He would not consider any other answer adequate. And, meanwhile, he will go on believing in the answer he dare not give. That is the art of being a Christian. Like a camel, he receives his burdens kneeling; and, as a proof of his faith, when an absurdity is offered him, he swallows it without effort.

Says the Bishop of London, in an interview published in the *New Age*, "Christianity abolished slavery by making master and man kneel together before the same Christian altar." On this one has visions of the abolition of slavery following the adoption of Christianity by master and man. And so it did—in a sense. After they had been kneeling together for some eighteen centuries chattel slavery *was* abolished, as we all know. Meanwhile, the slave had been taught, from the same altar, that to resist the commands of his master was contrary to the Christian. And before chattel slavery was abolished, the same good Christians in this country had instituted the Factory System, under which children of nine and ten years were flogged to work and kept at work twelve and fourteen hours a day. And, still kneeling before the same altar, women were sent to work in mines, stripped nearly naked, and harnessed like horses to coal trucks. A wonderfully effective thing is Christianity! And no slaveholder in the world has ever objected to it. Slaveholders always had a strong desire to see their slaves kneeling before the same altar as themselves. They then felt their position quite secure.

At the inquest on Sophia Gardener, of Farm Lane, Fulham, who committed suicide by drowning, it was stated the woman was a constant church-goer, and had been to services four times daily. The restraining power of religion is not very evident in this case.

The death of Mr. Leopold de Rothschild recalls the fact that he was the third son of Baron Lionel de Rothschild, who was the first Jew who, as a Jew, represented a British constituency in the House of Parliament. Christian charity is of such slow growth that it took nearly twenty centuries for Christians to remember that a Jew was a man and a brother.

A remarkable burst of Christian charity by Dr. Furse, Bishop of Pretoria, was recently exhibited at Johannesburg, when the bishop advocated the tarring and feathering of men opposed to military service. Evidently, Dr. Furse does not immediately expect the second coming of Christ.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley says that, in view of the very strict press censorship, editors should strike. The trouble is that they will not strike anything unless they are paid the usual advertisement rates.

The Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, of Stamford Hill, is notoriously dogmatic and cocksure in all his pulpit and other utterances. Recently he devoted a whole sermon to a consideration of the religious signs of the times, according to his reading of which "religion is coming in upon us again." The majority of Christian leaders, among whom are the Dean of Durham and the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, declare that the religious outlook is depressingly dark and discouraging; but Mr. Gibbon is in possession of much ampler knowledge and sounder judgment, and he assures us that "many who were indifferent are now eagerly pondering the answers of religion, while its great questions, Is there a God? Is the soul of man immortal? Is there an eternal difference between right and wrong? are the master-questions of the day for millions.'

Is not Mr. Gibbon aware that whether such questions are the master-questions of the day for millions or not, they are certainly the questions, *not* of religion, but of people who *doubt the truth* of religion. The mere asking of questions betokens imperfect belief, if not more or less positive unbelief. Before the War there were millions of men and women who had never asked, "Is there a God?" It is the War that has forced the question upon them, and thousands of them have been driven by the logic of events to a negative answer. As many military chaplains have reluctantly admitted, the War has been and is a breeder of Atheists; and it is well known that Atheists do not believe in immortality. Mr. Gibbon ought to know that the difference between right and wrong is not a religious question at all, but a purely social one.

The Rev. F. C. Spurr, of Regent's Park Baptist Chapel, who has so often, for many years, asserted that Freethought is a dead and buried enemy, charges Mr. G. H. Wells with making a most ferocious attack upon the Christian doctrine of the Trimity in his *God the Invisible King*. We hold no brief whatever for Mr. Wells, but we must remind Mr. Spurr that the occupants of glass houses should refrain from casting stones. It has been Mr. Spurr's habit in Melbourne, as well as in London, to attack Freethought "in what one can only call an almost vicious way."

Wesleyan Methodist Church statistics show notable decreases in both Church membership and Sunday-school scholars. There is a decrease of 3,870 members, and 20,396 scholars. This discounts the clerical boast that the War is favourable to religion

The clergy are not only exempted themselves from the operations of the Military Service Act, but at Camberley the magistrates decided that a lay-reader was exempt as a minister of religion. If this ruling holds good, it will add to the 50,000 parsons who are already exempted in this country.

The *Ploughshare*, a Quaker Organ of Social Reconstruction, for February, has the following paragraph:—

> We are glad to learn that there is now a Theosophist Chaplain visiting Wormwood Scrubs, as this means that yet another religion is represented by adherents who refuse to violate its tenets by slaughtering their fellows. The privilege of having Chaplains for the various religions is one for which we should be grateful. There are still two notable exceptions, however—Agnosticism and Atheism—which compare very favourably with the other religions regarding the number of their adherents who have a conscientious objection to murder.

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Canon Newbolt says that God is totally unlike all other beings, and never was a truer statement made. Indeed, God is so absolutely dissimilar to all other beings that it is quite impossible for sane people to believe in his existence at all. Fancy thoughtful people getting the following twaddle inflicted upon them:—

> He is unlike any other king. Look back, dear brethren, on the reign of God. He sitteth in the heavens over all from the beginning. Who made this world? God. Who rules it? God. Who has watched over and woven into one great plan all the conflicting issues of life? God. Yes, on this Trinity Sunday, think of the reign of God.

And those who do really *think* of the reign of God are fully aware how infinitely absurd it is to believe in it.

The Vicar of Holy Trinity, Malvern, has just published a volume on *The Church and Social Questions*, and in it he says of his brother clergymen that, while many of them are repeating out-of-date truths,—

> Too many also are up-to-date at second hand, and quote Scotch translators of German rationalists to mystified congregations. Some repeat moral platitudes in an emotional manner, and some spend all their time in denouncing the dogmas they have not studied, or the pietism of those with whom they have no sympathy. They have failed and we shall not mend matters or win men back into our Churches by talking politics in an ill-informed way.

The chance of the clergy winning men back to the Church is very small in any case. When men have gained the recognition of the falsity of Christan beliefs, it is absurd to talk of winning them back by altering the tone of the preaching.

The Vicar has some "nasty things" to say of the way in which some clergymen seek advancement, and of the methods adopted. Many, he says,—

> write shameless letters of self-commendation in an attempt to secure preferment. Only recently I was told of an officer at the front who kept a Mess merry for days with extracts from the letters of clerical aspirants to a living of which he was patron. Some sent their photographs, and one sent instead the portrait of his wife, which no doubt made a stronger appeal.

No doubt!

Newspaper editors like to be thought up-to-date, but what are we to think of the *Daily Chronicle's* suggestion that the Kaiser is Satanic. In another column of the same issue is quoted Wilhelm's latest outburst, "To God alone is it known how long the War will last." A dreary devil who drivels devotion is centuries behind the times.

"Thank God," said the Bishop of Chelmsford, speaking at Ilford on June 9, "the War is to go on until our purpose is accomplished." Beyond the bare purpose of beating Germany, we do not suppose the Bishop of Chelmsford is any more aware of what is "our purpose" than we are; but why thank God for it? Could God stop the War before we have accomplished "our purpose"? And if the duration of the War rests with this hypostatized ignorance, why does he not see that "our purpose" is achieved, and so bring the War to a speedy end? Perhaps the Bishop will explain.

The Rector of Potter Hanworth asks, in the *Church Times*, whether an agreement on the education question cannot be reached. His idea of an agreement is peculiar and eminently Christian. He suggests that four representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, and the Free Church Council meet, and adopt as a basis for discussion (1) Christian teaching subject to the conscience clause, (2) parents to decide as to the special religious teaching to be given, (3) all teachers appointed to declare that they can give Christian instruction in accordance with the Apostles' Creed, (4) the appointment of teachers. That is all! And that is the Rector's opinion of a "common understanding"!

As usual, it is a common understanding between Christians that is aimed at. No one else matters. The impertinent egotism of these Christians quite prevents their realizing that there are other people in the world beside themselves, and that the educational system must be finally settled, not upon the basis of what suits the sectarian interests of Christians, but upon the basis of what is just and equitable to all citizens. The suggestion of the Rector of Potter Hanworth deserves publicity only because it so well expresses the normal Christian attitude. One day these gentlemen will, perhaps, recognize that in the modern State, Christianity is no more than a religious sect, and that while it is justified in demanding the protection of the State in the pursuit of its legitimate interests, it has no right whatever to ask that the State shall aid it in forcing upon the public its ridiculous doctrines.

There is a discussion going on in the *Glasgow Herald* concerning the character of Socialist Sunday-schools. Enemies of the schools are keen to prove that the teaching therein is quite "materialistic" in tone. On the other hand, champions of the schools are pathetically, and foolishly, desirous of rebutting the charge, and urge that the "words and principles of Jesus are most earnestly studied and taught." We do not know if this is correct, but we feel that unless the teaching of these schools is "materialistic"—in the scientific and philosophic sense—they will be of little value so far as a sane and helpful Socialism is concerned.

General Sir William Robertson gave a company of cadets some good advice the other day, even though it was of a platitudinous character. "Be truthful and just," he said, and then proceeded to spoil his advice with "and let it be known on occasion that all you do is based on strong religious convictions." But Sir William Robertson must have known that amongst those whom he was addressing were some without *strong* religious convictions, and even with no religious convictions at all. What of these? Sir William surely does not mean that they are not, or cannot be, truthful and just. And if he does not mean that, his advice does not amount to much. Probably it was no more than a piece of customary cant, delivered without the slightest intellectual appreciation of all that it involved. All the same, it is a pity our public men do not cultivate a more respectable mental attitude in such matters.

Let's All Help.

Is there any reason why we should not gain a thousand new readers during the next two months? We can see nothing impossible about the achievement—if our present readers make up their minds it shall be done. If some millionaire would come along and finance the cost of advertising the *Freethinker*, we would undertake to do it ourselves. But as no complaisant millionaire has come along, and as we have no capital to meet the cost of that plan, we are compelled to fall back upon the goodwill of those who take an interest in this journal because of the great Cause it serves.

We *are* gaining new readers all the time, although, thanks to the War, we are losing readers all the time, and thus not reaping the profit we should have gained under normal conditions. Still, we are more than holding our own, and that is certainly gratifying during a period when so many papers have had to suspend publication.

Now, we want our readers to make a supreme effort. If a thousand of them will resolve to find a new subscriber for us during the next month, they will not alone be greatly extending the influence of the paper—they will be giving very material help towards meeting the very, very heavy expenses attendant upon the production of the *Freethinker*. Most of our readers must know a likely subscriber. Let those who do, make a "dead set" at him or her until success crowns their efforts. Don't be beaten at the task. Summer-time is a season when everyone is more or less on the move, and there are thus exceptional opportunities for carrying on the good work.

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To Correspondents.

C. W. MARSHALL.—We long ago gave up wondering at the stupidities of educated men. Otherwise we should have spent our life in a constant state of wonderment. After all, there must be something to educe if education is effective; and in many cases this condition is lacking.

T. FOWLER.—To act with courage is invariably the wiser and more profitable policy.

WE are asked to say, in response to a recent inquiry, that the publisher of Madelin's *The Revolution* is Heinemann; price 7s. 6d. net.

MR. J. DRISCOLL would like Mr. Mann to inform him, if possible, where he could find Mr. Maskelyne's exposure of the Davenport Brothers.

R. EMINSON (Canada).—Subscription for *Freethinker* received. Your friendly criticism was justifiable and acceptable. We are pleased to have your appreciative sympathy with the worries and troubles of this War period.

E. CRAWFORD.—Thanks for reference.

H. AUSTIN.—Pleased to hear from a year-old reader who derives so much benefit from this paper. Your plan of showing that an Atheist is not ashamed of being known as one is the best way of encouraging those who do not believe in Christianity to speak out.

C MORGAN.—We *do* expect to get a number of new readers "when the boys come home." Your information as to the interest taken in the *Freethinker* by men in the Army confirms this view. So far as we can, we send out free copies to soldiers in various parts of the world, and we believe they are appreciated.

L. N.—If we stopped to think of all the worries and troubles we may have to face, we might get discouraged. We find the best plan is to just go ahead and deal with each difficulty as it arises.

T. P. WHITE.—Thanks for suggestion, which will be acted on.

J. W. LEIPER.—A "Flag Day" for Freethinkers is not a bad idea, and we believe that, if enough sellers could be obtained, plenty would buy them. Half the people who buy these things have only the vaguest notion of what they are purchasing. Thanks for papers and addresses, to which copies are being sent. We are not "overworking"—only working hard.

J. WELTON.—We do not see what more definite statement could be given.

A. ROBERTS.—Shall appear, but cannot promise an early date.

J. W. WHITE.—Pleased to hear you are back in England with all your old interest in the old cause. By all means do all you can and we will give all the assistance in our power. The Ingersoll cards are out of print. The address of the R.P.A. is 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

MR. F. H. HORN writes to correct an error in our Report of the N.S.S. Conference. It was he who moved the election of Mr. Cohen to the Presidency on behalf of the Bethnal Green Branch.

B. SIBLEY.—So far as we are aware, your letter did not reach us.

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.

Colonel Ingersoll was a great Freethinker and an admirable man. His writings have been of incalculable benefit in the dissemination of Freethought, and we should be the last to find fault with anything said in his praise. All the same, it sounds strange in English ideas to find the *Sun* (New York), announcing the decision of the Bowman Case, to hear that the Secular Society, Limited, was founded forty years ago, that G. W. Foote was one of the founders with Mrs. Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh, and that the purpose of the Society was to "spread Ingersoll's ideas." Needless to say, the Society was founded nineteen years ago, not forty; G. W. Foote was *the* founder—not one of them; Bradlaugh was then dead, and Mrs. Besant had left the Freethought Party. That the Society was founded for the purpose of spreading Ingersoll's ideas in England is a statement due to the *Sun*'s reporter never having heard of Freethought apart from Ingersoll.

We recently heard from Mr. R. H. Rosetti, and all his London friends will be pleased to hear that so far he has succeeded in dodging German shells and bullets. At the time of writing he was playing the part of cook. He says:—

> Yesterday morning an exploding shell sent a shower of dirt and *debris* into the cook-house just as I was making the breakfast tea; so you can see one cannot feel dull with so much liveliness going on. Last year, at the Annual Conference, I had the great pleasure—to me—of voting for you as President of the N. S. S. Now, after nearly a year in the President's chair, surely everybody in the Movement must admit that your triumph on that particular Whit-Sunday has carried the flag of the Party with vigour and dignity through a very trying year.
>
> Unfortunately, I cannot be at the Conference this year, but I have every confidence that it will re-elect you without a dissenting voice.
>
> From here, I can assure you, the much-talked-of revival of religion in our Army is most conspicuous by its absence. There has been no church parade in my company since I have been here, but I have not heard a single complaint on that score. Scepticism is truly the spirit of the great majority of fellows I have come in contact with out here. They do not volunteer their scepticism, but once mention the mildest Freethought ideas and there are many professions of personal religious decadence.
>
> Recently a N.C.O. of my company, in making out a report concerning me, looked up surprised when I said "None" in answer to his question, "What religion?" In quite a friendly manner he said he would come and have a talk with me, to which I responded with an invitation. A few nights later he duly arrived, and in a very short time my dugout was packed. The N.C.O. was, in argument, quite a gentleman, and it was a pleasure to discuss with him. If those who talk of a religious revival among the troops could have seen the apparently deeply interested audience in that dugout, it would not, of course, have altered their business cry of a demand for their wares, but would have shown what little hopes there were for actual realization. Amid much friendly laughter, the N.C.O. laughingly declared he was ————, and left the dugout to attend to some duties. (The line represents a word better left unwritten, although in common use among the troops.) Another N.C.O. continued to discuss—a gentleman also; but the evening finished with the verdict willingly given to the Freethought side of the discussion.

The Glasgow Branch has suspended its meetings during the summer, but a special meeting was held on Sunday last to consider and discuss the Report of the Conference sent by its representative, Mr. J. T. Lloyd. A vote of thanks has been sent that gentleman for acting as the Branch's representative. We would suggest that although indoor meetings are not now being carried on, the summer months should be utilized for thinking out a regular plan of campaign for the coming autumn and winter season.

A correspondent falls foul of a recent assertion of ours that physical force does not, and never did, constitute the real ground for the franchise. He professes surprise that the *Freethinker* should set up moral right as a public standard. For our part, we should be sorry to see the *Freethinker* stand for anything else. We cheerfully grant that physical force may be used to enforce a moral right, and the fear of physical force may have been the immediate cause of certain moral rights being admitted; but we quite fail to see how that affects our original contention. And even the use of physical force generally justifies itself by an appeal to public necessity, or to some other essentially moral consideration.

A correspondent sends us the following, from Mr. C. V. Heckethorn's *London Memories*:—

> Mr. Walker was a founder at Rotherham, in Yorkshire, at whose works Thomas Paine made his first experiments on a large scale in iron bridges, having in 1787 presented to the Academy of Sciences in Paris a model of such a bridge. The famous one-arch iron bridge at Sunderland was the first result of Paine's experiments. It was cast at Mr. Walker's works. It was entirely Paine's idea, but the prejudice against his name and writings enabled an impostor to claim, and retain, the merit of the invention. Paine sent a full explanation of his plans and experiments to the Society of Arts, which was about to be printed in their Transactions, when the appearance of the *Rights of Man* put a stop to the publication: bigotry always was a stumbling-block placed in the path of science.

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Science and Spiritualism.

XIV.

(Continued from p. 358.)

We are far from the time when Pascal could say "Miracles are as a flash of lightning that reveals." The lightning no longer flashes. Science stands ready to explain the first miracle that arises in support of a new religion.—*Guyau, "The Non-Religion of the Future,"* p. 355.

Criticism is no respecter of things; it neither stops at mystery nor prestige, it breaks every charm, it pulls aside every veil. This power, utterly lacking in reverence, casting an unflinching and scrutinizing glance on everything alike, is from its very essence guilty of high treason against the divine and the human.....The cause of criticism is the cause of rationalism, and the cause of rationalism is the cause of the modern spirit itself. To curse rationalism is to curse the whole development of human intelligence from Petrarch and Bocaccio, that is, from the appearance of the critical spirit.

It is not from one argument only but from the whole of modern science that the tremendous result is derived. "There is no such thing as the supernatural."

Nature is simply human reason, it is the immutable, the exclusion of everything savouring of the whimsical; and our modern task will not be accomplished until we have destroyed the belief in the supernatural, no matter in what shape—the same that we have destroyed the belief in magic and witchcraft. All these belong to the same order of things.—*Ernest Renan, "The Future of Science"* (1891), pp. 37-38, 40-41.

THE most distinguished convert made by Madame Blavatsky was Mrs. Annie Besant, who is now President of the Theosophical Society. Mrs. Besant began life as a ritualistic High Churchwoman, the wife of a clergyman. She then went to the other extreme, becoming an Atheist and joining the National Secular Society. Then she became a Socialist, and ultimately a Theosophist. Her changes have been chameleon-like in their diversity, and there are not wanting those who prophesy that Mrs. Besant will ultimately find peace in the bosom of the Holy Roman Church.

In all her divigations Mrs. Besant has always been a follower of somebody else. It is the personal factor that has always swayed her in intellectual matters. The heroic figure of Charles Bradlaugh, defying gods and men in his titanic battle for liberty of speech and publication, captured her imagination and sympathy. She heard him lecture, and immediately gave in her allegiance, under the spell of Bradlaugh's glowing eloquence.

Mrs. Besant has been a voluminous writer during *all* phases of her diverse mental wanderings, but she has never contributed a single original idea to any of the causes to which she has at different times given her allegiance. She has adopted her opinions—and discarded them—like suits of clothes. Her intellect is at the mercy of her emotions. Such women are the natural prey of charlatans like Madame Blavatsky, who know full well how to bind them in the spell of their fascination.

Now, if the Mahatma missives were genuine, and were really, as Madame Blavatsky asserted, "precipitated" by "astral force" from the Himalayan Mountains by the mysterious Mahatmas, then they should continue to arrive after the death of Madame Blavatsky.

Madame Blavatsky died on May 8, 1891, and three months later (on August 30, 1891) Mrs. Besant made the sensational announcement to her old followers at the Hall of Science that she had received messages from the Mahatmas. Her words were: "You have known me for sixteen and a half years. You have never known me tell a lie. ('No, never,' and loud cheers.) I tell you that since Madame Blavatsky left I have had letters in the same handwriting as the letters which she received. (Sensation.) Unless you think dead persons can write, surely that is a remarkable fact." In an interview published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, September 1, 1891, Mrs. Besant pledged herself definitely to "precipitation." In answer to a question as to whether the letters came through the post, she declared: "No, I did not receive the letters through the post; the letters I receive from the Mahatmas are 'precipitated.'" As Mr. Edmund Garrett observes:—

> Mrs. Besant did not overrate the extent of her public credit. She *was* implicitly believed by many who would not have troubled their heads at all over an assertion of Madame Blavatsky's. A "boom" was the immediate result—the second big boom in the society's history. Mrs. Besant had the satisfaction of seeing her statement honoured with a salvo of leading articles. "Can it be," the *Daily Chronicle* exclaimed, "that there are things in heaven and earth which philosophy and science have not yet dreamed of?"—(*Daily Chronicle*, August 31.) And it opened its columns to a flood of correspondence on Theosophy and things occult. Day after day a crop of letters attested the public appetite for the marvellous.[1]

Papers that had previously maintained a dead silence about Mrs. Besant's atheistic propaganda now filled columns about her adhesion to supernaturalism, because it countenanced the masses in their superstitions.

At the time of Madame Blavatsky's death, Colonel Olcott, the President of the Theosophical Society, was in India. Mr. William Q. Judge, the Vice-President, was in America, and Mrs. Besant was in London. With the death of Madame Blavatsky, the Society's one link with the Mahatmas seemed to have broken. The "Masters" allowed a whole "fortnight to elapse without giving any sign that they survived the decease of their high-priestess." The renewal of the "astral post" coincided, strange to say, with the arrival in this country of Mr. Judge, who, upon receiving the announcement of Madame Blavatsky's decease, telegraphed, "Do nothing till I come."

Of the machinations of Mr. Judge, of the manner in which he schemed and plotted to oust Colonel Olcott from the leadership of the Society and himself into it; of how Colonel Olcott, who swallowed all the Blavatsky miracles without winking, suddenly developed a previously unsuspected and very keen critical faculty when he found that Mr. Judge was designated by the Mahatmas as the successor of Madame Blavatsky in place of himself; of how Olcott was the means of exposing the new Mahatma missives as the fabrication of Mr. Judge—all these things are set forth in inimitable style, which the present writer could not hope to emulate, by Mr. Edmund Garrett in his *Isis Very Much Unveiled*.[2]

Enough to say that, at a Judicial Committee gathered from the ends of the earth to discuss the matter, Mrs. Besant recanted her sensational claim made at the Hall of Science as follows:—

> .....When I publicly said that I had received, after H. P. Blavatsky's death, letters in the writing that H. P. Blavatsky had been accused of forging, I referred to letters given to me by Mr. Judge, and as they were in the well-known script I never dreamed of challenging their source. I know now that they were not written or precipitated by the Master, and that they were done by Mr. Judge; but I also believe that the gist of these messages was psychically received, and that Mr. Judge's error lay in giving them to me in a script written by himself and not saying so.....Having been myself mistaken, I in turn misled the public.[3]

Apparently it never occurred to Mrs. Besant that it was her duty to return to the Hall of Science and acquaint the audience with the manner in which she had been

[1] Edmund Garrett, *Isis Very Much Unveiled*, p. 25, to which reliable and entertaining work I am indebted for the narrative of Theosophic history after the death of Madame Blavatsky.

[2] I have to thank Miss E. M. Vance, our energetic Secretary, for a sight of this book—one of many obligations I am under to that gifted lady.

[3] Garrett, *Isis Very Much Unveiled*, p. 63.

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deluded. At any rate, she never did so. The moral of this sordid story, and indeed of the whole history of Spiritualism, is that, however truthful, upright, and honest deponents may be, their testimony is worthless as a proof of the supernatural.

We shall conclude with a study of the methods of Eusapia Palladino, the last and, if we count the heads of the great scientists she deceived, greatest of all spirit mediums. For although she had been detected in fraud more than once, it must be remembered that she had not the advantage of Home, who was one of the first in the field, and operated before the many discreditable exposures had taken place and rendered the public rather more sceptical of these performances. Even with this disadvantage, Eusapia succeeded in deluding a greater number of scientists than all the other mediums put together. Among others who have testified to the genuineness of her phenomena are: Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Richet, Professor Morselli, Camille Flammarion, Professor Lombroso, Professor Brofferio, Professor Schiaparelli, Dr. Ochorowicz, and Mr. Myers, besides many others who thought that her phenomena was partly genuine and partly trickery.

By the year 1890, through the frequent exposures of fraud, says Podmore, "the subject fell into increasing disrepute," and the Psychical Society "reached the broad conclusion that the phenomena degenerated precisely in ratio in which the precautions against trickery were rendered more effective, until sometimes a point was reached at which, the safeguards being absolute, the manifestations ceased altogether.....Then in 1892, Eusapia Palladino appeared on the scene. Eusapia—for by universal consent the gifted Neapolitan, she, too, an artist, has been assigned a place amongst her immortal countrymen who are known through the ages by their Christian names alone—Eusapia, then, is an Italian peasant women, who from early youth has been possessed of mediumistic powers."[1]

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

The Psychology of Insanity.

THERE is a well-known stock platitude that "everyone is mad on at least one subject," but that there is some excuse for the saying will be readily understood after a perusal of the interesting book bearing the somewhat forbidding title, *The Psychology of Insanity*, by Bernard Hart, M.D. (Cambridge University Press, 1s. 3d.). Any Freethinker will find it a most instructive introduction to psychology, a side of his or her subject well meriting careful study.

After giving a short history of insanity and the abominable treatment of the insane in the past, the writer, who believes in the psychological rather than the physiological treatment of mental trouble, proceeds to show that the modern psychologists have built their science on the same lines which led Dalton to conceive his atomic theory. Psychologic phenomena cannot be brought into the laboratory and dissected, but this does not prevent their laws being discovered by testing theory with facts.

Passing on from the weakness of mentality due to anatomic deficiency in the brain, a point easily comprehended, we are led into the more interesting discussion of hallucinations and delusions, with both of which subjects any one of us who have listened to speakers at meetings will be familiar. Hallucinations are termed visual, auditory, or tactile, according to the sense to which the false impression appears to belong. In the extreme case of the God-finder it is probably olfactory. On the other hand, delusions are not false sensations, but false beliefs, such as a man believing himself to be the Emperor of the Fijis. Chapter iv. deals with the dissociation of ideas in the field of consciousness, and concludes as follows:—

> Yet this dissociation of the mind into logic-tight compartments is by no means confined to the population of the asylum. Our political complexes are notoriously inaccessible to argument, and we preserve the traditional beliefs of our childhood, in spite of the contradictory facts constantly presented by our experience.

We then come to complexes, perhaps the most interesting chapters in the book. Again taking the "political" complex, we find that the victim's complex "causes him to take up an attitude towards the proposed measure which is quite independent of any absolute merits that the measure may possess." "The two mechanisms which manifest themselves in our example of the politician, the unconscious origin of beliefs and actions, and the subsequent process of rationalization to which they are subjected, are of fundamental importance in psychology. They may be observed every day in every individual. That a man generally knows why he thinks in a certain way, and why he does certain things, is a widespread and cherished belief of the human race. It is, unfortunately, for the most part an erroneous one. The prevalence of 'rationalization' is responsible for the erroneous belief that reason plays the dominating role in the formation of human thought and conduct. The 'reason' is usually evolved subsequently to satisfy our craving for rationality." Chapters vi. and vii. on Repression and Conflict approach more closely to the insanity part of the question, and show the danger to the mind of both, and is worthy of much attention to a nation whose religion is one of repression and morbidity. Take the following from chapter x.:—

> All non-rational opinions and beliefs appear to their possessor as propositions whose truth is immediately obvious, and whose validity it is silly to question. They are held, moreover, with a peculiar emotional warmth and instinctive certainty which is difficult to define, and whose character will be at once appreciated by anyone with a reasonable capacity for self-introspection. Genuine knowledge, the product of scientific deduction from observed facts, appears in quite another guise to this. It is relatively cold and devoid of the warmth which accompanies non-rational beliefs. If truth is called in question we are not annoyed, but merely stimulated to examine with renewed attention the foundations upon which it rests.....We shall easily recognize that non-rational beliefs and opinions are the product of complexes, and that the peculiar warmth we have described is the emotional tone which invariably accompanies the action of a complex.

After reading this book we begin to see the limitations of the human brain, the ease with which a "complex" may begin in the mind on a false foundation, and the way in which a "complex" becomes a "logic-proof compartment," the avoidance of which should be the object of all education and mental training, and that "the rational method adequately used would tell us that on the great majority of these questions there can be for us but one attitude—that of suspended judgment."

The average man who has not studied psychology at all, if asked whether he is always open to listen to any reasonable proposition which is put before him, will at once answer, certainly. Probably, however, not one in a thousand is really able to do any such thing.

Y. C.

Canon E. A. Stuart, of Canterbury, left estate of the value of £35,546. This amount should be sufficient to ensure his going to the place where there is no winter.

[1] Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism* (1911), p. 88.

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Notes from Scotland.

SURELY the Rev. Ross, of Kilmarnock, will now be pleased when the Lord Advocate has been forced to intervene in the Glasgow Tramway Draw. In his latest letter to the papers, the reverend gentleman gives his whole case away when he inquires, Why does the Corporation of Glasgow openly and knowingly flout the law? And he answers: They know that such lotteries are illegal, for the Churches were forbidden by law to have raffles for charitable and religious purposes. Did the reverend gentleman raise the question of the morality of bazaars and raffles, which were held daily, and which certainly had become a great nuisance, previous to the time when the law intervened and pronounced them illegal? It is certain the Church will gain nothing by its action in this matter, as the indignation expressed at their interference is very bitter.

Speaking at a public function last week, Lord Provost Dunlop, referring to the Tramway Draw, said that Mr. Dalrymple had conceived a brilliant scheme, which, he was credibly informed, the whole nation wanted to copy. They had been assailed with suggestions that they were committing a terrible crime; they were teaching the nation to be gamblers. He looked at it in this way, and he said this in face of all the clergymen who liked to stand up against him, that we were a democratic nation, and he saw no evil in it. The funds were going to a great and good object. The nation or the man who had not got the sporting instinct were not worthy of being called either a nation or a man. For the benefit of those people of tender conscience who would not accept a prize, they had put on the little red boxes; but while in one week the boxes had realized the enormous sum of £37, the War tickets in the same week had brought in £1,700. We were a democratic nation—£1,700 against £37; and yet we were told the £37 people were to rule the nation. He left it at that.

The Rev. Dr. McLean, in preaching his farewell sermon in St. Columba Church, Glasgow, said that what made the work of the Church most difficult of all was that science and civilization had made the world without so beautiful and so attractive to us that we were devoting too much attention to it, to the ignoring of the spiritual and eternal world. Those who could go back half a century, who knew the differences between Glasgow then and now, knew what obstacles science and civilization had been to worship. Amusement had been carried to an art and science, and the pursuit of pleasure during the week had been accompanied by the emptying of the Churches on Sunday. Perhaps the Rev. Dr. McLean would like to get back to the times when the clergy had the power to compel people to attend church or suffer under the pains and penalties then in operation.

The Rev. Angus Mackay, of the Free Church, Kingussie, said the other day: "I regard the attitude of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland towards Sunday labour on allotments as a grievous and terrible mistake. There is no doubt that these breaches of the Sabbath Day have been followed by very unfavourable weather." It does seem peculiar that some of the potatoes planted on the Sunday were up and above ground quite as early, and in some cases before those planted on the week-days; and besides, is Sunday not the only day out of the seven on which the reverend gentleman does anything in the way of work or exercising the faculties of his stupid wee brain?

When the children's church service was over, an old lady asked one of the boys which one of the hymns he liked best. She was amazed when he replied that he liked "the one that spoke about the wee fellah that pinched the old man's watch. What he referred to was:—

> The old man meek and mild,
> The priest of Israel, slept,
> His watch the temple child,
> The little Levite, kept.

CALEDON.

Bowman and Others
V.
Secular Society, Limited.

(LORD SUMNER—*continued from p. 364.*)

IF later cases seem to dwell more on religion and less on considerations of State, I think, when examined, they prove to be of small authority. In Waddington's case (1 B. and C. 26) there seems to have been little argument, and no decisions were cited. R. *v.* Davison (4 B. and Ald. 329) decides in effect that contempt of God in court may be also contempt of court. In 1838 Baron Alderson told a York jury (Reg *v.* Gathercole, 2 Lewin 254) that "a person may, without being liable to prosecution for it, attack Judaism and Mohammedanism, or even any sect of the Christian religion (save the established religion of the country), and the only reason why the latter is in a different situation from the others is because it is the form established by law, and is, therefore, part of the constitution of the country. In like manner, and for the same reason, any general attack on Christianity is the subject of criminal prosecution, because Christianity is the established religion of the country." The defendant, in fact, had not made any general attack on Christianity, but, being a Protestant clergyman, had foully aspersed a Roman Catholic nunnery. Whether this strange dictum was material or not, and whether it is right or not (and Baron Alderson's is a great name), it only shows that the gist of the offence of blasphemy is a supposed tendency in fact to shake the fabric of society generally, its tendency to provoke an immediate breach of the peace is not the essential, but only an occasional feature. After all, to insult a Jew's religion is not less likely to provoke a fight than to insult an Episcopalian's; and, on the other hand, the publication of a dull volume of blasphemies may well provoke nothing worse than throwing it into the fire.

Hetherington's case (5 Jurist, O. S., 529; 4 State Trials, N. S., 563) was a motion in arrest of judgment. Even here, along of the propositions that the old Testament contains the law of God, and that "it is certain that the Christian religion is part of the law of the land" (per Mr. Justice Patterson) we find Lord Chief Justice Denman saying: "As to the argument that the relaxation of oaths is a reason for departing from old law, we could not accede to it without saying that there is no mode by which religion holds society together but by the administration of oaths, but that is not so, for religion.....contains the most powerful sanction for good conduct." R *v.* Moxon (4 State Trials N. S., 721) is of small authority. Later prosecutions add nothing until Lord Coleridge's direction to the jury in Reg. *v.* Ramsey and Foote. For thirty years this direction has been followed, nor was it argued by the Appellants that the publication of anti-Christian opinions, without ribaldry or profanity, would now support a conviction for blasphemy. It is no part of your Lordships' task on the present occasion to decide whether Lord Coleridge's ruling was or was not the last word on the crime of blasphemy, but the history of the cases and the conclusion at present reached go to show that what the law censures or resists is not the mere expression of anti-Christian opinion, whatever be the doctrines assailed or the arguments employed.

It is common ground that there is no instance recorded of a conviction for a blasphemous libel, from which the fact, or, at any rate, the supposition of the fact, of contumely and ribaldry has been absent, but this was suggested to be of no real significance for these reasons. Such prosecutions, it was said, often seem to be persecutions, and are, therefore, unpopular, and so only the gross cases have been proceeded against. This explains the immunity of the numerous agnostic or atheistic writings so much relied upon by Secularists. All it really shows is that no one cares to prosecute such things till they become indecent, not that, decently put, they are not against the law. Personally, I doubt all this. Orthodox zeal has never been lacking in this country. The Society for Carrying into Effect His Majesty's Proclamations against Vice and Immorality, which prosecuted Williams in 1797, has had many counterparts both before and since, and as anti-Christian writings are all the more

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insidious and effective for being couched in decorous terms, I think the fact that their authors are not prosecuted, while ribald blasphemers are, really shows that lawyers in general hold such writings to be lawful because decent, not that they are tolerable for their decency though unlawful in themselves. In fact, most men have thought that such writings are better punished with indifference than with imprisonment.

My Lords, with all respect for the great names of the lawyers who have used it, the phrase, "Christianity is part of the Law of England," is really not law; it is rhetoric, as truly so as was Erskine's preroration when prosecuting Williams, "No man can be expected to be faithful to the authority of man who revolts against the Government of God." One asks what part of our law may Christianity be, and what part of Christianity may it be that is part of our law? Lord Chief Justice Best once said in Bird *v.* Holbrook (4 Bing. at p. 641, a case of injury by setting a spring gun); there is no act which Christianity forbids that the law will not reach; if it were otherwise Christianity would not be, as it always has been, held to be part of the law of England"; but this was rhetoric too. Spring guns, indeed, were got rid of, not by Christianity, but by Act of Parliament. "Thou shalt not steal" is part of our law. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is part of our law, but another part, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is not part of our law at all. Christianity has tolerated chattel slavery; not so the present law of England. Ours is, and always has been, a Christian State. The English family is built on Christian ideas, and if the national religion is not Christian there is none. English law may well be called a Christian law, but we apply many of its rules and most of its principles with equal justice and equally good government, in heathen communities, and its sanctions even in courts of conscience, are material and not spiritual.

Frequently as the proposition question appears in one form or another, it is always as something taken for granted and handed down from the past rather than as a deliberate and reasoned proposition. It constantly has been used in charging juries as to unmistakably scurrilous words, where there was neither opportunity nor occasion for defining the limits of legitimate religious and irreligious opinion. I question if the foundations of the criminal law of blasphemous libel were ever fully investigated in any court before Ramsey's case. Even then Lord Coleridge passed over numerous decisions. To be sure, his omissions were faithfully dealt with soon afterwards by Mr. Justice Stephen, one of his own *puisnes*, in a popular periodical, and this paper your Lordships allowed Mr. Talbot to read as part of his argument, to which, nevertheless, it added nothing either in learning or in cogency. Such observations, too, have often been employed by Judges of first instance in cases relating to charitable trusts, where there was equally little need for any analysis of the proposition or for discussion, either historical or juridical, of its implications. It is fairly clear, too, that men of the utmost eminence have thought and said advisedly, that mere denials of sundry essentials of the Christian faith are indictable as such. Hawkins, in his *Pleas of the Crown* (Bk. i. ch. 5, ss. 1 and 2), says that "all blasphemies against God in denying His Being .....as well as all profane scoffing at the Holy Scriptures" are punishable offences, and adds as the reason for punishing the latter that offences of this nature "tend to subvert all religion or morality, which are the foundation of government." Blackstone (Bk. iv., ch. 4) describes a class of crimes consisting in "offences more immediately against the Almighty, by denying His being or providence or by contumelious reproaches of our Saviour Christ" and "all profane scoffing at the Holy Scriptures." Probably few great judges have been willing to go further in questions of religious liberty than Lord Mansfield in his eloquent address to this House in Evans *v.* Chamberlain of London (2 Burns Eccl. Law, 218). Yet there he says: "The eternal principles of natural religion are part of the common law; the essential principles of revealed religion are part of the common law, so that any person reviling, subverting, or ridiculing them may be prosecuted at common law." Again, the very careful Commissioners on the Criminal Law, of whom Serjeant Starkie was one and Sir William Wightman another, observe in their Sixth Report: "Although the law forbids all denial of the being and providence of God or the Christian religion, it is only when irreligion assumes the form of an insult to God and men that the interference of the criminal law has taken place." Nevertheless, it seems too clear to need citation of authorities (the opinions of the majority of the Judges in your Lordships' House in Shore *v.* Wilson having been fully discussed) in order to show that a temperate and respectful denial, even of the existence of God, is not an offence against our law, however great an offence it may be against the Almighty himself, and, except for Cowan *v.* Milbourne, it has never been decided outside of the region of charitable trusts that such a denial affects civil rights. I cannot bring myself to think that it does so. What, after all is really the gist of the offence of blasphemy, or of its nature as a cause of civil disability? Ribaldry has been treated as the gist, which must be a temporal matter; as between creature and Creator, how can the bad taste or the provocative character of such a denial come into question? The denial itself, not the mode of it, must be what merits the Divine anger: but that is an offence against God. Our courts of law, in the exercise of their own jurisdiction, do not, and never did that I can find, punish irreligious words as offences against God. As to them they held that *deorum injurias dis cure*. They dealt with such words for their manner, their violence, or ribaldry, or more fully stated, for their tendency to endanger the peace then and there, to deprave public morality generally, to shake the fabric of society, and to be a cause of civil strife. The words, as well as the acts, which tend to endanger society differ from time to time in proportion as society is stable or insecure in fact, or is believed by its reasonable members to be open to assault. In the present day meetings or processions are held lawful, which, a hundred and fifty years ago would have been deemed seditious, and this is not because the law is weaker or has changed, but because, the times having changed, society is stronger than before. In the present day reasonable men do not apprehend the dissolution or the downfall of society because religion is publicly assailed by methods not scandalous. Whether it is possible that in the future irreligious attacks, designed to undermine fundamenta institutions of our society, may come to be criminal in themselves, as constituting a public danger, is a matter that does not arise. The fact that opinion grounded on experience has moved one way does not in law preclude the possibility of its moving on fresh experience in the other; nor does it bind succeeding generations, when conditions have again changed. After all, the question whether a given opinion is a danger to society is a question of the times, and is a question of fact. I desire to say nothing that would limit the right of society to protect itself by process of law from the dangers of the moment, whatever that right may be, but only to say that, experience having proved dangers once thought real to be now negligible, and dangers once very possibly imminent to have now passed away, there is nothing in the general rules as to blasphemy and irreligion, as known to the law, which prevents us from varying their application to the particular circumstances of our time in accordance with that experience. If these considerations are right, an the attitude of the law both civil and criminal towards all religions depends fundamentally on the safety of the State and not on the doctrines or metaphysics of those who profess them, it is not necessary to consider whether or why any given body was relieved by the law at one time or frowned on at another, or to analyse creeds and tenets, Christian and other, in which I can profess no competence. Accordingly I am of opinion that acts merely done in furtherance of paragraph 3 (*a*) and other paragraphs of the Respondents' Memorandum are not now contrary to the law, and that the Appeal should be dismissed.

LORD BUCKMASTER.

My Lords, the terms of the Will of the Testator and the circumstances leading up to this Appeal do not demand close attention, for according to the Appellants' arguments the whole question to be decided depends upon the meaning of the Third Article of the Memorandum of Association of the Respondent Company, and upon the determination of whether this article, properly construed, renders the

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real object of the Respondent Company either criminal or illegal as contrary to the common law. The point of construction must be decided by considering the fair meaning of the language used and without resort to external means. Neither the documents preliminary to the incorporation of a Company registered with a Memorandum of Association, nor the action of Directors after a Company has been formed, can properly be received in evidence for the purpose of determining what the objects of the Company may be.

Clause 3 sub-head (*a*) of the Memorandum defines the main object of the Company in these words: "To promote in such a way as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief; and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action." Upon this follow a series of objects which in themselves it is not suggested are obnoxious to the law, while the last sub-head of the Clause is in general terms, and gives power "to do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to all or any of the above-named objects." Without this last provision the true construction of the Memorandum would involve the view that if the defined objects could be attained, either by lawful or unlawful means, it was only those that were lawful that were permitted. But the latter provision makes the meaning quite plain. This conclusion, however, does not affect the Appellants' case, which depends upon the assertion that there are no lawful ways by which the objects of the Society can be carried out. It is said that the true meaning of the Memorandum is to encourage the propagation of doctrines directly contrary to the Christian faith—doctrines that are inimical to the central principle of Christianity and incapable of reconciliation with any essential portion of its creeds. Lord Justice Warrington, indeed, thought that to promote such objects would be to promote Atheism, and as this may be a material matter it is necessary to state the reasons why I am unable to accept this view.

Natural law may, as it seems to me, be properly regarded as part of the Divine purpose revealed through the instrument of reason; and if natural knowledge be accepted, as on this assumption it must, as equivalent to the truth, then, to take that as the basis of human conduct, as the first part of the clause directs, does not, to my mind, necessarily mean that a belief in God is thereby excluded. The latter part of the clause, which says that human welfare in this world is "the proper end of all thought and action," is more difficult. That human welfare is a proper end of thought and action few would dispute—it is the end on which the noblest minds have concentrated their highest effort; even if it be regarded as the sole object, I can conceive it being stedfastly pursued by people who possessed a firm belief in a supreme invisible Power using the instrument of man's agency to accomplish the Divine will. That this clause of the Memorandum defines an object contrary to the generally accepted conception of the Christian faith is, I think, assented to by all who have heard this case, and from this view I am not prepared to dissent. It is not necessary, and if unnecessary it is certainly not desirable, to attempt a definition of what the law would regard as the essential features of that faith. It is sufficient to say that the Respondent Company has as its main object the propagation of doctrines hostile to the Christian religion, and the question to be determined is whether it is, in consequence of illegal association, incapable of receiving or holding property.

(To be concluded.)

Inquiry into the evidence of a doctrine is not to be made once for all, and then taken as finally settled. It is never lawful to stifle a doubt; for either it can be honestly answered by means of the inquiry already made, or else it proves that the inquiry was not complete. "But," says one, "I am a busy man; I have no time for the long course of study which would be necessary to make me in any degree a competent judge of certain questions, or even able to understand the nature of the arguments." Then he should have no time to believe.—*W. K. Clifford.*

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.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (Colingwood Hall, 12A Clayton Street): 7, Business Meeting and Chat.

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INDOOR.

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, June 21, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Miss Kough, "The Old Order Changeth."

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, H. V. Storey, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, Mr. Burke, "Faith and Science."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Percy S. Wilde, a Lecture

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, George Rule, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

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THE FREETHINKER

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Views and Opinions.

Education and the War.

No apology is needed for once more returning to the subject of religion in the schools. It is one of the vital questions which concern Freethinkers, and it involves not only educational issues, as such, but also very important questions of modern polity. Nor are there wanting signs that the Churches are resolved on making a strenuous, perhaps a final, effort to secure a firmer hold on the schools as their share of gain from the War. In this, their task is not nearly so hopeless as some people imagine. For our own part, we have never shared, and do not now share, the belief that the coming of peace will find us a nation comparatively united in the desire to achieve a social millennium. The mass of people will be concerned only with the relief following so long a period of great strain. The millions of war-weary soldiers will be too ready to enjoy a season of peace to engage in a new warfare at home. And, withal, we shall have the forces of reaction united in making good their position, taking whatever steps are needful to conserve their interests, and greatly assisted by the three or four years of sacrifice of popular liberties and social ideals which the War has entailed. No one would be more pleased than ourselves to find these prognostications falsified by events, but we greatly fear their realization. And it is idle to refuse to face facts because they are not of the kind we desire.

* * *

The Struggle for the Child.

The question of religious instruction in State schools has been raised several times of late. It was the subject the other day of a discussion in the House of Lords, initiated by Lord Parmoor; it forms the text of a Circular Letter recently sent by a Church Council to all the diocesan educational bodies in England, and in other ways one is able to arrive at the conclusion that "educational reconstruction after the War" means, for the Churches, a readiness to pay teachers better salaries provided more religion, and a more definite religion, is given to the children. The education given, to quote the Circular Letter, is to be "alive with religious force and spirit," and "the schools of Christian England" are to be "places of definite Christian instruction." From other sources it is plain that, in the face of the loss of prestige due to the War, the Nonconformist bodies may be ready to strike a bargain with the Establishment and sell the position, as they have sold it before. A grip on the children is vital to the Churches. It is more vital to them than it is to us, because we can trust our principles to the decision of a matured intelligence. It is vital to them, because if they lose the child they lose all. It is important to us, because if we can see that the child gets a fair start in life, we have made the first step towards the creation of an intelligent and useful citizen.

* * *

Coercing the Teachers.

The speeches of Lord Parmoor, the Bishop of Wakefield, and others (it is significant that the speech of Lord Sheffield in opposition was not reported in any of the papers) together with the circular letter, make it clear that what is now aimed at is not only the introduction of more denominational religion into the schools, but also the more effective religious instruction of the teachers. The Bishop of Wakefield complained that "a teacher was trained in the training colleges on the method of imparting instruction in every subject save the one which, in the opinion of the overwhelming body of the people, should be the predominant subject in the training of character." We leave for a time the question of the veracity of the concluding words of the Bishop, and, indeed, from one point of view, the opening words are unobjectionable. If religion is a subject that ought to be taught in the schools, if it is essential to the training of children, then it is only right to ask that teachers should be as carefully trained in this subject as in others. But it means a more definite religious test for teachers. And it means penalizing those teachers who are not religious even more than they are penalized to-day. If teachers are to be carefully trained in religion, if reports on their fitness in this direction are to be considered in the granting of certificates, and in the making of appointments, it requires no great sagacity to see where it will all end. The presence of religion in the schools at all makes it difficult for thousands of teachers to avoid playing the hypocrite. If the Bishop of Wakefield gets his way this hypocrisy will commence with their entering the training college. And a profession of religion will certainly become a condition—expressed or unexpressed—of their appointment.

* * *

Tradition versus Facts.

Lord Parmoor quoted with approval a *Times* writer who said: "It is essential at the present time to bring out in no uncertain fashion the predominantly religious nature of the whole tradition of English education..... Education without instruction in the Christian verities

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is far more dangerous to national life than any inefficiency of organization or inadequacy of curricula." And Lord Sydenham said that if we "neglected spiritual education the result upon the country would be disastrous. The most terrible calamity that the world had ever known could be plainly traced to misdirection." Neither of the speakers seemed to be aware of the fact that such education as the world has had, and for many generations past, has been predominantly religious. Germany is no exception to this rule, since its rulers have never failed to recognize the power of religion as an aid to their ambitions. Of all the countries now at war, France is the only one in which education has been definitely and avowedly separated from religion. Will either Lord Parmoor or Lord Sydenham say that education separated from religion has been disastrous there? And if they will not assert it of France, what reason is there for asserting that a similar policy would be disastrous in this country? That Germany has made a bad use of its educational system no one will deny. But are we doing much better when we utilize the schools to force upon the defenceless minds of children doctrines of which large numbers of educated people are ashamed, and which, as a much larger number will admit, are open to the most serious doubt? It is a prostitution of the schools to use them as a training ground for militarism, and to narrow that which should be devoted to the ideal of humanity to the promotion of imperialistic ambitions. And it is, none the less, a prostitution of the schools to use them for the perpetuation of theological doctrines which ought to have been discarded long ago.

* * *

What Freethinkers May Do.

It is to be observed that nearly all these speeches and circulars in favour of religious instruction in State schools proceed on the cool assumption that the question is one to be settled by a consultation between Christians. The great lesson that these people have to learn is that England is not a Christian country—save in the sense that the majority of its inhabitants profess some form of Christianity. And the majority is a majority in name only. On what they believe there is the widest possible divergence and the sharpest possible contradiction. But there are others beside Christians, and these form an integral part of the State. Unpleasant as the recognition of this fact is to Christians, they will have to face it. And it will be the fault of these non-Christians if they are not made to face it in the near future. Freethinkers are an active-minded body as a whole, and they take a part in all sorts of social and political movements. They can, then, if they will, make their influence felt. There is a great cry at present for reconstruction in education, and this offers a golden opportunity for action. In trade unions, in social or political or educational meetings, wherever the question of education is raised, let them bring this vital question of Secular Education to the fore. As we have seen, Christians are not slow to urge their claims, and Freethinkers should certainly not be less backward in insisting that the modern State, as it embraces all varieties of opinion, should maintain a strict neutrality between them. In insisting upon the application of this principle they are asking for nothing for themselves with which all others are not in perfect agreement. They are asking only for justice from the State between members of the State. Above all, they are claiming justice and freedom for the child—a justice that will protect it from the machinations of this or that Church, and a freedom that will permit its individuality to develop with the aid of an education based on verifiable knowledge and rational assumption.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Abraham Lincoln: Freethinker.

DR. FORT NEWTON, in his first sermon as pastor of the City Temple, stated that Lincoln was an ideal man, and that if every citizen of the United States of America resembled him there would certainly ensue an ideal state of things there. The laws would be just and humane, woman would be honoured as man's equal, "social slavery and industrial brutality would cease to exist," and the nation would be what "it was meant to be, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the service of humanity." Lincoln, so true of heart, so clear of mind, living with malice towards none, with charity for all, was a character worthy of universal imitation. Now, it is true that Dr. Newton did not formally claim him as a Christian; but it is equally true that he did not even remotely hint that he was an unbeliever. Inasmuch, however, as the direct object of his discourse was to show that "Christ is all in all," and in human life, those unacquainted with the illustrious Emancipator's story would naturally have inferred that he had been an enthusiastic follower of the Galilean. So far as the overwhelming majority of his congregation were concerned, the preacher's tactful, though not truthful, silence as to Lincoln's religious views was entirely misleading. In this respect, Dr. Newton loyally followed the example of the innumerable host of his ministerial brethren. It seems to be taken for granted in his profession that every man of genius, every heroic performer of mighty deeds, every practical lover and servant of his fellow-beings, must of necessity be a believer in Christ. When such a philanthropist dies it is customary either tacitly to assume, or openly to assert, that he was a devout believer in the Lord Jesus, though possibly without knowing it. As is well known, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. During his public life he had been systematically reticent on the subject of religion. Neither in his speeches nor in his presidential messages had he been in the habit of making any reference to it. Even his Proclamation of Emancipation contained no allusion to a Supreme Being. When, on the 22nd of July, 1862, he read it to his Cabinet, Secretary Chase observed that there ought to be something about God at the close, the President replied: "Put it in; it won't hurt it," an answer which carried with it a suggestion that the desired addition would not help it either.

But no sooner was the great man dead and buried than fanatical Christians began to claim him as a great servant of the Lord. From pulpit and press the word went forth that the murdered President had lived an exemplary Christian life, General Collis going so far as to assert that "Lincoln invoked the power of Almighty God, not the Deist God, but the God whom he worshipped under the forms of the Christian Church of which he was a member." Certain letters he had written were supposed to explain his attitude to the Christian religion; but the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Gurley, who made such a statement about them, admitted her entire ignorance of their contents, and that they had been destroyed by fire.

An anonymous but eminent Christian lady told an equally anonymous friend that once upon a time the President spoke to her thus:—

> I think I can say with sincerity that I hope I am a Christian. I had lived until my Willie died without fully realizing these things. That blow overwhelmed me. It showed me my weakness as I had never felt it before, and I think I can safely say that I know something of a change of heart, and I will further add that it has been my intention for some time, at a suitable opportunity, to make a public religious profession.

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The late Colonel Ingersoll characterized "this falsehood," which had been related by a Mr. Seip, as "an orphan, a lonely lie without father or mother." The same remark applies to the tale that, on being presented with a Bible by some coloured people of Baltimore, he warmly thanked them, and described the Bible as "God's best gift to man, without which we could not have known right from wrong." Those who knew Lincoln personally, and his estimate of the Scriptures, had no difficulty in showing how absolutely impossible it was for him to have so spoken.

It is a noteworthy fact that not one of the clergymen who claimed that Lincoln was a Christian was able to testify that Lincoln had ever so styled himself in his hearing. The Rev. Mr. Gurley, already mentioned, was quoted as one authority for the truth of the legend; but strangely enough, it was this same Mr. Gurley upon whom had been conferred the honour of preaching a funeral sermon over the body of the murdered President at the White House, and in that discourse he had not claimed that he was a Christian—had, indeed, not said anything about Christ at all. It should also be borne in mind that Bishop Simpson, in his funeral oration, "said nothing about Lincoln having been a Christian."

We are now in possession of the testimony borne by personal, some of them lifelong, friends of the world-famed President, to the effect that he was a convinced, thorough-going Freethinker. Mr. Herndon, for many years his partner, Justice David Davis, Colonel Ward Lamon, the Hon. Jesse W. Fell, William G. Green, the Hon. James Tuttle, Colonel John G. Nicolay, and Colonel Ingersoll, all of whom knew him well, and several of whom were on terms of close intimacy with him, unanimously declared that "he did not believe in the inspiration of the Bible, or the divinity of Christ, or the scheme of salvation, and that he utterly repudiated the dogma of eternal pain." Mr. Herndon added that he did not believe "in the existence of a personal God." In addition to all, we have the clear testimony of Mrs. Lincoln that "her husband *was not a Christian*." Surely, such evidence, derived from such sources, is perfectly conclusive in utterly discrediting the various legends set in circulation by those whose delusion is that nobility of character, blossoming into just and benevolent deeds, is possible only to genuine disciples of Christ. It is a fundamental article of their creed that Freethought is inevitably either the parent or the offspring of a depraved, wicked heart. But as the Freethought ascribed to Lincoln neither sprang from nor gave rise to vicious habits, there was no escape from the conclusion that, at bottom, he was all along a true Christian. That they were radically mistaken is now beyond all serious controversy. Like Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, Lincoln's beauty of character and purity of motive owed nothing to Christian influence, but were the natural fruit of a clean, healthy nature. He was in every respect superior to the Christian professors in the midst of whom he lived. In the 'thirties and 'forties of last century the Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopal, and Methodist Churches of the Southern States were passing resolutions in justification of slavery as a Divinely ordained institution, which resolutions are now embodied in *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe. In 1831 "Lincoln went down the Mississippi in a flat boat at the extravagant salary of ten dollars a month."

> When he reached New Orleans, he and some of his companions went about the city. Among other places, they visited a slave market, where men and women were being sold at auction. A young coloured girl was on the block. Lincoln heard the brutal words of the auctioneer—the savage remarks of bidders. The scene filled his soul with indignation and horror. Turning to his companions, he said: "Boys, if ever I get a chance to hit slavery, by God I'll hit it hard" (*The Works of Ingersoll*, vol. iii., p. 143).

In the Northern as well as in the Southern States, the majority of the Churches vigorously supported the institution of slavery. As Lincoln himself once wittily put it, the advocates of abolition were "sinners calling the righteous to repentance." Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, and Henry Ward Beecher were insurgent sons of the Church, upon whom her wrath was not seldom visited. A few men of lesser weight, but fully as zealous friends of the slaves, were brutally put to death, notably, Elijah Lovejoy, of Alton, Illinois, of whose courage Emerson speaks with glowing enthusiasm, and John Brown, of Harper's Ferry fame. The Harmony Presbytery of South Carolina solemnly resolved that, as the great head of the Church had recognized the relation of master and slave, it followed that "the existence of slavery itself was not opposed to the will of God," and that those who condemned it had "submitted their necks to the yoke of men, sacrificed their Christian liberty of conscience, and left the infallible word of God for the fancies and doctrines of men." As Ingersoll says, "it does not seem possible that only a few years ago our Constitution, our laws, our Courts, the Pulpit and the Press, defended and upheld the institution of slavery,—that it was a crime to feed the hungry—to give water to the lips of thirst—shelter to a woman flying from the whip and chain"; but it is incontrovertibly true. The Church not only defended and upheld slavery, but cruelly persecuted those of her members who had the courage to denounce it, and to advocate its abolition; and the fact remains that the man who actually emancipated the slaves in the States was outside all Churches, and did not even believe in Christ.

We thank Dr. Fort Newton for his fine eulogy of Lincoln, but beg to remind him that this man, whose "life was a revelation of the genius and purpose of the Republic, its reason for being, and its prophecy of times to come," made no secret of the fact that he was a Freethinker. To him Christ was not all, and in all. America's greatest and noblest statesman did not even pretend to love the Lord, and to "an angel writing in a book of gold" the names of Heaven's favourites he would have said,—

> Write me as one that loves his fellow men.

We cannot conclude better than in the closing words of Colonel Ingersoll's lecture on Abraham Lincoln delivered in 1894:—

> He knew no fear except the fear of doing wrong. Hating slavery, pitying the master—seeking to conquer, not persons, but prejudices—he was the embodiment of the self-denial, the courage, the hope, and the nobility of a Nation. He spoke not to inflame, not to upbraid, but to convince. He raised his hands, not to strike, but in benediction. He longed to pardon. He loved to see the pearls of joy on the cheeks of a wife whose husband he had rescued from death. Lincoln was the grandest figure of the fiercest civil war. He is the gentlest memory of our world (*Works*, vol. iii., p. 173).

J. T. Lloyd.

"God is With Us" (The Kaiser).

The air with fragrance is laden,
And the meadows are decked with gold;
All Nature's myriad voices
Thy wond'rous love unfold;
Blind to thy love and beauty,
We have fashioned this human hell—
List to the song of the skylark!
Hark to the bursting shell!

P. A.

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Under a Fool's Cap.

Rabelais laughing in his easy chair. —*Pope.*

I class Rabelais with the great creative minds of the world. —*Coleridge.*

Le rire c'est le propre de l'homme. —*Rabelais.*

FRENCH literature is one blaze of splendid scepticism from Abelard to Anatole France, and the name of Francois Rabelais is one of the greatest in this splendid beadroll. The popular idea of Rabelais coincides with Pope's famous line, depicting the famous writer "laughing in his easy chair." He is pictured as one who laughs and mocks at all things; a hog for appetite; a monkey for tricks. His genius had many facets, and he has been described as a great ethical teacher, a grossly obscene writer, a reckless buffoon, a Catholic, a Protestant, and a Freethinker. To paint him as a moralist alone is to ignore the innate drollery of his character. To set him up as a mere mountebank is to forget the stern reality which underlies his writing.

To treat Rabelais as destitute of all serious purpose in art or life is a great error. Whatever Rabelais may have been, he was not a trifler. He had seen ecclesiastical life from the inside, and he hated priests with every drop of his blood. He studied Greek when it was a forbidden language, and was an enthusiastic disciple of learning when scholars carried their lives in their hands. His zeal for intellectual freedom, untrammelled by priestcraft, entitles him to rank with Erasmus and Von Hutten as an apostle of humanism.

Of middle-class parentage, Francois Rabelais was born in the fifteenth century near the lovely little city of Chinon, on the Vienne, where Henry II. cursed his sons and died. Always he regarded Touraine, its cities, rivers, and vineyards, with affectionate admiration. "Noble, ancient, the first in the world," so he called it in the fullness of his heart. His father, an innkeeper, wished to make him a priest. Accordingly, little Francois was sent at nine years of age to the Benedictine monks of Scully, so young that the white vestment was put over the child's frock. Later he was removed to the Franciscan Monastery of Fontenoy le Comte. The Franciscan vows included ignorance as well as celibacy and poverty. For fifteen years he remained there, taking priest's orders at the age of twenty-eight. Always inquisitive, he amassed that encyclopædic knowledge which he put to so good a use in his immortal book *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.

It is to this long period spent among the bigoted, narrow, intolerant sons of the great lying Catholic Church that we owe his undying hatred of priestcraft. It breaks out in nearly every page of his writings, here passionately, there sorrowfully, with a cry of rage, a sob of pain, or a mocking laugh of *sanglante derision*. He hated the "monk birds" more bitterly than even Erasmus, for his nature was stronger.

At the age of forty he came into the world a free man, at liberty to follow his studies, burning with a pathetic enthusiasm for the new learning. He threw aside the monastic habit, and became secretary to the Bishop of Maillezais. Afterwards he went to the University of Montpelier with the object of getting a medical degree. When he attended the lectures he was within sight of his fiftieth year, and he sat by the side of men young enough to be his sons. Two years later he went to Lyons, where he held an appointment as physician to the hospital. His friend, Etienne Dolet, the Freethinker, was already established as a printer in the place.

Rabelais' connection with the first reformers of France is certain; the extent difficult to determine. He had no desire for the martyr's crown, and he never contemplated following Calvin into exile, or Berguin to the stake. As he humorously explained, he was "too thirsty to like fire." His sympathies, too, were antagonistic to all dogmas. "Presbyter," to him, "was but priest writ large." Luther and Calvin were as abhorrent to him as the priests. The society of Des Perriers, Etienne Dolet, and the Lyonnais Freethinkers, was more congenial to his habits of thought. Moreover, he had an intimate knowledge of the power of the Church, and of the malignity of her hired assassins.

Heretics were then handed over to the secular arm to be burnt for the good of their souls, and the greater glory of God. Rabelais did not intend, if he could help it, to be butchered to make a Roman holiday. When he was denounced as a heretic, he challenged his enemies to produce an heretical proposition from his writings. They were unequal to the task, but, nevertheless, the heresy was there. Rabelais' caution was necessary if he wished to live. Some of his contemporaries suffered severely for heresy. Dolet was burnt to death, Des Perriers was driven to suicide, Marot was a half-starved wanderer in Piedmont. Giordano Bruno, whom he had met at Rome, was also done to death in the accepted Roman manner. Rabelais had every reason for not wishing to be "saved by fire."

His writings, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, which have kept his memory green through the ages, are a series of satires in a vein of riotous and uproarious mirth on monks, priests, pedants, and all the solecisms of his time. With all their licentiousness and freedom of expression, they reveal a heart aflame with love of liberty, and a passionate desire for the triumph of truth and justice.

It has been said with truth that Rabelais despised women. He did not write till an age when the passion of youth had consumed itself to ashes. Love was killed in Rabelais by that hateful system of monkery which has filled Christendom with unspeakable horrors. Poor Rabelais! Half of humanity was absent from his mind. Love, the central fire of the universe, the source of all human joys and sympathies, the bond of society, appears in the accursed monastic system in which he was trained as corruption and depravity. The damnable discipline surrounded Rabelais from the time he wore a child's frock till he was a man of forty, and the best side of his nature was strangled. He never loved; never even thought of loving. He had no more respect for women than a eunuch in an Eastern seraglio. Nay, more, there had even been crushed out of him that love for his mother which characterizes every Frenchman worthy of the name. As the old galley-slave used to be known by the dragging foot, on which had been the heavy iron fetter, so when the unlovely years had eaten away manhood, imprisoned with its blind instincts and objectless passions, the monk is known by his sexless mind. Thrice poor Rabelais! The priests spoiled his life. The robe he wore was to him like a bodily deformity, narrowing his view, corrupting his mind. Originally, his nature must have been very different, witness those exquisite chapters in which he describes the monks of Thelema, who motto was "Liberty."

Tradition has it that he died saying: "I go to seek the great perhaps." We may picture the rage of his opponents when the old man slipped quietly out of their eager clutches. The Catholic Church never forgets, and it was well for the old scholar that his life was not prolonged.

Rabelais went further than contempt for the trappings of Christianity, and he rejected it altogether. He hoped to cure the evil of religion by spreading knowledge, by bringing priestcraft into contempt, by widening the boundaries of thought. It was his desire that his writings

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should be read. To read rationalistic thought is to think rationally, and is the first step towards Freethought. Rabelais knew as much as any man of his time, but he carried his weight of learning with a smile. He was acquainted with the book of the world, and not merely with the world of books. Liberty was Rabelais' sovereign specific for the ills of his time. Finding his contemporaries bound with chains of their own manufacture, it was his life-purpose to break the fetters and set them free.

MIMNERMUS.

Science and Spiritualism.

XV.

(Continued from p. 379.)

Mankind when they grow enthusiastic mistake their hopes and imaginations for evidence of truth, and run like sheep after every new pretender who professes to hold the key of the mystery which they are so passionately anxious to penetrate.

People in search of the miraculous never like to be disappointed.

Belief in the marvellous does not rise from evidence and will not yield to it. There is the easy answer, that infidels are answered according to the impiety of their hearts, that the gods will not and perhaps cannot work miracles in the presence of sceptics.—*J. A. Froude, "A Cagliostro of the Second Century," "Short Studies on Great Subjects"* (1894), vol. iv., pp. 436-454-473.

Discussion and examination are fatal to miracles.....miracles only exist when people believe in them. The supernatural owes its existence only to faith.....miracles.....never occur where they would be most effective.....A miracle at Paris, for instance, before experienced savants, would put an end to all doubts! But, alas! such a thing never happens. A miracle never takes place before an incredulous and sceptical public, the most in need of such a convincing proof. Credulity on the part of the witness is the the essential condition of a miracle. There is not a solitary exception to the rule that miracles are never produced before those who are able or permitted to discuss and criticize them.—*Ernest Renan, "The Apostles"* (1895), p. 28.

EUSAPIA PALLADINO was born and bred in the slums of Naples, and married, early in life, a travelling conjurer, who no doubt taught her the tricks by means of which she afterwards became famous, or notorious. First investigated at Milan in 1892, she has practised as a spirit medium for the last twenty-five years; and although she has been several times exposed, she still retains the faith of several scientific men.

Among those who assisted at the investigation at Milan in 1892 were Professor Brofferio and M. Schiaperelli, Director of the Astronomical Observatory in Milan, who both signed a report expressing their conviction that some of the things witnessed could not be attributed to normal agency.[1] Professor Richet, who attended some of the sittings, though attaching great weight to the phenomena which he had observed, was not completely satisfied. Therefore, with a view to further investigation, Professor Richet, in the summer of 1894, invited Sir Oliver Lodge, Mr. W. H. Myers, and Dr. Ochorowicz, and one or two others, to his own house in the Ile Roubaud, in the Mediterranean, and later at Carqueiranne, to again meet Eusapia.

The sittings were held in "semi-darkness." The phenomena were of the usual type, and consisted mainly of the movement of furniture at a certain distance from the table, the sounding of musical instruments, grasps and touches felt by the sitters, while Eusapia's hands and feet were believed to be secured by those sitting on either side of her. Professor Richet, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Mr. Myers were convinced that some of the phenomena were due to supernormal agency. "Amongst the phenomena for which Sir Oliver Lodge specially vouched 'as being the most easily and securely observed, and as being amply sufficient in themselves to establish a scientifically unrecognized truth,' were the movements of a distant chair, visible in the moonlight, bulging of curtain, sounding of notes of untouched piano and accordion, movement and uplifting of a heavy table, and other purposive movements of apparently distant objects; graspings and pattings of hand, arm, and back, whilst the head, hands, and feet of the medium were under complete control and nowhere near the place touched. Further, the rude outline of a large face was seen against the background of the window; little lights like glow-worms were seen to flit about; some scent like verbena appeared on the medium's hands, and blue marks were made on the under surface of a table previously examined and found clean, and on part of Richet's shirtfront under his waistcoat."[1]

On another occasion, after the seance, Eusapia took Professor Richet's finger and drew it along a clean sheet of paper. The finger-nail was seen to leave a thick blue mark on the clean white paper, as if made with a blue pencil! The amazing thing is that intelligent and clever men could bring themselves to believe that spirits, who are supposed to consist of pure intellect released from all earthly matter, and far transcending us in knowledge and power, could perform such childish antics as making blue marks under tables, on shirtfronts, and paper. Did they believe that spirits carry blue pencils behind their ears, ready for such tricks as these?

It should be stated that all the investigators positively asserted that the hands and feet of the medium were under control during the phenomena. Nevertheless, when the report of the sittings reached Dr. Hodgson—the exposer of the Blavatsky fraud—he pointed out that the precautions described did not exclude trickery, and declared that all the phenomena "described could be accounted for on the assumption that Eusapia could get a hand or foot free." Mr. Myers, Sir O. Lodge, and Professor Richet each replied at length to Hodgson's criticisms, and all declared that they were fully aware of the dangers referred to. "And really," says Podmore, "to impute negligence on this point to Richet and his fellow-investigators would almost seem equivalent to imputing imbecility."[2]

Of course, neither Sir Oliver nor his colleagues were at all shaken in their convictions by Dr. Hodgson's arguments; and to prove their conviction, a further series of sittings were arranged for the following summer at Mr. Myers' house at Cambridge, to which Dr. Hodgson, then living at Boston, in America, was especially invited. The result was the discovery that the tricks were performed exactly as Dr. Hodgson had stated in his criticism. Myers, in communicating the results to the Society for Psychical Research, said: "I cannot doubt that we observed much conscious and deliberate fraud, of a kind which must have needed long practice to bring to its present level of skill. Nor can I find any excuse for her fraud (assuming that such excuse would be valid) in the attitude of mind of the persons, several of them distinguished in the world of science, who assisted in this inquiry. Their attitude was a fair and open one; in all cases they showed patience, and in several cases the impression first made on their minds was distinctly favourable.....I do not think there is adequate reason to suppose that any of the phenomena at Cambridge were genuine."[3]

However, Sir O. Lodge and Richet still maintained their belief in Eusapia, and "A few years later, after witnessing some more of Eusapia's performances in

[1] Podmore, *Studies in Psychical Research*, p. 183. Tuckett, *The Evidence for the Supernatural*, p. 80.

[1] Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, pp. 93-94.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 97.
[3] Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, pp. 97-98.

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Paris, Myers returned to his original allegiance, and formally avowed his renewed belief in the supernormal character of Eusapia's mediumship."[1]

But after the exposure of systematic fraud at Cambridge, the Council of the Society for Psychical Research declined to proceed with any further investigation of Eusapia's powers, and her subsequent performances have been confined to foreign investigators. In 1907 she held sittings with Doctors Herlitzska, Charles Foa, and Aggazzotti, the phenomena at which included "the breaking up of a small table before their eyes, and the impression, by radio-activity, of four finger marks on a sensitized plate wrapped in black paper—which they regarded as unquestionably supernormal."

The most elaborate investigation was undertaken by the Institut General Psychologique of Paris, who between the years 1905 and 1907 held no fewer than forty-three sittings with Eusapia. "Of the investigators the best known are M. and Madame Curie. The circle seems to have included several other competent physicists, and the apparatus employed in the inquiry was as well devised as it was, unfortunately, for the most part unproductive."[2] Of course, when the tests were too rigid, when they could not be got round or got over, then the sitting was "unproductive"—that is, Eusapia did nothing. As Podmore observes: "Eusapia tolerates human 'control'—she understands men and women; but she has a rooted antipathy to scientific apparatus of any kind."

And again, says the same writer:—

> Her feet are generally controlled by being placed over or under the feet of the controller-observer on either side. Unfortunately, the Committee found that she suffered from a painful corn on the right foot, so that this foot had generally to be placed on the left foot of her neighbour instead of under it. As to her hands, she practically insists on the method of control already described; one hand may, as a rule, be clasped, but the other must be free, resting wholly or partly on the hand of her neighbour. This preference of hers is due, as would appear from her statement to the Committee of the *Institut*, to cutaneous hyperaesthenia, which makes it difficult for her to tolerate pressure on the hand for long together.[3]

We shall see the reason for this later. However, "The investigators loyally complied with the conditions imposed, but sought in various ways to devise tests which should still be valid. The really valuable part of their report is the successive rejections or evasions of their tests by Eusapia."[4] One of the phenomena witnessed was the levitation, or floating, a stool in the air. Photographs were taken of this, which Eusapia allowed on condition that she gave the signal for working the camera. "Three of the photographs," says Podmore, "taken from a position facing the medium, show the little stool against the background of the dark curtain, apparently suspended in the air over the medium. But a fourth photograph, taken simultaneously on the last occasion from the side, shows that the stool was actually supported in quite normal fashion, by Eusapia's head. Unfortunately, Eusapia saw this last photograph, and the cameras, which henceforth lay in wait to right and left, were baulked of their prey, for the little stool was levitated no more."

With the final and crushing exposure, in America, of this super-clever adventuress, we shall deal with in our concluding article.

In reply to Mr. G. Driscoll's inquiry, in last week's "Correspondence Column," as to where he can find Mr. Maskelyne's exposure of the Davenport Brothers; I am not aware that Mr. Maskelyne did expose them, that is a fable circulated by our great and glorious free press.

The facts are these. The Davenport Brothers—there were two—came to London from America in September, 1864. Their performance was to allow themselves to be bound with rope by members of the audience. They were then sealed on chairs in a cabinet, accompanied with various musical instruments. The doors were then closed, and immediately after the instruments were heard to play, and some of them were even thrown out of the cabinet through an oval hole near the top. When these phenomena had ceased, the doors were thrown open and the brothers found to be still sealed, securely bound.

After a triumphant season in London, where they were loudly boomed by our beautiful press, they toured the provinces, and in Liverpool met with disaster. Two gentlemen were in the audience who possessed the secret of a special knot, called the "Tom Fool's Knot," which they proceeded to apply to the wrists of the Davenport Brothers, who both protested against it, declining to proceed with the performance. The next night there was a riot, and the brothers had to fly the town. A like reception awaited them at Huddersfield and Hull.

It was some months later when Maskelyne and Cooke, in their Crystal Palace performances, imitated the Davenports' tricks so well that Spiritualists declared that Maskelyne and Cooke were themselves mediums. Podmore gives the facts in *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 55-60.

(To be concluded.) W. MANN.

[1] *Ibid*, p. 98.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 102.
[3] Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 104.
[4] *Ibid*, p. 105.

Acid Drops.

"The mailed fist of Germany, with the additional aid of Almighty God." will replace King Tino on the throne. So says the Kaiser, and we are greatly taken with "the additional aid of God." He is evidently a mere auxiliary. And, after all, most people would be willing to wager that if the "mailed fist" doesn't replace Tino, the "additional aid" will not.

The Vicar of Wymondham, Norfolk, complains that it is impossible "reverently" to administer War-bread because it produces so many crumbs. We wonder what exactly is the nature of the "irreverence" produced? Does the worthy Vicar find himself swearing at the Food Controller because of the mixed flour? Or is it that the people who receive the sacrament do the "cussing"?

The Governor of Greenland says that the Greenlanders "are all Christians," and they have a Bible, but no bishops. Christian Evidence lecturers will be delighted to hear that there is one country which can fairly claim to be Christian.

The *Shoe and Leather Record* announces that a Bible 5 ft. 2 in. high and 3 ft. 6 in. wide has been "built" at the Oxford Press. When opened the book measures 7 ft. 10 in. across. The binding is of morocco, and used up twelve goat-skins. The book is to be used in a "Bible Crusade." We haven't the least doubt that the size of the book will impress the type of mind usually ensnared by a "Bible Crusade." Those responsible for such things are not exactly fools, and they make no mistake as to the character of the people for whom they cater.

In the *Pall Mall Gazette* of June 9, Father Vaughan denounces the "war-time growth of spiritism in our midst," and inveighs Spiritualism in the characteristic would-be-infallible style of the exponent of Roman Catholicism. He says that a stern stand should be made to check this folly, and goes on to insinuate that the Spiritualist is a necromancer. Oh, thunder and blue ruin, if the Spiritualist is a necromancer what, pray, is the priest? A little further on he avers that "the powers of evil" proffer false promises

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and empty consolation through spiritistic agents. And the "powers of evil" are, in the view of Father Vaughan, the devils who inhabit the Christian hell, that nightmare conception of panicky minds. These "powers of evil" build up "trick towers of hope that inevitably totter and tumble into the lowest depths of despair. In this the Spiritualists are but humble imitators of the Great Lying Church. These "powers of evil" and the Spiritualists differ only in degree of audacity from the Christian priest; and while Roman Catholicism has become almost endemic in some parts of the world, Spiritualism is only mildly sporadic. Spiritualists seem to hold the view that the spirits of the dead exist in close proximity to us but are separated from us by physical barriers, and only through physical media can they communicate with us. But the Roman Catholic Church "knows that any attempt on the part of her children to get into communication with the other side means the violation of the Commandments of God and of his Church." What a tremendous assumption is that of the "other side." To Father Vaughan it means the inane Christian heaven and its concomitant the fiendish Christian hell—and also limbo. What are heaven and hell but a continuance of the insolence, as Omar Khayyam terms it:—

> What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence?*
> And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence!
> Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine
> Must drown the memory of that insolence.

"Relationship with the Other World is contrary to the known will of God." With what colossal assurance does Father Vaughan make this statement? The Christian, or any other God, is merely a supposition; and the Christian God has no more reality than Odin or Zeus, or any other personification of the flood of foolishness that has ever poured over the minds of men. The "other world" is just a similar sort of guess; hence talk of relationship with the other world, and of the known will of God, is simply nothing more than babble. Further, "From what the Divine Master has told us of the Other Side, it seems clear that damned souls have no opportunity of making themselves heard or felt here." Damned souls! What foul ignorance and cruelty are behind these two words. How finely does Omar Khayyam answer:—

> Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with Gin
> Beset the road I was to wander in,
> Thou wilt not with Predestination round
> Enmesh me, and impute my fall to Sin?
>
> Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make
> And who with Eden didst devise the Snake;
> For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
> Is blacken'd, Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

Finally—"Personally, I have no doubt whatever that, telepathy and trickery aside, the rest of this bad business is in reality a travesty and caricature of Satanic spirits, who, in more cases than I care to state, start their soul-snatching game with a promise of spiritual consolation, only to end it with ruin and despair." Satanic spirits! Devils! Father Vaughan still believes in hell and hell-fire, and he, presumably, is of opinion that all non-Catholics ought to be roasted in twentieth-century Smithfield fires for the benefit of their souls. Satanic soul-snatching! Puerility of puerilities! Is it not time that the world was purged of Hebrew absurdities and insanities, of Christian babblings and vain imaginings, of the carrion of the crucifix, of the inanities of present-day theological divisions, of the obstacle that all these make against the progress of mankind. What is behind Father Vaughan's utterance is trade rivalry. He sees dangerous competition in the spread of Spiritualism. Therefore, he loudly advertises the Old Firm, "Look here," he shouts, "we have the real goods." But neither has the real goods; both are charlatans.

In view of the electoral privileges shortly to be given to women, the Bishops are wondering how they can keep women in the Church, and they are considering a modest proposal for a larger share of Church government to be extended to the ladies. It must be hard for parsons to regard women as human beings.

The *Daily Chronicle* recalls Dr. Joseph Parker's Thursday services at the City Temple, and mentions a number of well-known people who were attracted by them, and concludes with the tantalizing remark, "one of London's Agnostic leaders" has been "seen listening intently." What a pity that the poor journalist's memory gave way when he got so far as the "Agnostic leader."

A merciful Providence is not disturbed by the European War, in which many millions of soldiers, sailors, and civilians have lost their lives. In a recent tornado which swept through the State of Illinois 300 men, women, and children were killed.

The Bishop of Birmingham has said the nastiest thing of Mr. Wells' *God, the Invisible King*, for he asserts, "I believe that the writer of the fourth gospel and Mr. Wells would have had a good deal in common." And Mr. Wells plumes himself on the idea that he is an up-to-date man.

Two local curates are acting as tram conductors on Chatham trams, and are already adepts at collecting fares. The remaining clergy are attending the fair at parochial functions.

Cardinal Bourne has sent a telegram to Cardinal Gibbons congratulating the Americans on joining the Allies, and the Yankee Cardinal replied that the fight is for "All that Christianity represents." Yet millions of Catholics are fighting in the ranks of the Central Powers.

"If we had sat still and dared nothing, the women and children of Britain would have been treated as those in Belgium," says the Bishop of London. Yet that is precisely what the clergy have done, for they are entirely exempted from military service.

The lunatics at Caterham Asylum have hitherto had the benefit of the spiritual ministrations of a chaplain, who was paid £300 a year. This sum has now been reduced to £200 yearly, in order to save money in war-time.

Our Christian editors are getting demoralized by a three years' War. Most of them allowed about twenty lines to the awful earthquake at San Salvador, in which 60,000 people perished. Yet the Salvation Army flag day received a full column of appreciation. Perhaps the last-named was paid for at the usual advertisement rates.

The Rev. Dr. C. H. Watkins told the Baptist Church at Myrtle Street, Liverpool, on retiring from the pastorate, that "if we were really prepared to stand by and live by Grace, it would revolutionize the world." So it would, most certainly; but the world wouldn't be worth living in then. To live by faith would be to trust God rather than self; to transfer our citizenship from earth to heaven; to depreciate and despise the present life except as merely a preparation for the life to come; to set our affection on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth, and such a life would be an unspeakable absurdity.

No one has ever lived by grace, and there is nothing to indicate that any one will ever do so. Professing Christians live very much like other people, and differ from their neighbours only in cherishing certain unnatural beliefs, and in going in for frequent orgies of emotional intoxication. Christians after the New Testament pattern would be despicable parasites, and the world wouldn't tolerate them. Happily, all the clergymen on earth will never succeed in persuading their hearers even to attempt to live by grace.

Dr. Watkins is amazed that people "are afraid to trust God with hell," the reverend gentleman himself being quite willing "to trust him with a thousand hells." It would be fully as easy to trust him with ten million hells, for both God and his hells are nothing but theological myths which are ceasing to exert any influence over the modern mind.

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The belief in hell is already practically dead, and that in God is dying fast.

The clergy are not so cocksure that the Germans are Atheists as they once were. The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare says: "It is perplexing that a country which has been so largely under the influence of Lutheranism should appear almost unanimously to approve of every possible violation of moral and humane considerations." It is only natural that a minister should find the failure of Christianity a "perplexing" matter.

The Bishop of London has been pouring ridicule on conscientious objectors, and he added that his own conscience was "absolutely at peace." The declaration is not surprising. Does not the bishop enjoy a salary of £200 weekly for preaching the gospel of poverty?

There is a suspicious Catholic flavour in the newspapers, which looks as if the journalists were inspired by propagandist motives. Great prominence is given to all the utterances of the Pope and the leading Cardinals, and even the War-news is tinged with Catholic sentiment. One Sunday newspaper printed a quarter-column account of the destruction of a stone angel outside Rheims Cathedral, and the statue was referred to as a "celestial messenger." And all this happens in a time when space is valuable owing to the paper famine.

The Bishop of Birmingham, who has had his portrait reproduced in the newspapers in full war-paint as an Army chaplain, says Christians go through life as learners, and at the close pass hence with Goethe's cry on their lips, "More light!" Yet, if Christianity be true, more people "pass hence" into the "light" of the everlasting bonfire.

Evangelists have many affinities to South Sea Islanders and other uncivilized people, but it is rare that they give themselves away so completely as Prebendary Carlile. Preaching at Holy Trinity Church, Kingsway, he said they had been very fortunate as regards the number of Church Army huts destroyed by the Germans. "When I say this, however, I should also say, 'Touch wood,'" he added. Yet clergymen are astonished that intelligent people no longer regard them as "pastors and masters."

We clip the following from a review in the *Daily Mail* of "Papers from Picardy," by two Army Chaplains. The authors are describing how and why some soldiers pray:—

> It is not perhaps a very high type of prayer, it is purely individual, self-centred, and inspired by fear. At one time, especially during the early stages of the war, we heard a great deal about religious revival and a new turning to prayer. There is a story that during a lull in a heavy bombardment a man emerged from a dug-out and shouted inquiries to a neighbouring shelter: "You all right in there, mate?" "Yes, so far, but some of them b—— shells come b—— close." "What have you been doing while it was going on?" "Well, as a matter of fact, we've all been saying our prayers." "So've we—we've been praying like hell."

The majority of soldiers, we imagine, don't even "pray like hell." They simply don't bother about it.

Rev. Andrew Ritchie, of Glasgow, advises that little attention be paid to the thrilling stories of the conversions of soldiers. They are due, he says, "to the inexcusable blindness of the people who told them, or they are pure bunkum." In other words, they are simply not true, and clergymen, such as the Bishop of London and others, when they told their tales were—well, call it romancing. We could use a stronger term, and in business, or politics, or science, or literature, if a man deliberately stated the thing that was not he would be called a liar. But in religion greater latitude is permitted.

English Nonconformity will soon be an American colony. Dr. Newton, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A., is now the minister at the City Temple, and Spurgeon's pulpit is occupied by the Rev. Dr. Dixon, another Transatlantic theologian. If this goes on, English Dissenters will be talking the great American language.

The *Record* has published a first list of signatures it has invited in favour of a Day of National Prayer in connection with the War. Apart from several bishops and other professional defenders of religion, the names include a large number of mayors, who are mostly successful shopkeepers. As Christianity is now a business, the result of the canvass is not surprising.

The members of the Foodstuffs Committee at Ammanford, South Wales, have issued a decree that all persons found working on allotments on Sundays will be prosecuted. The decree is ridiculous and unenforcible, but it is an indication of the mental character of the Committee. We take the information from the *South Wales Daily Post*, but it sounds as though some one had been pulling the editor's leg.

Another paper, the *South Wales Daily Echo*, has the following:—

> The Sunday diggers have won a notable victory at the Heath Allotment, Cardiff, where a notice was put up strictly forbidding work on the Sabbath. A Government inspector, so the story goes, visited the scene and gave the authorities twenty-four hours' notice to delete from the board the prohibition command. And they did so quickly.

It is certain that none of these strict Sabbatarians would protest against a battle being fought on a Sunday, or a raid repelled on the Sabbath. Where their own skins, pockets, or stomachs are concerned they are rational enough. It is only when they can do so with immediate safety that their bigotry becomes active.

The head of the American Young Men's Christian Association detachment that has visited England is Dr. Eddy. We wonder if he is related to Mrs. Eddy, the founder of the Christian Science Movement.

The piety of the average pressman is peculiar. The *Daily Express* says it is "almost incredible that any man can doubt" the story of Adam and Eve. The *Express* is very slow in matters intellectual.

Mr. Arthur Henderson dubs the Russian Revolution "the greatest miracle since the beginning of the War." The poor angels of Mons have soon been forgotten.

"The War seems to have made everyone braver," says Dr. Wynn Westcott. Always excepting the dear clergy, who prefer to console the girls the soldiers have left behind.

Over 123,000 children were displaced by the military occupation of elementary schools last year, and members of teachers who have joined the Army have been replaced by parsons. No wonder the Bishop of Chelmsford thanks God that the War is going on.

You.

You can help us by introducing the *Freethinker* to your friends and acquaintances.

You can help us by inducing your newsagent to display a copy in his window or paper-rack.

You can help by leaving your copy, when read, in train, or tram, or 'bus.

You can help by taking an extra copy and posting it to a likely subscriber.

You can help by sending us the name and address of anyone whom you think would care to receive a copy.

You can help in other ways, which your own ingenuity will suggest, to make the *Freethinker* a greater power in the land, and a more potent factor in the cause of enlightenment and progress.

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To Correspondents.

W. BROWNLEE (*N.Z.*).—Thanks. Shall appear.

J. BREESE.—We should be very pleased to publish brief notes from *Freethinker* readers as to how they first became acquainted with this paper, and its influence upon them. We agree with you they would prove interesting reading. The idea is a capital one. It remains for our readers to carry it out, if they care to.

G. F. DIXON.—Thanks for copy of service. You will see it has been used. We have no doubt that when the time comes for making good the deficit, our friends will rise to the occasion.

G. L.—We quite agree that the pamphlet is a more effective form of propaganda than a book. But pamphlet publishing is not remunerative to either writer or publisher; which, perhaps, explains why it is not more used. But the fact remains, that in all critical struggles the pamphlet has played a great part. And one may add, it does so still.

S. L. INES.—We do not hesitate to say that the really important obstacle to Freethought propaganda in many places is the inactivity of Freethinkers. There must be at least three million Freethinkers in this country. Just imagine what might be done if only fifty per cent. made up their mind to do something. Instead of a constant anxiety, the work would then be child's play.

G. H. GRAINGER.—We should have no great objection to anyone using the word "God" to cover admiration of an ideal, so long as conditions did not ensure its being utilized for very different purposes. But it is quite plain to us that with all its historic associations, and its significance to the general mind, "God" is bound to be taken in a theological, and not a social, sense. We are glad to have from a new reader an impression of the "sincerity, courage, and ability" displayed in the *Freethinker*.

A. MCCLEAN.—Pleased to hear from an old attendant at Freethought meetings. We should be pleased to have a chat one day with the gentleman you name.

J. H. WATERS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. TAYLOR.—We have heard before of W. R. Bradlaugh's tale of the recantation of Charles Bradlaugh on his death-bed. We should say that anyone who pays attention to what he says is almost past redemption. Some people are content to lie about the living. Others, of less courage, prefer to select dead men as the subjects of their mendacity.

M. DESHUMBERT.—We are pleased to render assistance to any movement which promises benefit towards the rationalizing of life and the benefit of mankind.

H. O. ROGER.—It may be that what you call "real Christianity" we should not call Christianity at all. At any rate, we are only concerned with the Christianity with which the world is troubled. And that this has been an evil there is no doubt whatever.

R. C.—Pleased to see letter in reply to Mr. Runciman. This is exactly the kind of thing that we want to see done generally, and done systematically.

J. A. REID.—See "Views and Opinions." Thanks.

J. HUDSON.—We don't know of the firm referred to as having been bombed. The *Freethinker* office escaped, perhaps "Providence" intervened.

E. W. DATEN (Warrall).—We are quite willing to insert a brief and pertinent reply to Mr. Mann's articles. Of course, "brief" is used with due regard to the length of Mr. Mann's criticism of Spiritualism.

H. J. BAYLIS (Twickenham).—Shall appear as early as possible.

J. SMITHIE.—The Army Council Instruction No. 179, January, 1916, makes it quite clear that a soldier's statement as to his religion must be taken down without comment, or any attempt to influence him. If a soldier insists upon being entered as a Monist, Athcist, Agnostic, or Freethinker, he must be entered as such. If the order is quoted, the officer will doubtless give way.

F. HAVES-JAMES.—You are probably correct in assuming that the prohibition of discussions on religion in the barrack-room where your son is stationed is due to parsonic uneasiness. We suppose the responsible people are within their rights in making the order, but it is indicative of many things.

J. BURRELL.—We have no fund to defray the cost of sending the *Freethinker* weekly to the old Secularists you name, and who are unable to purchase it. But we should regret their going without it, and if you will send us on their names and addresses we will see they are sent. The Bowman Report will be republished, as will also Mr. Mann's articles. Thanks for other items of information.

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.

Those who have taken to heart the advice offered for several weeks past at the foot of the "Acid Drops" column will be pleased to learn that their efforts have already borne fruit. There is again a distinctly upward move in our circulation, and although it is not much at the moment, we believe it will grow. We are *sure* it will, if the advice we have given is followed. Unfortunately, every gain is soon swallowed up by increased cost of production; but one day we ought to reap the reward of all our struggles. Meanwhile, we thank most heartily those who have been working to secure new readers.

At last the London County Council has made a move in connection with its unwarranted prohibition of the sale of literature in the parks. Mr. J. Neate, Secretary of the Bethnal Green Branch of the N.S.S., has been served with three summonses for having sold the *Freethinker* on three particular dates. The summonses are returnable on Wednesday, June 20, and as we are writing on Tuesday, the 19th, we are unable to say more than that Mr. Neate will be legally represented at the court. We shall have more to say next week. There is also another matter connected with the law with which we may have something to say at the same time.

The new Swansea and District Branch of the N.S.S., started by Mr. Cohen last winter, has mapped out a very ambitious programme for the forthcoming season, and the "saints" evidently mean to spare no effort in making the Branch a success. We have great hopes ourselves of the Movement in South Wales, and should like to see Cardiff and other neighbouring places showing greater activity. Other places in the country also ought to be soon considering what are the possibilities for the winter of 1917-18.

Enquiries have been received at the N.S.S. office from individuals in the neighbourhoods of Clapham and Battersea, Wood Green, Hammersmith, Shepherd's Bush, and Marylebone, as to the prospects of forming Branches of the N.S.S. at these places. If all those interested in the matter will write Miss Vance, the General Secretary, she will place them in communication, and a start may be made. Those willing to assist may give either moral or financial support, or both—the latter is, of course, preferable.

Mr. L. E. Tate, of 13 Brookhill Road, Plumstead, is anxious to form a Branch of the N.S.S. in Woolwich and district. Will all Freethinkers who are willing to co-operate please communicate with Mr. Tate. A preliminary meeting could then be arranged.

We bring to a close in this issue our report of the judgment in the Bowman case. This has been a full but not a verbatim report. The verbatim report will be issued by the Secular Society, Limited, at as early a date as is possible, and we anticipate a brisk demand for copies. It is a most important deliverance, and marks the opening of a new chapter in the long story of the fight for freedom of thought. In order to make the publication complete, the Board of Directors has asked Mr. Cohen, and he has agreed, to write an introduction giving a history of the case, with a survey of the general question of "blasphemy" and the position of Freethought as affected by the House of Lords' judgment. The whole will form a work which no Freethinker ought to be without.

We are glad to see that the Sheffield and District Small Traders are defying the attempt of local Sabbatarians to enforce Sunday closing. They have ordered all their members to open their shops as usual, and are calling a mass meeting to protest against this exhibition of "religious hypocrisy."

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The Twilight of the Gods.

THAT man makes his gods is by this time a truth resting on a solid pedestal of scientific induction. But he who makes can also unmake. And if the story of god-making is interesting, that of god-unmaking, in past and present history, is equally so.

It is an incomplete view which ascribes the unmaking of gods solely to the progress of reason. Human nature in the mass is less influenced by reason than by instinct. If reason were the only factor, gods would have been abolished altogether, whereas we see that in history the gods of old have vanished, only to give place to the Trinity, the saints, or Mahomet—each of these being scarcely more or less rational than the others.

The supersession of one god by another is due to changes in human society itself. Primitive man, as Sir J. G. Frazer has shown, deifies such forces of nature as affect him most and seem most to need propitiation. In the climate of Europe, the supreme god was the personification of the sky and weather, Zeus or Jupiter or Woden. Other gods, again, were personifications or alleged ancestors of the tribe or people that worshipped them. Worship was everywhere a State function, designed to propitiate and enlist the support of the gods for the particular city or kingdom. Their existence was self-evident; anyone who denied, to an old Greek, that Zeus existed, would be met with the query: "Who rains, then?" Nevertheless, from the sixth century B.C. onward, the Greek gods were subject among the educated classes to a constant flow of criticism. From Xenophanes to Lucian, over 700 years, various schools of philosophy held up to contempt the myths which, originally descriptive of operations of nature, looked grotesque or indecent when narrated of quasi-human personalities. This rationalist spirit had its root in social development. The spread of trade and colonization, the opening of the Egyptian markets to Greeks in the seventh century B.C., and the increase of travel and intercourse which followed the Persian Wars, enabled wealthy and educated Greeks to compare their religion with others, and in many cases to see the absurdity of them all. This enlightenment was confined to a section of the well-to-do, and did not affect the masses of the population.

Economic development had another result, in breaking up the old political and moral basis of society. The old city-state was formed by the aggregation of a few tribes for mutual protection, the tribes being primitive social groups based on assumed kinship between the members of each. The real and supposed interests of the tribe or city were the mainspring of ancient ethics. But trade, by increasing the wealth of individuals, and war, by subjecting one city to another and by multiplying slave-labour, drove a fatal wedge into this solidarity of interest, so that the fifth century B.C. found prevailing a wide opposition of interest between rich and poor, landed and industrial classes, and individuals in the same class. The conquests of Alexander the Great, and later of Rome, completed the moral disintegration of the ancient world, by destroying the political independence of the cities, and finally substituting a cosmopolitan society based on slave-industry for the old, narrow, social groups based on free agriculture.

In the absence of any visible bond of interest between different classes and individuals, philosophers sought a theoretical basis of conduct in two directions. Some, like the Epicureans and the early Stoics, attempted to show that right conduct was actually the way in which the individual could get the best out of life. Others, *e.g.*, the Platonists, identified the moral sense of man with reason, and reason with the divine nature, and sought the right aim of life in the triumph of this over the natural man, believing that after the death of the natural man the rational part of him would enjoy eternal life in company with the Deity. This belief was linked up with the teaching of the "mysteries," originally ceremonies connected with the old nature-worships, but now, owing to the rise of the new ideas, professing to sanctify the individual and fit him for eternal life. Various primitive and local cults, such as those of Demeter and Dionysus in Greece, Isis and Osiris in Egypt, and Mithras in Persia, were diffused through the Mediterranean world in the final melting down of ancient society, and made alike to serve these philosophical doctrines.

Christian historians, on account of the affinity between these doctrines and their own, have taken for granted that the mystical and Platonic theories were morally superior, and more calculated to serve the best interests of man, than the Epicurean philosophy; and the latter has, by a sort of pious conspiracy, been represented as selfish, sensual, and shallow. The name of Lucretius alone ought to be taken as a refutation of this. The Epicureans were as much in earnest, and did as good service, in attacking the absurdities and immoralities of ancient religion as the Stoics or Platonists, and they were far more uncompromising in their hostility to it. Their atomistic metaphysics were inadequate as a reading of the riddle of the universe, though even in this they anticipated modern science in some respects. The morality of the Epicureans, in any case, was not sensual, was no more selfish or shallow than that of their detractors, and was much more rational and practical. It is impossible to read the good sense of Lucretius or Lucian without feeling the tragedy that such sound, humane doctrines should have been supplanted in the minds of men by the theosophical slush of Neo-Platonism and the lurid fanaticism of Christianity.

While these developments occurred in the ideas of the unofficial world, the official religion had become crystallized in the forms handed down from the old city-state regime. Down to the first century B.C., indeed, the decline of civic solidarity, and the rationalistic movement, had tended to bring the old forms of worship into disuse, at least so far as the educated were concerned. The attacks of Lucretius excited no resentment among the governing classes at Rome. In the last resort, however, every established government tends to be conservative in religion. Even cults which are not seriously believed in are upheld as useful instruments of government. In the reign of Augustus, the Roman ruling classes began to be appalled at the prevailing tendency to commercialism, cosmopolitanism, and utilitarianism. A serious effort was made to re-establish order, regenerate the Roman aristocracy, enforce marriage on the well-to-do, and revive the old forms of religion. From henceforth the policy of the Government was one of religious conservation. (History repeats itself; in the same way modern governments, consisting largely of individuals who are indifferent or irreligious, none the less support the Established Church, maintain religious education, and enforce the Blasphemy Laws!)

Nothing, however, can, in the long run, protect a religion which has become meaningless to the majority, against movements which, in one way or another, express their aspirations. In country districts where the old agricultural society still persisted against the competition of the great slave-worked estates, the old worships might still have life in them. But among the masses of the urban commercial centres, such as Alexandria, Antioch, Corinth, and Rome itself, among the small artizans, freedmen, slaves, and indigent paupers, who formed the bulk of the population, the new "mystery" religions flourished. These were classes without social and

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political interests, to whom religions that promised eternal rewards for good conduct and compensations for suffering endured in this life, would naturally appeal. Some were attracted by the mysteries of Isis, others by those of Mithras, others became proselytes to Judaism. When Christianity appeared, an amalgam of elements derived from all these, it was bound to prove a formidable competitor. The exclusiveness and intolerance which it borrowed from Judaism, while in some respects a handicap, in the end helped to secure its triumph.

ROBERT ARCH.

(To be concluded.)

Disillusioned.

HE was a young man who took a very keen interest in the work of the Church. His parents before him had both been connected with the same church, and as soon as he was able he attended the Sunday-school. When he grew older he joined the Bible class. He noticed quite a number of the lads put nothing into the plate at the door on entering. The subscriptions were very small indeed.

It occurred to this young man one day to make a suggestion regarding the collections. He suggested that instead of leaving the subscriptions to the tender mercies of the plate, a ladle or offertory bag should be passed around the Bible class. This suggestion met with the approval of the minister and was adopted forthwith.

Instead of five shillings, which was usually the average previously, thirty, thirty-five, and forty shillings was now obtained.

At the end of the year, after paying all expenses, a considerable surplus existed. Our young man, who was responsible for the surplus, was endowed with a good supply of the milk of human kindness. The funds of one of the local infirmaries had been depleted very much of late, so our young man thought the surplus of the Bible class should be handed over to the treasurer of the local infirmary, and at the meeting of the Bible class committee he moved accordingly. The minister was otherwise minded. He thought the surplus should be handed over to the "Aged and Infirm Ministers' Scheme." Our young man tried to point out to the minister that they, as a committee, had the right to disburse the money they had raised in any way they thought proper. The minister was adamant and wouldn't yield on the point. The "Aged and Infirm Ministers' Scheme" was the most laudable object that any church money could be given to. Our young man was beaten on the point. He began to consider why should he and his like, who were making very small wages, have to give money to the ministers, who, while they were young men, were making eight or ten times more money than he ever did.

Having made a start with his enquiries, he continued enquiring ever since. The result was the usual kind of ending to the enquiring mind. He does not now go to church, Sunday-school, or Bible class. He attends all the Freethought meetings within his reach. He reads the *Freethinker* every week, likewise the many other Freethought publications. In fact he is one of the most ardent Freethinkers in his district.

YELSIAP.

My memories of the ring go back to the great day when Sayers fought Heenan, and the man who beat the Benicia Boy was the idol of England. I was a small boy at the Preparatory School for Young Gentlemen at Eastbourne at the time, but another boy—a good little boy—told me all about it. He had asked permission to go upstairs to his bedroom half an hour earlier than usual, in order that he might devote himself to pious meditation. That night, as we lay in our little beds in the dormitory, the good little boy told me all about the great fight. He had in some way got hold of a copy of *Bell's Life* with a full report in it, and it was in order to read *Bell's Life* in the privacy of the unoccupied dormitory that he had sought the opportunity of an extra half-hour for pious meditation.—*George R. Sims, "My Life."*

Death of Mr. Julian Gould.

THE sympathy of all our readers will be extended to Mr and Mrs. F. J. Gould on the death of their only son, Julian, who was killed in action in France on May 31. Julian Gould was twenty-five years of age, a young man of great promise, and an artist from whom much was hoped. He joined the Army in May, 1915, and went out to France in November of the same year. The loss of so gifted a young man brings out once more the fearful drain made by the War upon the best life of the world. So much evil done in the death, so much good lost to the race in the dying. We are quite sure that whatever comfort Mr. and Mrs. Gould may derive from the knowledge that very many others count themselves as fellow-mourners, will be theirs in full and generous measure.

Bowman and Others
v.
Secular Society, Limited.

(LORD BUCKMASTER—*concluded from p. 382.*)

THIS objection is stated by Mr. Talbot (to whom I am much indebted for his research and the matter and manner of his argument) by saying that such doctrine offends, in the first case, against the common law, which prohibits blasphemy. He regards the essence of legal blasphemy as the publication of matter denying or hostile to the Christian faith, and he rejects the interpretation put upon it by Mr. Justice Erskine, by Lord Chief Justice Denman, and by Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, each of whom state the law so as to limit the offence to the act of denial associated with ribald, contumelious, or scurrilous language or conduct. I am unable to accept the Appellants' contention as correct. To do so would involve the conclusion that all adverse critical examination of the doctrines of Christianity—even though it was conducted with the utmost reverence—was a blasphemous publication which rendered the writer liable to criminal proceedings. It would, indeed, be hard to find a worse service that could be done to the Christian faith than to prevent people from explaining and inviting an answer to the reasoned convictions that led them to question its truth.

The common law which forbids blasphemy is to be gathered from usage and custom, and it is a striking fact that, with one possible exception—the case of R. *v.* Woolston—every reported case upon the matter, beginning with R. *v.* Taylor, and continuing down to R. *v.* Ramsey and R. *v.* Boulter, is a case where the offence alleged was associated with, and I think constituted by, violent offensive, or indecent words. That it was considered necessary to report the earlier cases as precedents affords, to my mind, a strong presumption that it was the character of the attack which constituted the crime, for if the law was well recognized as forbidding any adverse criticism, the cases where such criticism was coarse and disgraceful would be too plain to merit preservation. In my opinion, therefore, the Common Law of England does not render criminal the mere propagation of doctrines hostile to the Christian faith. The crime consists in the manner in which the doctrines are advocated, and whether in each case this is a crime is a question for the jury, who should be directed, in the words of Mr. Justice Erskine in Shore *v.* Wilson, quoted by the Master of the Rolls in his judgment on the present case.

It is then said that, even if this be conceded, the object of the Society is illegal, not in the sense that acts done to further its objects would be criminal, but that they are of such a nature as to be incapable of establishing a legal right to receive money for their furtherance. I find it difficult to appreciate this distinction, but I understand the contention to be that Christianity is part of the Common Law of England, and it must, therefore, be illegal, even if it were not criminal, for any body of people to promote doctrines that are hostile to its creed. If this argument be carried to its full extent, it will really show that Unitarians, Positivists, Comtists, and other similar religious and ethical bodies, unless relieved by statute, are illegal associations for the Christianity known to the Common Law is certainly not

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Unitarian Christianity, nor is it reconcilable with the doctrines of Comte or Hegel. Again, it would result that editors and publishers would be able to deny payment to contributors and authors whom they had expressly employed to write philosophical and scientific articles or books if it could be decided that the work was anti-Christian, while no one could be compelled to pay for any such books when purchased. Indeed, the doctrine, as it seems to me, would apply to a great deal of classical and scientific literature, and the conditions which would condemn these works might vary from year to year as different views from time to time prevailed. It is quite right to point out that, if the law be as the Appellants contend, these considerations afford an argument for its alteration, but do not prove that it does not exist. If, on the other hand, the law is not clear, it is certainly in accordance with the best precedents so to express it that it may stand in agreement with the judgment of reasonable men.

Apart from the criminal cases already mentioned, certain authorities are referred to which, if correctly decided, do appear to afford support for the Appellants' argument. The case of De Costa *v.* De Paz, a decision of Lord Hardwicke's —is one of these authorities; and the Master of Bedford's Charity, is a decision of Lord Eldon's, containing statements to the same effect, and so also is the case of Briggs *v.* Hartley. The first of these was a gift for the purpose of providing a fund to be applied for ever for the reading of the Jewish law, and for advancing and propagating the Jewish faith. It was certainly open to argument that this was not a charitable bequest, and was consequently void as a perpetuity. But it was not upon this ground that the decision was based; it was held that it was a charity (see the report in Ambler, p. 228), but that the mode of disposition was such that it could not take effect. It is true that in the Report in 2 Swans the reason why the gift to the specific object of the charity was held imperative was because it was contrary to the Christian religion, but in Ambler it is stated that the objects were contrary to the "established" religion, and as at that date the statutory disabilities under which the adherents of the Jewish faith suffered had not been removed, this might have been sufficient for the purpose of the case; indeed, on any other view, it is hard to understand why it was supported as a charity at all. I do not, however, propose further to pursue this question, as I have had the advantage of reading Lord Parker's opinion, and with it I am in entire agreement. The second case was merely a question as to whether Jews might enjoy the benefits of a particular charity, and it was held they might not. The last was a legacy for the best essay on Natural Theology treated as a science, and sufficient when so treated and taught to constitute a true perfect and philosophical system of universal religion; and it was held bad for no further reason than that it was not consistent with Christianity, but the law was in no way examined or criticized.

In the two earlier cases it was stated that Christianity is part of the law of the land, and the authorities quoted in support of the proposition are the cases of R. *v.* Taylor and R. *v.* Woolston; but the pronouncements of Lord Hale and Lord Raymond in these cases must be taken in reference to the subject-matter of the case which, in one instance, certainly, and in the other, possibly, was a prosecution for scurrilous blasphemy.

If the reasons for the decision in De Costa *v.* De Paz were those urged by the Appellants, I should not regard them as correct. If a gift to endow any body that propagates doctrines hostile to the generally accepted view of the Christian religion was at any time contrary to the Common Law, it is, in my opinion, contrary at the present time, and gifts to Unitarians and similar religious bodies for the support and endowment of their religious faith are now void. It is urged in answer to this that the position with regard to Unitarians, as also with regard to Jews, is altered by two Statutes—the one 53 Geo. III. cap., 160, and the other 9 and 10 Vic. cap. 59. I am unable to accept this view. The statutory position appears to me to be plain. By the Act of 1 William and Mary cap. 18 (generally known as the Toleration Act) it is provided that no penalties shall apply to any person dissenting from the Church of England that shall take the oaths that are specified in 1 William and Mary cap. 1, and in 30 Car. II. st. 2, and accept the Articles of Religion, excepting Articles 34, 35, and 36, and certain words of the 20th Article. But Papists and those denying the doctrines of the Blessed Trinity, as declared in the said Articles of Religion, are omitted from the protection of this Statute. The penalties from which this Statute grants relief are statutory penalties and disabilities, and it left the Common Law exactly what it was.

The Act known as the Blasphemy Act—9 and 10 William III., Cap. 32, is really an Act directed against apostates from the Christian faith, and that Act again provides certain penalties, cumulative and severe on second conviction, for any person who, having been educated in, or, at any time, having made profession of the Christian religion within this Realm shall by writing or advised speaking deny any one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity to be God, or who shall assert that there are more Gods than one, or shall deny the Christian religion to be true. This is a disabling Statute still unrepealed, imposing penalties so severe that it is said no prosecution has ever been instituted under its provisions. Its terms, therefore, demand the narrowest and most jealous scrutiny. The fact that it has only incidentally been brought under judicial notice may explain the loose and, as I think, erroneous references made to its effect, as, for example, by Lord Lyndhurst, in Shore *v.* Wilson (9 Cl. and Fin., p. 355, at p. 397), where he says that "those persons who by preaching denied the doctrine of the Trinity are subject to the penalties of the Act," and, again, by Lord Bramwell, in Cowan *v.* Milburn. This is not accurate; only those persons who have been educated in, or had at any time made profession of the Christian religion within the Realm could incur the statutory penalties.

The Act 53 Geo. III. cap. 160 repeals so much of the Toleration Act as provides that the exemption of the Statute shall not extend so as to give its advantage or benefit to persons denying the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, and for the purpose of making this exemption effectual it repeals as far as was necessary 9 and 10 William III. cap. 32. The Statute of 9 and 10 Vic. ca. 59 (the Religious Disabilities Act, 1846), provided that persons professing the Jewish religion shall, in respect of their schools, places of religious worship, educational and charitable purposes, and property held by them, be subject to the same laws as His Majesty's Protestant subjects who dissent from the Church of England. This means that they are freed from all disabilities imposed by Statute and open to all existing at Common Law. This is the view expressly stated by Lord Eldon in Attorney General *v.* Pearson, and is in agreement with the decisions in Rex. *v.* Carlile and Rex. *v.* Waddington.

So far as holding property is concerned, Jews are to be regarded as being in the same position as His Majesty's Protestant subjects who dissent from the Church of England. This must be taken to mean that they can hold property; for the Common Law—whatever its scope—did not specially safeguard what we now know as the Established Church, but the Christian faith. And there was never anything, apart from statutory disabilities to prevent Protestant Dissenters from holding property. Of course while any particular belief was made the subject of penalty by Statute, a gift to further the purpose of that belief would be contrary to the Statute Law; but when once the Statutory disability was removed, unless some disability could be found outside, there could be nothing to hinder the gift of money for the purpose of any such association.

It is this that explains the decision in the case of West *v.* Shuttleworth, which was a decision on the Statute in relief of Roman Catholics similar to that in relief of Jews (2 and 3 William IV. c. 115). "Now the Roman Catholic religion—whatever views may be taken of the Reformation—was certainly never contrary to the Common Law; and, therefore, when once the Statutory Prohibitions were taken away, the receipt of money for the general purpose of their faith was not forbidden. In the case of Shrewsbury *v.* Hornby, a gift in support of Unitarian doctrine was held good, and it is suggested that this was because 53 Geo. III. c. 160 repealed the Common Law so far as it affected Protestant ministers.

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I am unable to find that the Statute effects this purpose. If by implication any part of the Common Law is repealed, there would appear to be no particular reason why it should be repealed so as to allow a special class of Protestant Dissenters—but not other people—to deny the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It would, indeed, be strange if the publication of a book, or the delivery of a lecture would be legal or illegal according to the religious opinion of the person who wrote it, and not according to its contents. If any repeal at all had been effected by these Acts, it would, in my opinion, have been the repeal of the whole doctrine had it ever existed; but the true view in my judgment is that it did not exist. The Common Law throughout remains unaffected, and I cannot find any case where, as a necessary step in the decision, it is enunciated in terms as wide as are necessary to support the appellant's case. For example, in Thompson *v.* Thompson, it was held that a gift will be supported for the encouragement of the general doctrines advocated in a testator's writings if neither atheism, sedition, nor any crime or immorality is to be inculcated. Again, in Harrison *v.* Evans, Lord Mansfield defined the Common Law in these terms: "There was never a single instance from Saxon times down to our own in which a man was ever punished for erroneous opinions concerning rites and modes of worship but upon some positive law. The Common Law of England, which is only common reason or usage, knows of no prosecution for mere opinions. For atheism, blasphemy, and reviling the Christian religion there have been persons prosecuted and punished upon the Common Law." It is unnecessary to determine whether and under what circumstances the promulgation of atheism is illegal, for by atheism in this connection I understand a disbelief in one eternal and invisible God, and I have already stated my views that the Respondents' objects do not properly include the advocacy of such a doctrine. Blasphemy is constituted by violent and gross language and the phrase "reviling the Christian religion" shows that without vilification there is no offence.

I am glad to think that this opinion is supported by the carefully considered and weighty utterances of many learned judges. The case of Shore and Wilson in its actual result depended upon a question of construction of deeds of trust and upon special facts, and so regarded the decision could have but little application to other disputes; but when the case was before this House the opinions of the Judges were taken on certain questions, and the sixth question was this: "Whether such (*i.e.*, Unitarian) Ministers, preachers widows, and persons are in the present state of the law incapable of partaking of such charities or any and which of them." Mr. Justice Erskine (p. 525), Mr. Justice Coleridge (p. 539), Mr. Justice Maule (p. 509), Mr. Justice Williams (p. 545), Baron Gurney (p. 554), Baron Parke (p. 565), Lord Chief Justice Tindal (p. 578), all agreed in thinking that they were not. It is true that Mr. Justice Coleridge based his opinion upon the ground that Unitarians were Christians, but Mr. Justice Maule stated that there was no authority to show that teaching Unitartan doctrine was contrary to the Common Law, and Mr. Justice Erskine stated that it was open to any man "without subjecting himself to any penal consequences soberly and reverently to examine and question the truth of those doctrines which have been assumed as essential to the Christian faith." There is, indeed, to be found in certain of these opinions indications of the view expressed in R. *v.* Woolston, that it is not illegal to deny any doctrine of the Christian faith, but that it is to deny them all collectively. I cannot accept this view of the law. The Christianity, offences against which are illegal at Common Law, is the Christianity known to the Common Law, and Unitarian Christianity is opposed to the central doctrine of this faith.

I have only to add that, apart altogether from these considerations, I think that the Respondents are well founded in arguing that since the Company is a legal entity, and as some at least of its objects are on the face of them lawful, there is no ground upon which it is possible to prevent them from receiving money which has been the subject of a bequest in their favour. I cannot accede to the argument that the later purposes in the Memorandum, which taken alone must be regarded as proper and lawful objects, become unlawful because they are associated with the first purpose of the Memorandum. If an unequivocal Act be lawful in itself, the motive with which it is performed is immaterial; and if it be said that all the later purposes are the instruments by which the first purpose may be effected, this, as it seems to me, may be an argument for showing that the first purpose is lawful, but it cannot establish that the later purposes are not. Even if all the objects of the Company were illegal, it would not follow that while the certificate of incorporation remained unrevoked, the Company would be unable to receive money. It is a mistake to treat the Company as a trustee, for it has no beneficiaries, and there is no difference between the capacity in which it receives a gift and that in which it obtains payment of a debt. In either case the money can only be used for the purposes of the Company, and in neither case is the money held on trust. If, by oversight or mistake, a Company were incorporated for wholly illegal objects, the right course to follow, where its capacity to receive money were questioned in legal proceedings, would be to direct an adjournment till proper steps had been taken to revoke the incorporation. This matter has been so fully dealt with by Lord Parker, with whose views I entirely agree, that I do not desire to elaborate it further. For these reasons I am of opinion that this Appeal should be dismissed.

Correspondence.

A QUESTION OF STYLE; HEBERT AND THE *FREETHINKER*.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I can see no reason why I should be asked to dispute, at any rate, in this place, the historical value of *Pere Duchesne*, which, I admit, has the authority of intelligent observation of contemporary events. I fancy that Mr. Farmer has forgotten that this was not the subject of my letter. I must here remind him that an *ipse dixit* even from him is not above suspicion; and here, too, the question is not one of opinion, but of fact. I say, again, with all the emphasis warranted by a recent study of *Pere Duchesne*, that even the mere suggestion of a comparison between Hebert's style and that of the *Freethinker* is as ignorant as it is foolish.

The right thing for Mr. Farmer to do would be to confess that he has made a bad blunder, and to leave it at that. However, instead of doing the right thing, he asks me to waste my time in transcribing a dozen or so pages in French for you to print, thus wasting your space, and asking you to run the risk of a prosecution for obscenity. Now, if he is anxious to get at the truth, he can easily have a copy made for a few shillings by a professional transcriber. But this is no concern of mine. It is surely his business to support his statement when it is challenged, and not to run away from it.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

SOCIALIST SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your *Freethinker* of this week you mention a discussion going on in the *Glasgow Herald* concerning the character of Socialist Sunday-schools. I can quite understand the enemies of the schools keen to prove that teaching is quite materialistic in tone. It sounds bad to the ordinary person, and that is what the enemies of Socialist Sunday-schools want. The words of the champions of the Sunday-schools are absolutely incorrect. I, myself, a Freethinker of twenty-five years' standing, happen to be Secretary of The Hampstead Garden Suburb Socialist Sunday-school, and the name Jesus has never been mentioned. I will write you out the Declaration which the children repeat every Sunday, so that you can judge for yourself the character of the teaching:—

DECLARATION.

We desire to be just and loving to all our fellow-men and women.

To work together as Brothers and Sisters.

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To be kind to every living creature.

And so help to form a new Society with Justice as its foundation.

And love its law.

Perhaps you will be interested to learn that amongst our S.S.S. children are Joseph McCabe's three little ones.

The superintendent is a Freethinker. So are pretty nearly *all* the parents of the children. I myself have had my six children exempt all along from religious teaching in the day schools, and my son, who is a C.O., was refused exemption at the local and appeal tribunals on the grounds that as he belonged to no religious organization he could not possibly possess a conscience. We have taken in the *Freethinker* for over twenty-five years, and often came in contact with Mr. Foote and yourself, although you would not remember us. The last time I saw you was at Mr. Foote's Memorial Service. We all wish you the best of success with the *Freethinker*, and I will end by saying that to have a good, sound, moral conviction of what is right and what is wrong is far higher and better than all the drivelling rubbish the parsons would try to cram down one's throat.

(MRS.) E. SMITH.

Another New Battle Song.

(With Apologies to "John Brown's Body.")

IN the brains of cleric humbugs, who should go across the sea,
There's a stunt about the "Saviour" that quite staggers you and me,
As they lie to make men truthful! Let us cry to make men free,
That Cant goes marching on!

There's much talk about war's horror, and the "Saviour," you'll agree,
And we, who know old Humbug well, are smelling knavery,
As the bishops' lisp of battle—let us tell humanity—
That Cant goes marching on!

The Churches all will tell you how our "Saviour" gave the key,
How he "died to save all sinners"—Kaiser Bill, and you, and me;
But now this "Saviour" saves us with the Field Artillery!
And Cant goes marching on!

In the blood-mire of the trenches Christ was gassed across the sea,
With a grenade in his bosom that "transfigures" Fritz and me!
As Christ "died to make men holy"—let us state to make men free,
That Cant goes marching on!

The "Church's one foundation" is a maze of roguery,
They twist about like slimy eels with great agility;
So, after all, Freethinkers, its for folk like us to see—
That Truth goes marching on!

ARTHUR F. THORN.

So far as science or a rational conception of things is concerned, the fathers of the Church and the framers of our popular theology were mere children. Considerations were all-powerful with them, which to-day would not have a feather's weight with a man of ordinary intelligence. Children readily, even eagerly, believe almost any impossible thing you may tell them about nature. As yet, they have no insight into the course of nature or the law of cause and effect, no fund of experience to serve as a touchstone to the false or impossible. The same was true of the fathers and of the races that witnessed the advent of Christianity.....mere children so far as the development of their scientific faculties were concerned.—*John Burroughs.*

The village had organized an entertainment for the delectation of the local asylum. The inmates listened stolidly, and when the programme was ended, the vicar asked one of the unfortunates how he had enjoyed it. "Ah, weel, sir," said the looney, with a beautiful smile, "it's a good thing that we're daft here!"

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.

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WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Miss Kough, "The Old Order Changeth."

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Views and Opinions.

The Massacre of the Innocents.

On June 20 eighteen little children, their ages ranging from four to eleven years, were buried in a cemetery in the East of London. They were the victims, from one school, of the recent air-raid, killed—murdered is, perhaps, the better term—in the course of a War in which the name of God has been freely used by the chief nations engaged therein. It was certainly one of the saddest, if not one of the most impressive incidents of the War. They had done nothing, they could do nothing to gain the ill-will of anyone. It was not even true, as was said by the Mayor of Poplar, that "they died for England." That was pure cant. How could they be said to die for anyone or anything? They were the innocent unresisting victims of man's lust for slaughter, of a militarism which so many, to their shame, have done so much by pen and voice to cover with a fictitious greatness and glory, and so hide its inherent and inescapable brutality from the gaze of men. Of all the cowardly—we use the word advisedly—games in which man engages, war, modern war, is the worst. The deaths of these eighteen little children prove it as such.

* * *

Real Blasphemy.

Naturally a religious service was held over the dead children. That, in itself, would not call for notice. The parents, doubtless, desired it, and no Freethinker would deny it them much as he might disapprove. But common sense, even common decency, certainly ordinary intelligence, might have selected a little different service to the one arranged. I do not know how many hymns were sung, but the *Times* report mentions some that are startling in their allusiveness. Here are three of them:—

> "There's a Friend for Little Children."
> "Loving Shepherd of thy Sheep."
> "O God, Our Help in Ages Past."

Is it possible to conceive titles better calculated to make the scornful smile, the flippant jeer, or to even make stricken parents curse at the mockery of a child's friend, or a loving shepherd, who could stand idly by while this massacre of the innocents was proceeding? If there is such an offence as blasphemy then this is a genuine case. If the feelings of believers are not outraged at the terrible irony of hymns such as those sung over the graves of those dead children, they ought for ever to give up the pretence that they are hurt by anything that could be said by a Freethinker.

* * *

Sheep or Jackass?

The two first-named hymns are, we are told, favourites with children. I do not know whether this is the case or not, but if it is so, it does not lessen the irony of the situation. Think of hundreds of children singing of their "Friend" above, of the "Loving Shepherd" who guards them, and in a moment a number of them lying mangled corpses because of the ineffectiveness or carelessness of their friend and shepherd! A friend who cannot befriend, a shepherd who cannot guard his sheep, a God who does nothing, or who can do nothing, a Deity as ineffective as the paint-besmeared wooden idol of a South Sea savage, and his worshippers without the justification of the savage for believing in him. No wonder the clergy struggle to keep religion in the schools; no wonder they realize that if religion is not forced upon the mind in its immaturity it is hopeless to make the attempt later. One marvels at the insensitiveness of the clergy in selecting these hymns for such an occasion. One wonders at the type of mind that could listen to them without open resentment. Only one expression is at all appropriate to the situation. The believers in the heavenly friend are likened to sheep. That *is* apt, although even here an animal with longer ears and a louder voice spontaneously offers itself to the mind.

* * *

An Idle God.

Directly after the air-raid, thousands of people were asking, "What were the authorities doing not to have prevented such a disaster?" If that question is pertinent, asked of men who suffer under all the limitations of human nature, is it not infinitely more pertinent to ask, "What was God doing that *he* did not prevent it?" There are few men or women who would not cheerfully have given their lives to have saved those children. And the man who could have saved them and did not would certainly have been lynched. What, then, was God doing? We have had many stories of God's activities since the War commenced. He has "miraculously" preserved wooden wayside crosses in France and Belgium. He has "providentially" protected certain churches in England from air-raids. He has been asked publicly to promote the growth of potatoes on allotments. Why did he not exert the same protective influence over schools? It would have been so easy to Omnipotence, so congenial to genuine fatherly love for children. Perhaps the explanation lies in the third hymn—"O God, Our Help in Ages *Past*." His help was in the past; it is idle to expect it in the present. He helped in the past; and the God who could work miracles for half-mad prophets

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and unwashed saints can do nothing to protect the lives of little children to-day. Very well, then; God's activity belongs to the past; he is a relic of the past, and it is often the wisest policy to bury the past and have done with it. It is certainly so in this case.

* * *

An Impeachment of Deity.

Those eighteen dead bodies form an unanswerable indictment of German ruthlessness. But they are equally an indictment of the indifference, or the callousness, or the impotence of Deity. And why should anyone be surprised at that? Is it not of a piece with what we see elsewhere? In this country, with its churches and chapels, and thousands of parsons and millions of Bibles, there are many thousands of cases of ill-treatment of children every year. God does nothing to stop that. It is a human organization which does all the work. And if man be blamed for these cases, well, there are hundreds of thousands of children born into the world cursed with the legacy of physical and mental disease, and God does nothing to remedy that. The "Friend for Little Children" is as impotent here as elsewhere. The "Loving Shepherd" does as little for his sheep here as elsewhere. The disaster at that East End school does not, after all, stand apart from the rest of life; it is in harmony with it. God does nothing. That is the lesson of the disaster. God is as invisible to sense as he is to sight. These eighteen dead bodies are a proof. These are the irrefutable evidence of the almost criminal stupidity of a religion which can set children singing of the loving care and protection of a Heavenly Father, and in the presence of their dead bodies has the supreme audacity to sing hymns which are an outrage on human decency and intelligence.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Reformation in England.

IT is universally admitted that "under the name of Christianity and the Christian Church, human weakness and perversity have created repulsive systems of self-torture, of tyranny, and injurious repression," and that "every kind of insanity and imposture, the most sordid ambition and the vilest cruelty and lust, have made use of this as of many other religions." Some apologists, however, are convinced that "it is a mistake to regard the offences of those who have thus abused the power of a religious organization as an index to the character of the essential teaching upon which the organization was founded." That is an eminently specious argument, and many are misled by it; but it is vitiated by an underlying fallacy. Christianity, as many divines declare, is neither cultus, creed, nor conduct, but fellowship with God in Christ; not a system of morality, but a scheme for establishing and maintaining right relations with the Unseen. In other words, Christianity is Christ, and Christ is the Saviour of the world. To become a Christian is to accept Christ as Redeemer and Lord, or to allow one's self to be delivered from the bondage and power of sin by an act of complete self-surrender resulting in a God-given and God-directed life. Paul calls the Gospel the power of God unto the salvation of all who believe it; and after he became a Christian the great Apostle was able to testify thus: "I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." A Christian is a person who has been born again from above, and in whom the Holy Spirit dwells as infallible guide even unto death, concerning whom all the redeemed joyfully sing—

> And every virtue we possess,
> And every conquest won,
> And every thought of holiness,
> Are his alone.

Christians, then, are not merely people who hold a certain creed and observe certain rites, but rather people who, being in Christ, are led by his Spirit in all they think and do.

In theory, that is what Christ does for all who accept him by faith. They are new creatures in him and walk in newness of life. Renewed in the spirit of their mind they have "put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." In practice, however, the new birth, the indwelling Spirit, the gracious, willing Guest, checking each fault, calming each fear, and speaking of heaven, and the all-conquering Christ, do not count at all, professing Christians being not one whit better than their neighbours, and in many instances a great deal worse. This has been true of them in all ages and countries. Proudly claiming to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, they have, on the average, always opposed intellectual progress and social reform, and indulged in gloomy, pessimistic views of life on earth. There have been good and noble characters among them, of course; but everybody knows that goodness and nobility have nothing distinctively Christian about them. Paul told the Corinthian converts that they would judge the world and the angels; but he also charged them with drunkenness, licentiousness, litigiousness, and other faults. He assured the Philippians that, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, they were "seen as luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life"; but there is nothing in his Epistle to them to indicate that they were morally superior to the Pagans around them. Indeed, what they seem to have excelled in most was generous remembrance of the Apostle's want. But even in the New Testament, as well as in the history of the Church, we find that Christianity's first, if not chief, tendency is to divide its professors into hostile parties. In the little Corinthian Church there were four irreconcilable factions, which spent most of their time in noisy quarrels and bitter wrangles on subjects about which they had no knowledge. It may be exceedingly pleasant for emotional Bethelites to sing—

> Blest be the tie that binds
> Our hearts in Christian love;
> The fellowship of kindred minds
> Is like to that above;

but it is common knowledge that our religious conventicles are practically innumerable, and that they usually hate and denounce one another in great bitterness of heart and extravagance of language.

Let us take the so-called Reformation in England in the sixteenth century as a notable illustration of the truth of that statement. Leo X. conferred on Henry VIII. the title of Defender of the Faith; and it is undeniable that the king was a profoundly pious man. That the English Church stood sadly in need of a radical reformation is utterly beyond dispute. In the year 1512 Dean Colet preached a remarkable sermon before Convocation in which he called special attention to its corruptions, saying:—

> We are troubled in these days by heretics—men mad with strange folly, but no heresy of theirs is so fatal to us and to the people at large as the vicious and depraved lives of the clergy. That is the worst heresy of all..... Would that for once you would remember your name and profession and take thought for the reformation of the Church. Never was it more necessary, and never did the state of the Church need more vigorous endeavours (Green's *Short History of the English People*, p. 310).

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Sir Thomas More was more violent still in his vituperation of the men of God of his day. He ridiculed the bishops as a class; and his famous Latin Epigrams in denunciation of priestly vices and ascetic observances are distinguished for their "foul-mouthed polemics." Then came Henry VIII. to sweep away all corruptions with the besom of his piety. Wolsey, his Chancellor, loved England dearly, but he loved Rome better, as Froude puts it; and Henry ordered him to be charged with treason. We must bear in mind that the king was of a deeply religious nature. He loved God with all his mind, and the Church occupied a warm place in his heart. His one fear was to do anything in opposition to the will of God. On ascending the throne in 1509, he married his brother Arthur's widow, Catherine of Arragon, with whom he lived in tolerable happiness for nearly twenty years. But her children did not live, and he lacked an heir to his throne. Then he began to wonder whether a marriage with a brother's widow was in harmony with the will of God. The Pope refused to pronounce it a sin. Wolsey did his utmost to procure a divorce between him and Catherine, but all his endeavours were without avail. In dismissing and degrading him, Henry ignored this fact altogether. He appealed to the Universities of Europe, and to insure a favourable response the learned professors were either bribed or bullied, which proves that the appeal was a sham. The Pope delayed his final decision until Henry's patience had been exhausted. He now resolved to break with Rome, unless it fell in with his wishes, and constitute himself the head of the English Church. He demanded that the title of the Supreme Headship be conceded by the clergy, which was done in 1531. Even after the submission of the clergy he still hoped Clement VII. would grant the divorce, and in order to induce his holiness to come to his side, he obtained from Parliament the first Act of Annates, according to which the first year's income of bishops and their clergy should in future be paid to him and not to the Vatican. In the hope that his holiness would yield rather than sacrifice so large a portion of his revenue, he refused to ratify the Act for some time. Realizing that there was absolutely no chance of winning Clement's favour, he and Anne Boleyn were secretly married in January, 1533. In his *Student's History of England* Gardiner says:—

> Now that he had reluctantly given up hope of obtaining a favourable decision from the Pope, he resolved to put an end to the Papal Jurisdiction in England. Otherwise if he obtained a sentence in an English ecclesiastical court declaring his marriage with Catherine to be null from the beginning, his injured wife might appeal to the superior court of the Pope. He accordingly obtained from Parliament the Act of Appeals, declaring that the king held the supreme authority in England, and that as under him all temporal matters were to be decided by temporal judges, and all spiritual matters by spiritual judges, no appeals should hereafter be suffered to any authority outside the realm. Henry was capable of any meanness to serve his ends, but he also knew how to gain more than his immediate ends by connecting them with a large national policy. He almost made men forget the low design which prompted the Act of Appeals by fixing their eyes on the great object of national independence (p. 389).

It was thus that the English Church ceased to belong to Rome and became Protestant; or, in other words, such was the Protestant Reformation in England. In belief Henry remained a Catholic as long as he lived, the only difference being that now he assumed the office and functions of Pope for England. How did he manage to do it? By the exercise of sheer tyranny in the guise of piety. He was a shrewd, clever, far-seeing, strong man, whose will was law to all alike. Those who opposed him were burned alive, hanged, or beheaded without a moment's hesitation. Even gentle and tender-spirited More was thrown into the Tower and executed. Any disagreement, however slight, with the king deserved capital punishment, and there was positively no escape. "The cause of his Majesty," the Lords were made to say, "is the cause of each of ourselves." Former monarchs had called Parliament together as seldom as possible, but Henry caused it to meet as frequently as he could, because, under him, "Parliament assembled only to sanction acts of unscrupulous tyranny, or to build up by its own statutes the great fabric of absolute rule. All the constitutional safeguards of English freedom were swept away. Arbitrary taxation, arbitrary legislation, arbitrary imprisonment were powers claimed without dispute and unsparingly exercised by the Crown" (Green's *Short History*, p. 332).

Yet, Henry VIII., according to the testimony of the Venetian ambassador, Giustiniani, "is very religious, hears three masses daily when he hunts, and sometimes five on other days." When his death drew near, he talked incessantly of the love of God and of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Christian duty of loving all men everywhere for Christ's sake. The English people were also extremely religious; and yet they had no convictions to which to adhere at any cost, but were all, clergy and laity alike, sufficiently craven-hearted to submit without an audible murmur to the orders of the Crown, no matter how unjust, tyrannical, and wicked they were. Is the conclusion not absolutely inevitable, therefore, that Christianity was a colossal failure in England? The God in whom the nation believed and the Saviour whom it professed to love and obey, were but empty names, productive of no good effect whatever upon the national character.

J. T. LLOYD.

Cockney Christianity.

> Of all the dull, stagnant, unedifying *entourages*, that of middle-class Dissent seems to me the stupidest.
>
> —*Matthew Arnold.*

> The only true conquests—those which awaken no regret—are those obtained over ignorance. The most honourable, as the most useful pursuit of nations, is that which contributes to the extension of intellect. —*Napoleon.*

To the superficial observer, not skilled to penetrate beneath the surface of things, there is probably but one thing in the world more solemn than a funeral; and that is the Christian religion. Short of death itself, nothing seems more awful than the Christian scheme of salvation. Only think of it! To Mr. John Smith, Nonconformist and tradesman, simply the most stupendous thought that can engage the attention of the watery custard which he is pleased to consider as representing the human mind. For it is not alone the weal or woe of all living human beings, including Mrs. Smith and the children, but also of generations of Smiths unborn, that will be involved in the awful and tremendous issue.

The very perpetuity of the scheme, in a vanishing world, where all things are passing away even as a dream, seems to impart a quality of awe to the dwarfed perception of the average believer. To a mere outsider all this must seem most solemn and impressive. But appearances are deceptive, and it is foolish to look at any question with only one eye, as is said to be the habit of birds. The unfeathered biped, man, should know better. A more philosophic view of the matter would lead to another conclusion. So far from religion being a serious affair, it is simply a human comedy. An expensive and elaborate jest it may be, but none the less

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a joke. You cannot tell what the religious circus is like by looking at the highly coloured posters on the walls. For in all nations it has been customary from time immemorial to invest religion with an air of gloom. So it was in the twilight of history, is now, and must be, even in the byways and burrows of the great metropolis.

The mere circumstance of that respectable ratepayer and tradesman, Mr. John Smith, "finding Jesus" in his fiftieth year is enough to set his numerous friends and acquaintances on the alert. They know that when his conversion becomes a certainty his countenance will exhibit the expression of a tired funeral horse, and that his every word, look, and action will eclipse the gaiety of the spectators.

Mr. John Smith, junior, is compelled to check the tide of his youthful laughter with a sigh. Miss Henrietta Smith, his sister, finds her father's condition clouds the delight of sweethearting, and overshadows the glories of her summer dress. Like Banquo's ghost at the feast, the pious picture of melancholy inbecility overawes the flow of domestic happiness. But if "finding Jesus" is a serious matter, how dire are the after effects of the conversion. Resplendant in his best suit of funereal black, Mr. Smith conveys his family to the nearest jerry-built chapel or tin tabernacle. If he has the disease badly this will become the rule every Sunday. He is under the spell of religiosity, and as proud of it as a corpse with two tombstones. Master Johnny can hardly contain himself for speechless transport as he finds that his Sunday fishing excursions are no longer to be tolerated. He turns green with envy as he passes the splendid pageant of the greengrocer's boy and the postman's son with rods and bait-cans on their way to the still waters of the nearest river. Miss Henrietta, who is neither so blind as a bat, nor so deaf as an adder, may easily envy 'Arry and 'Arriet treading the primrose path of dalliance. What would she not give for the chance of starting the stitching in 'Arry's heart herself? As for Mrs. Smith, she is firmly and secretly convinced that all this piety springs from the idea of her lord and master to be considered "respectable," and, incidentally, to extend his business. In one of her confidential chats over the tea-table with her bosom-friend, Mrs. Jones, she expresses her private opinion with a powerful metaphor: "Find Jesus, my dear. I had as soon go to sea in a ship on fire."

What does Mr. John Smith himself gain by his conversion? The Bible? He reads it daily, and his verbal knowledge is nearly perfect; but what he apprehends is limited by an imperfect education. The literature of Israel is intensely local. There are passages where the perfumes of Sharon and Lebanon, the atmosphere of the hills about Jerusalem, the beauty of the fair daughters of Judæa, are so caught and rendered that in a distant age, an alien speech, a remote land, they affect the reader. But Mr. Smith is hampered by his limited vocabulary and dwarfed perceptions. To him the word "publican" invariably suggests a licensed victualler; and the expression "divers diseases" conjures up ideas of water on the brain. Thus he is forced to rely on a purblind parson's conception of what is written. Mr. Smith cannot usefully adopt New Testament ethics with his ordinary business avocation, and keep out of the workhouse. He cannot, with any success, apply Christian principles to his everyday life, if he is to escape Earlswood or Colney Hatch. Hence his admiration for the sleek parson who shepherds the flock at his chapel, and shears them well into the bargain.

The minister instructs poor Mr. Smith as if the Bible were written yesterday, and the legends but the facts of fifth-edition journalism. The minister tells him that the Bible is true from cover to cover. That the Almighty maker of all things put the first man and woman in a garden, and for a crime of petty larceny punished them with death, and visited their small crime on all mankind, whose everlasting fate will be determined at the Judgment Day. Mr. Smith is further instructed that mankind became so wicked that the Almighty drowned them all, except eight persons, like kittens in a pail. Afterwards the Almighty became the War Lord of the Jews, who were his chosen people, although he could not always help them to victory. And so on, through the Newgate Calendar record of the Bible, until the climax when the Almighty is put to death to appease himself. At no stage of the instruction does the minister point out what a level of barbarism must the people have who could thus conceive of their Deity. Hence the delight of the minister and the limitations of poor Mr. Smith, who rapidly becomes the perfect expression of the self-opiniated Christian, a figure at which educated people raise their eyebrows, politely smile, and pass on.

MIMNERMUS.

Science and Spiritualism.

XVI.

(*Concluded from p. 390.*)

There can be no doubt, then, that the history of spiritualism is saturated with fraud, and that the vast majority of the phenomena obtained through mediums are fraudulent in character.....The net result of the investigations conducted by the English Society for Psychical Research was to produce the conviction that no results obtained through *professional* mediums were to be trusted, so long as the conditions rendered fraud *possible*; and, further, that practically all *professional* mediums are frauds! "There does not exist, and there never has existed, a professional medium of any note who has not been convicted of trickery or fraud," says J. N. Maskelyne (*The Supernatural*, p. 183). And, in case Mr. Maskelyne may be considered a prejudiced witness in such matters, it may be stated that the American Society for Psychical Research was unable to find any medium who could produce satisfactory phenomena under test conditions, and stated that "it is, in their opinion, inadvisable to undertake further investigation in regard to professional mediums, inasmuch as all the materializing seances yet attended by them have been held under conditions which rendered any scientific investigation impossible."".....It may almost be said that the S.P.R. has never succeeded in obtaining evidence for a single genuine physical phenomenon in its whole career, while the number of fraudulent mediums it has unearthed is amazing! They have been no more successful in their day than the Seybert Commission was in its—and it is certainly a suspicious fact that, so soon as strict and reliable "tests" are insisted upon, and no opportunity given the medium to produce the phenomena by fraudulent means, the phenomena altogether cease.—*Hereward Carrington, "The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism,"* pp. 9-10.

THE Committee of the Institut General Psychologique of Paris also tested Eusapia's alleged power of moving a balance without touching it. A small machine like a letter-weigher was employed, says Podmore. "It was surrounded with a wooden frame, so as to prevent the use of a hair or other fraudulent device. Eusapia tried it with the wooden covering and failed; tried it with the linen covering and failed. All the protecting apparatus was then removed. Eusapia put her hands on either side of the scale and it went down, and the onlookers could not find out how it was done."[1]

Ultimately it was discovered that the trick was done by means of a hair attached to Eusapia's little fingers, so that when she placed her hands on each side of the scale, she only had to depress her two little fingers to bring the hair down on the scale. The experiments were conducted in such a dim light that the hair was invisible.

[1] Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 108.

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The conclusion arrived at by the Institut Committee was that Eusapia undoubtedly resorted to fraud when it was possible to do so, but that some of the phenomena—the movement of the table and stool, for instance—they could not explain. They do not attribute these phenomena to any spiritual force, but to some physical force of the nature of electricity, emanating from the body of Eusapia. As Mr. Podmore remarks: "The great defect of their report is that whilst they cannot explain some of the things seen and done, they have not given us a chance of explaining them. They do not publish the shorthand notes of the seances.....We see that on this particular occasion the Committee believe that the control was adequate; but then we know that it is Eusapia's to induce this belief, and we know or suspect that in many previous cases the belief has been ill-founded. On the positive side this report does not advance the matter at all. Such a condensed description is of just so much value as the ordinary observer's account of a conjurer's trick. It tells us only that the witnesses didn't see through the trick; but it doesn't tell us how it was done."[1]

Notwithstanding the fact that the Society for Psychical Research had declined to undertake any further investigation of Eusapia's powers after the Cambridge exposure, yet so successfully did she impose on numerous foreign investigators—many of them eminent men of science—during the next twelve years, that in the autumn of 1908 they appointed a committee of three to again test her claims to supernatural powers. Of their qualifications, Mr. Podmore remarks: "Mr. Hereward Carrington is an amateur conjurer, who has for several years made a special study of the tricks of American mediums. His book, *The Psychical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, is the standard authority on these fraudulent performances. The Hon. Everard Fielding and Mr. Baggally have also to their credit years of practical experience in the same field. Mr. Baggally, again, is a practical conjurer, and Mr. Fielding's humorous exposures of the tricks of British and foreign mediums are familiar to all members of the Society for Psychical Research. On the ground of personal qualifications and practical experience a more competent Committee could, since the death of Dr. Hodgson, scarcely have been selected."[2]

The sittings, eleven in all, were held in Naples during November and December, 1908; and it is no small tribute to the genius of Eusapia that she succeeded in duping all three of these well-qualified and able gentlemen, and obtaining their testimony to her supernormal powers. Mr. Carrington, in particular, was so impressed by Eusapia's performance that he actually acted as her manager when she left Italy for America. But a year later (December, 1909) she was to experience utter and irretrievable defeat at the hands of Professor Munsterberg, in New York.

To properly understand what happened, it should be explained that, before giving a seance, a corner of the room was partitioned off by a pair of black curtains, so as to form a sort of triangular cabinet. Inside this cabinet was placed a stool, one or two musical instruments, and any other articles the spirits required to announce their presence and perform their antics. In front of this alcove was placed a table, thirty-three inches long by twenty inches wide, endways to the curtains. At this end Eusapia sat, with her back to the curtains, the investigators sitting round the table, linking hands, those on either side of the medium undertaking the control of her hands and feet. These were invariably the arrangements made by Eusapia before giving a seance.

[1] *Ibid*, p. 113.
[2] Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 114.

Upon this occasion Professor Munsterberg sat at her left side and Mr. Carrington at her right. The "John" referred to in the following description is the name of the spirit supposed to have been invoked by Eusapia, "her wonders to perform." Probably he is the "John King," the spirit of a deceased pirate, who has laboured so assiduously for the mediums for the last fifty years. Professor Munsterberg describes what happened as follows:—

> We had her under strictest supervision. Her left hand grasped my left hand, her right hand was held by her right neighbour, her left foot rested on my foot while her right was pressing the foot of her other neighbour. For an hour the regulation performance had gone on. But now we sat in the darkened room in the highest expectancy while Mr. Carrington begged John to touch my arm and then to lift the table in the cabinet behind her; and John really came. He touched me distinctly on my hip and then on my arm, and at last he pulled my sleeve at the elbow. I plainly felt the thumb and fingers. It was most uncanny.
>
> And finally, John was to lift the table in the cabinet. We held both her hands, we felt both her feet, and yet the table three feet behind her began to scratch the floor and we expected it to be lifted. But instead there suddenly came a wild yelling scream. It was such a scream as I have never heard before in my life, not even in Sarah Bernhardt's most thrilling scenes.
>
> What had happened? Neither the medium nor Mr. Carrington had the slightest idea that a man was lying flat on the floor and had succeeded in slipping noiselessly like a snail below the curtain into the cabinet. I had told him that I expected wires stretched out from her body, and he looked out for them. What a surprise when he saw that she had simply freed her foot from her shoe and with an athletic backward movement of the leg was reaching out and fishing with her toes for the guitar and the table in the cabinet! And then, lying on the floor, he grasped her foot and caught her heel with a firm hand, and she responded with that wild scream which indicated that she knew that at last she was trapped and her glory shattered. Her achievement had been splendid; she had lifted her unshod foot to the height of my arm when she touched me under cover of the curtain, without changing in the least the position of her body. When her foot played thumb and finger, the game was also neat throughout. To be sure, I remember, before she was to reach out for the table behind her, she suddenly felt the need of touching my left hand too, and for that purpose she leaned heavily over the table at which we were sitting. She said that she must do it because her spiritual fluid had become too strong and the touch would relieve her. As a matter of course, in leaning forward with the upper half of her body she was able to push her foot further backward and thus to reach the light table, which probably stood a few inches too far away.
>
> After this scream, at least let us not repeat the ridiculous excuse that she sometimes uses tricks when by chance genuine phenomena do not arise, but that she can perform the same acts at other times by mere spiritual powers. No. We had here the perfectly typical performance. Everything occurred in exactly the same style as in previous seances, and the conditions of supervision were the best which she allows at all. To put your foot on hers is never allowed, as the poor woman has a nervous "weakness" in her instep. Thus the only allowed supervision of her feet is in being sure all the time that her foot is on yours. I did indeed feel her shoe all the time. When the scream occurred and her foot was caught, I distinctly felt that her shoe was pressing my foot. A hook on the right shoe probably pressed down the empty left shoe. If her foot had not been caught that performance would have been the best in the whole seance, and the cabinet mysteries worked in our presence would never have been under stricter conditions. Moreover, this foot performance without any motion of the upper half of the body evidently pre-

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supposes a continued and perfect training. Here she was trapped for the first time in an act which cannot possibly be explained as an accidental occurrence; such marvellous athletics must be explained as a regular life-work. Her greatest wonders are absolutely nothing but fraud and humbug; this is no longer a theory but a proven fact.[1]

If the man had not been concealed in the cabinet, Professor Munsterberg would never have been able to detect, nor even suspect, the manner in which the tricks were performed. He himself frankly admits: "I do not refer to any philosophical or theoretical conviction, but to a practical one, that I myself am entirely unfit for such an investigation. There the public is usually under the influence of a curious illusion. Most people think that a scientist is especially adapted to carrying on such an inquiry, and if a great scholar becomes convinced of the genuineness of the performance, the public looks on that as a strong argument. I am inclined to think that scholars are especially poor witnesses in such a case." And, as he further points out, the scientist in his laboratory has not the slightest fear that Nature will play tricks or resort to fraud, and places the same trust in the honesty of his students. "If he weighs his chemical substances, he is not accustomed to watch whether one of the boys has a scheme to pull down the lever of the scale.....And now he, with his bland *naivete* and his training in blind confidence, is again and again called to make inquiries which would demand a detective and a prestidigitator. Moreover, the best scientific work in one field is not the slightest guarantee for good observation in another field. It is often remarkable to what a degree a man who is a great scholar in one division may be not only ignorant, but uneducated in his attitude, silly in his judgment and foolish in his conclusions in fields which lie outside of his interests"[2]—a fact we have amply demonstrated in the course of these articles. The greatest of all philosophers, Herbert Spencer, "thought he would be an easy dupe at a spiritualist seance."[3] Probably he would have been; but it is another proof of his clear good sense and honesty in admitting it.

I am convinced that if something entirely new and mysterious in phenomena were to-day launched in London, the public would flop down and the great and glorious newspapers would again rave about there being more in heaven and earth than we dream of in our philosophy. And this will continue all the while the child is inoculated with the virus of religion, which predisposes it to give easy credence to such tales of miracle and superstition in after-life. We shall deal next with the psychical phenomena.

W. MANN.

Correspondence.

HEBERT AND MR. UNDERWOOD.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I had no idea when I parried the first thrust made by Mr. Underwood, as he placed his foil between Mr. Arch's and my own, that I had a swashbuckler to deal with, who not only attempts the usual braggart's dodge in trying to frighten his adversary by noise, but even scorns the honourable rules of the sword. Yet, since he considers my criticisms "as ignorant as they are foolish"; since he doubts whether I wish to get at the truth or not; since he sneers that an *ipse dixit* even from me "is not above suspicion"; and finally, since he begs the question by wanting me to confess that I have made a "bad blunder" (as though I could possibly make a "good blunder"), we can truly see Mr. Underwood in his true colours.

My first letter anent Hebert and the *Pere Duchene* was, to my mind, tempered criticism. My second was, perhaps, a little playful, yet directly critical withal. Mr. Arch's replies were equally tempered and critical. A review of this correspondence will show that there has not been the slightest hint (as Mr. Underwood suggests) of an *ipse dixit* from myself. The only person who has adopted this attitude is Mr. Underwood.

I politely asked him, in my last letter, if he would give the readers of the *Freethinker* (not myself) some of *the worst of one number of the Pere Duchene* in French. His reply is, that he "cannot waste his time in transcribing a dozen or so pages"! I ask him if he thought it "waste of time" when he took the trouble to specially look up the *Pere Duchene* so as to reply to my first criticism? But he accuses his adversary of cowardice, when it is he himself who "runs away" at my *parer seconde et porter en meme temps!*

And then, he is so solicitous lest the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be prosecuted for obscenity! One feels inclined to emulate Hebert, and say, "Damn his impertinence!" It is the readers of the *Freethinker* who would be the best judges of that, and not the police. And I have no doubt that the Editor knows, or ought to know, the mental gauge of his readers without any reference to Mr. Underwood. Mr. Underwood may be an excellent authority upon "inebriated racing touts," and as to what would make them blush. I beg to say that I am not, and I have no desire to be. But I do know, or at least I hope so, something of the mental equipment of the readers of the *Freethinker*, a journal which I have read every week, and occasionally contributed to, for seventeen years.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

[We do not think that this controversy can be carried further with profit to readers; none of whom, we think, will be greatly interested in the opinions of Mr. Underwood and Mr. Farmer of each other.—ED.]

MIMNERMUS AND RABELAIS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You may, or what is more likely, you may not remember, that some time ago I tried to express my admiration for the fervid rhetoric of your contributor "Mimnermus," whose delightful articles give an air of literary ripeness to a paper the dominant note of which, if I may say so, is too often one of dry and angular disputatiousness.

You will think, perhaps, that I am inclined to attach too much importance to the way in which facts are presented, to the mere outward garb, and too little to the facts themselves. Now, that is exactly the point to which I am coming in my feminine and roundabout way.

You were once courteous enough to give me the opportunity of pointing out that I had found a noticeable resemblance between the style of "Mimnermus" and that of my erstwhile master in literature the great "Claudius Clear." They both have an unlimited affection for the completely rounded sentence, the glowing and coloured phrase. I now find that "Mimnermus" has something else in common with the editor of the *British Weekly*—a truly high-handed way with mere fact. Let me ask you to look for a moment at his article on Rabelais which he calls with his characteristic felicity of expression "Under a Fool's Cap." In the first place he accepts the impossible traditional date of Rabelais' birth, 1483—instead of 1495, the date fixed by Rathery, Lacroix, and Mr. J. M. Wheeler. The earlier date is chosen because it gives point to an eloquent passage about Rabelais not writing "until an age when the passion of youth had consumed itself to ashes," and also to the assertion that his cynicism with regard to women was the result of his long monastic training. But a cynical attitude to women was not peculiar to the Middle Ages; it is everywhere in the Greek and Latin poets; it was handed down from antiquity to the early Christian fathers; and so became a tradition. It seems to me questionable if the position of women was any worse in mediæval France than in sentimentalizing Germany or platonizing

[1] Professor Hugo Munsterberg, *Problems of To-Day* (1910), pp. 142-3-4.

[2] *Problems of To-Day*, pp. 121-3.

[3] Duncan's *Life of Spencer*. Cited in *Athenæum*, July, 1908.

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Italy. If "Mimnermus" has ever visited a music-hall he will remember the old and ever popular joke about the lodger. Yet I fancy he would not be so foolish as to make this poor joke the basis of a generalization on the sexual ethics of the lower Middle Class.

In another passage he says that Rabelais' love for his mother was killed. How does he know this? So far as I am aware there is no mention anywhere of Rabelais' mother. May not the simple explanation be that she died before the filial sentiment was developed in him?

Now, any one of us may go astray, but we cannot hope to do it so boldly as "Mimnermus." Had the Hebrew wise man been privileged to contemplate the way of "Mimnermus" with facts he would have added a fifth to the four things which were too wonderful for him. Rabelais, he tells us impressively, did not relish the idea of martyrdom for had he not seen his contemporaries burnt at the stake? Was not "Giordano Bruno whom he had met at Rome done to death in the usual Roman (Catholic) fashion?" It is quite possible that "Mimnermus" may have access to facts unknown to me, yet in the absence of proof upsetting the accepted dates, I am still inclined to think that Rabelais (1495-1553) was not a contemporary of Bruno (1548-1600).

MINNIE SPENCER.

Acid Drops.

Poor Paul! By 385 votes to 55 the House of Commons accepted the principle of "Votes for Women"—provided they are not under thirty years of age. What would Paul have said? He suffered not a woman to teach; he ordered them to remain in silence, and subjection, and obey their husbands. And now a House of Commons, the majority being Christians—of a sort—endow her with the vote! The world moves, although Christian bigotry has prevented it moving in *that* direction for many centuries.

The proprietors of "White Horse" whisky have just received intimation from a soldier on service that one of their pocket diaries had been the means of saving his life. A piece of shrapnel passed through the diary and just reached his flesh immediately in front of his heart. What would our religious friends have said if only this had been a Bible instead of an advertisement for Scotch whisky.

The Bishop of London says "no self-respecting citizen would demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." This suggests that "self-respecting" citizens had better ignore Old Testament teaching.

Another gem of the Bishop's is that he has studied the Bible far more than have the conscientious objectors. Just so! And his studies have been more profitable.

In an article on the loss of children's lives in the recent air-raid, the *Star* says, "Herod must surely be jealous of the Kaiser." This is unjust to Herod, for the story of the massacre of the innocents, narrated in the New Testament, is pure fiction.

What excellent conceit pious folk possess. The Rev. J. Tolefree Parr, the President of the Primitive Methodist Conference, says "Take out of the national life the moral and spiritual influence of the Church, and nothing can save it from sinking back into barbarism." This is delightful nonsense. If every Primitive Methodist Chapel closed its doors, there would scarcely be a ripple upon the surface of contemporary society.

The Rev. J. Tolefree Parr also speaks of the "withering blight of vices" which the War revealed, and said that drink had almost "throttled the Commonwealth." If this be so, it is a reflection on the clergy, who are absolved from military service and are at full liberty to attend to their own duties.

Providence has small respect for churches. The bell-turret at Christ Church, Harrow Road, Paddington, was struck by lightning, and a large piece of masonry, weighing seven hundredweights, fell to the pavement. A Methodist place of worship at Roegreen, Worsley, near Manchester, was also struck during a service.

We can't be expected to often find ourselves in agreement with the Archbishop of Canterbury, but we quite agree with him in his protest against the policy of "reprisals." Nothing could be more terrible than the slaughter of little children by airmen such as took place in the recent raid on London, and one can quite understand the lust of passion which calls for similar action against Germany. But between that understanding and a deliberate justification of the cry there is a world of difference. In times of stress the benefit of leadership and of the press would be that they served to keep the public mind steady and sane. But when we have a section of the press and a number of public men—either from lack of level-headedness or from a desire to exploit a natural and even justifiable outburst of feeling—deliberately asking that our own airmen shall slaughter German women and children, as German airmen have slaughtered ours, there is an indication of a deplorably low level of public life.

Reprisals mean, as we have already said, nothing less than a competition in brutality, and we do not think that any English man or woman will, on reflection, be anxious to demonstrate to the world that, however brutal Germans may be, we can be still more brutal. Nor is it complimentary to our own airmen to assume that they would undertake the work of slaughtering women and children without a feeling of repugnance and degradation. Nor do we follow those who argue that while the bombing of schools and civilians generally stiffens *our* backs and makes us determined to get on with the War, similar treatment of Germans will compel them to adopt other methods. It will rather play into the hands of the German military authorities, and help to strengthen the war-spirit there as their conduct strengthens the war-spirit here. And it is surely the height of absurdity to argue that while the German Governments are ready to sacrifice millions of their people in the pursuit of the War, and while the German people support the Governments in their doing so, both will be brought to their knees by outrages on mere handfuls of civilians. Similar outrages made Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, etc., more determined than ever to carry on the War. It is only the cheap psychology of an uninstructed mind that can look for any different effect of the same policy on Germany.

It is said that we adopted the policy of reprisals when we used gas and boiling oil in reply to the German gas and liquid flame. That is so; but the distinction is that in this case it was a necessity of war pure and simple. Soldiers were implicated, not civilians, or women and children. If we went one better than Germany, as we were entitled to do, that fact is a melancholy illustration of the truth that war is a progressively brutalizing occupation, and an apt comment upon the utter drivel talked about the ennobling influence of war upon a people. And note that the next war will certainly commence at the point of brutality where this one left off, and will go on developing along the same lines. Boiling oil, and gas, and liquid flame, and the rest will be part of the regular outfit of the armies of the future. Even air raids will have their recognized place. And they are best serving the cause of universal peace who recognize the truth, drive the lesson home to the minds of their fellows, and so make the recurrence of war more and more improbable.

Mr. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, says he has met Oxford men who were ignorant of the elements of spelling, who had never heard of the principal characters of history, and who could not trace the European capitals on the map. We are not surprised, for Oxford University expelled the poet Shelley, and conferred an honorary degree on the first "General" Booth.

The piety of editors is not always very deep. A Sunday

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paper, in a leading article states: "Nature knows nothing of sin; cause and effect are her only concern." Freethinkers have said the same thing for generations.

A schoolmaster, who possesses a London University degree, writes to the *Daily News* to complain that he was offered a teacher's post at twenty-five shillings weekly. This shows the value put upon education in a Christian country, which permits the bachelor Bishop of London to enjoy a salary of £200 weekly.

The Bishop of Chelmsford predicts a lengthy War. Let us hope that he is as mistaken as the Bible prophets.

Unconscious humour is not the worst. Under a paragraph headed "Showing Off," an evening paper printed a paragraph stating that organ recitals are to be given at the City Temple, London, weekly, until the end of July.

The late organist at Hereford Cathedral left estate to the value of £6,618. There are not many church organists who get the chance, for ecclesiastics are not innocent of sweating their employees.

At a City bookshop where "remainders" are sold, a notice was displayed, "Theodore Roosevelt reduced to twopence." This is twopence too much for the man who libelled Thomas Paine.

From the *Daily Telegraph* we take the following:—

> Under the Defence of India Act the Government of Madras has prohibited Mrs. Annie Besant, Mr. George S. Aeundale, and Mr. B. B. Wadia, who are both also connected with the paper *New India* and the Indian Home Rule propaganda, from attending or taking part in any meeting, from lecturing or making speeches, and from publishing or writing any speech composed by them. The Governor has also placed their correspondence under censorship, and has directed that after expiry of a brief period they shall cease to reside in Madras city and shall reside in any one of six specified areas.

In a War for the freedom of the world liberty appears to be faring rather badly.

Lady Courtney says, "Centuries ago the wisdom of the sages and statesmen of Rome may have been written on tablets of gold or silver, and honoured by all men, while the message of a few Galilean fishermen was only spoken to the hearts of a few simple men and women like themselves." Her ladyship forgets that the beautiful message "spoken to the hearts" of simple men and women was "Believe, or be damned!"

A large display advertisement of the Young Men's Christian Association states that the organization has given away, among other things, "many thousands of cigarettes." As Christ was crucified to prevent people smoking in the next world, we presume the Y.M.C.A. is giving them a chance of smoking in this one.

The scandal of the ever-increasing prices of bread and the ordinary necessities of life is an ironical comment on the prayer of millions, "Give us this day our daily bread." The food profiteers do not care how people pray so long as they themselves are free to prey.

As we have not enough pantomime Orders in the country, the King has been graciously pleased to create two new ones—an Order of Knighthood to be styled the Order of the British Empire, and the Order of the Companions of Honour, with all the paraphernalia of decorations, an Usher of the Purple Rod, etc., etc. The badge of the Order is to be a silver gilt cross with the motto "For God and the Empire." We marvel the King was not advised that there are millions of people in the Empire who do not believe in God at all. And if some of these are offered the decoration, we wonder what they will do with it? Will they go round wearing an Order given for service to *God* and the Empire? Really, it is time this sort of thing was dropped altogether. But we have no doubt that the King is wise in his generation. Every new title is a help to existing institutions. It creates a new vested interest, and that is something.

The clergy are not only claiming exemption from military service for themselves, but some of them seem determined to claim it for those who minister to their comforts. Thus, exemption was asked for the gardener of the Vicar of Walford, Ross. Before the tribunal it was stated that the vicar had three other men-servants beside this one. And, presumably, there would be maid-servants as well. Things have improved since the Son of Man had not where to lay his head.

The Rev. James Orpen, 32, was charged yesterday at Stratford Police Court with attempting to procure two boys to commit an act of gross indecency, and, further, with committing an act of indecency with a boy. Mr. Freke Palmer, for the accused, pleaded guilty. The prisoner was bound over to be of good behaviour for twelve months.—*Times*, June 21.

The Rev. J. H. Locke, a Congregational minister of Epping, is assisting in a grocer's shop, and a newspaper states that "he astonishes the customers with his skill in cutting cheese and bacon." The question is whether the gentleman is running a grocer's or a gospel shop, for grocers are not exempted from National Service.

In a column notice in a daily paper of the Salvation Army flag day, the headline bore the words, "Home Fires." The word "fire" embroidered on the jerseys of the Salvationists refers to an eternal fire in an everlasting home.

Punch makes excellent play with what it calls "the financial success of Mr. H. G. Wells' punctuality and enterprize in looking into the vexed question of the Deity," in a series of burlesque interviews. Mr. Arnold Bennett is made to say that he quite agrees the book of the other Essex fictionist is a meritorious and ingenious work, but the idea of God still needs handling in a capable and meritorious way. Mr. R. J. Campbell refused to be interviewed, but locked himself in his church, and looked through the keyhole "with his beautiful, troubled, wistful orbs." Mr. G. K. Chesterton quotes: "An honest god is the noblest work of man," and Sir Robertson Nicoll said that "for many years his paper had supported Providence to their mutual advantage." Meanwhile, sums up *Punch*, things go on as usual. That, we believe, hits the mark. By the time people have finished replying to Mr. Wells, his new God will have been quite forgotten. Even Mr. Wells may have some difficulty in remembering what he was like.

War Bread.

The Rev. Martin Jones, Vicar of Wymondham, Norfolk, says that War Bread is unsuitable for the Communion. It produces too many crumbs.—*Daily Mail.*

"THIS War Bread," says a Vicar bland,
"Makes too much crumb for Holy Rite;
It falls to pieces in my hand,
Before I take a tiny bite."

He cannot have good bread and strife;
He cannot praise the "God" who rides
Triumphant o'er "His" product—Life,
And in each gaping gun abides.

He cannot have both Bread and Stones;
The "Bread of Life" and War's abuse;
He cannot raise to life the bones
Of Creeds outworn in futile use.

But he will plead with reverence,
Providing topics for the Press;
And moan with pious innocence,
That War Bread makes an awful mess!

ARTHUR F. THORN.

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To Correspondents.

H. A.—It would be foolish to prophesy, as the result will be public property before the issue of the *Freethinker* is published.

E. B.—Many thanks for useful batch of cuttings.

WE have so many calls upon our space this week that we are compelled to hold over a number of replies until our next issue.

F. RUDDY (Liverpool).—You are confusing Rabelais with Boccaccio.

J. FITZPATRICK.—We are unable to deal with it this week. Absence from London and other calls have left us with little time on hand.

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.

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

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.

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 summonses issued by the L.C.C. against Mr. Neate for selling the *Freethinker* in Victoria Park came on for hearing before Mr. Clarke Hall at the Old Street Police Court on Wednesday last, June 20. Mr. Haedicke represented the Council, and Mr. W. H. Eldridge, appeared on behalf of Mr. Neate, at the instance of the Protest Committee. Owing to the quite amazing incompleteness of the case as presented by the Council's solicitor, the proceedings looked as though they would collapse entirely, but an adjournment was asked for by Mr. Haedicke, which Mr. Clarke Hall was compelled to grant. By the time this is in the hands of our readers the affair will be over, but as we are writing a day before the hearing, we will only say that we feel quite easy as to the outcome of *this* case. The important thing is that we are evidently in the initial stages of a fight which promises some interesting developments, and which is of first-rate public importance.

In summing up the consequences of the judgment in the Bowman case, we pointed out that it went much further than the case itself. It not only legalized a bequest to an incorporated secular society, it legalized bequests to *all* secular societies, whether incorporated or not. And we expressed the belief that a bequest left to a society such as the N.S.S. was perfectly valid. Recent events have quite justified that view. An old friend of the movement, Capt. E. Raggett, left the National Secular Society a bequest of £10. A solicitor wrote to the Secretary, Miss Vance, asking for a copy of the principles and objects of the N.S.S. in order that he might advise his client as to the advisability of payment. These were duly supplied, and the legacy has been paid over without comment or delay. Of course, the bequest was not due to the Bowman case, but we are fairly certain the prompt payment marks a great advance.

We are doubtful whether Mr. Wells' *God the Invisible King* is worth a whole book by way of reply to its nebulous theology and equally vague sociology; but if it is, *God and Mr. Wells*, by Mr. William Archer (Watts & Co.; 1s. 9d. net) will give those interested what they require. The book is lively reading, and Mr. Wells gets the good-humoured castigation he asked for when he came forward as the prophet of a new religion. We should like to see Mr. Archer himself a little more definite in his attitude towards "God" than he is (there really is justification for a definite attitude if one can divest one's self of the tyranny of tradition), but we must take each man as we find him, and make the best of him. We like best in the book the chapter on "Personification," and we fully endorse what Mr. Archer has to say about the use of the word "God." He asks:—

> Is it possible to deodorize a word which comes to us redolent of "good, thick, stupefying incense smoke" mingled with the reek of the auto-da-fe? Can we beat into a ploughshare the sword of St. Bartholomew, and a thousand other deeds of horror? God has been by far the most tragic word in the whole vocabulary of the race—a spell to conjure up all the worst fiends of human nature; arrogance, abjectness, fanaticism, hatred, and ferocity.....If a word is at best a confusion and at worst a war-whoop, should we not try to dispense with it, to avoid it, to find a substitute which should more accurately, if less truculently, express our idea?

That is good counsel. You can no more relieve such words as "God" and "religion" from their confusing and sinister associations than you can relieve the typhoid germ of its poisonous quality. And there is no sound reason why anyone should try.

Another handy little volume published by Messrs Watts and Co. is *Old Testament Legends for Young Readers*, by Mr. F. J. Gould (1s. 6d. net). These "legends" appeared originally in the columns of the *Freethinker*, and very many of our readers will no doubt welcome them in their more permanent form. They form a striking lesson in the art of making use of even the Bible in a way that will preserve all that is worth having for youthful readers, while divesting it of its character as an aid to superstition. The volume should be specially helpful to teachers and to all engaged in the training of children. It really teaches without preaching, whereas so many miscalled educational works preach without teaching. We are pleased to add that we have another series in hand by Mr. Gould, on New Testament Legends, which we hope to commence in a week or two.

We think the following letter will be of interest to others beside ourselves. It is one of many we receive, and our regret is that we can so seldom spare space for publication. But they are appreciated none the less on that account:—

> DEAR MR. COHEN,—I sincerely hope that your many duties will not prevent you from perusing these few lines of heartfelt thanks which I tender to you and your co-workers on the *Freethinker* staff. During the past few years I have been a frequent reader of your "Super Periodical," and I assure you the benefits I have derived from its perusal are manifold. You and your colleagues are responsible for the development of my critical faculties, for which I specially thank you. For they enable me to-day, amidst all our political, industrial, and religious convolutions, to look along the line of demarcation more clearly.
>
> Through your splendid *Freethinker* I came to know Darwin, and if I could only express my thoughts to you, you would then, perhaps, be able to gauge the extent of my delight, when after leaving behind me for a few hours the baneful and stultifying machine-labour, I forget the anomolies of our transient social order in the company of the great naturalist. You introduced me to the treasure-house of "Ingersoll," which I assert must be visited many times when you have once entered the domains thereof. You have greatly assisted me in developing the "cosmic sense," and from the development of that sense I have come to know my position in relation to the "universe."
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> . . . . . .
>
> We have a free library in Stafford, and I often go to peruse the *Literary Guide* and the *Positivist Review*. And, of course, being a reader of your splendid paper, and knowing its intrinsic worth, I approached the librarian with a view to placing the *Freethinker* on the table each week. He informed me that I could do so with pleasure. So I shall order a *Freethinker* from my newsagent each week, and thereby enable the citizens of Stafford to have an opportunity of reading the most interesting and intellectual periodical in the country at the present time.—H W. C.

A correspondent suggests that in view of the activity of the Churches with regard to religion in the schools, a copy of Mr. Cohen's pamphlet on *Religion and the Child* should be sent "broadcast" to teachers and public men. We should be glad to fall in with the suggestion, but if done on a proper scale it would involve a considerable outlay, and we have no means available for such a purpose. We do send out a fair

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amount of free literature now, but as we are at our wits end almost to "carry on," we cannot add to expenses. But we suggest that what cannot be done by one, could be done by all. We are prepared to quote special terms to such as wish to purchase large or small quantities for the purpose of free distribution.

As an illustration of what we have said above, we may mention that last week we bought a small quantity of *Freethinker* paper at a considerable advance on even last year's price. This week we decided to purchase a little more. On sending in the order we were informed that the price of the paper had advanced two pence per pound. So we decided to wait. But if things proceed at their present rate we can picture the *Freethinker* being sent from house to house on a gramophone record.

Special.

LAST week I mentioned that in addition to the fight with the L.C.C. there was another matter in connection with the law on which something might have to be said. That something is connected with a charge of blasphemy brought against Mr. J. W. Gott.

On June 13 Mr. Gott wrote me that he had been arrested on a charge of blasphemy and asking whether the N.S.S. would undertake his defence. Naturally, I could not undertake to pledge the Society to any such course before consulting the Executive, nor had I any information as to the charge. But I told Mr. Gott that in order to see that he got fair play in the police court, he might engage the services of a solicitor, for the expense of which I would make myself responsible.

This was done, and at a special meeting of the Executive, my action in the matter was fully endorsed. I was also requested to go to Birmingham, if necessary, and watch the case in the interests of the N.S.S. Accordingly I went to Birmingham on Sunday evening last in order to be at the court on the Monday. All that could be said on behalf of Mr. Gott was then said by the solicitor engaged, but it was clear that the stipendiary had no alternative but to send the case for trial at the Assizes, which opens, I believe, on July 10.

Another Executive meeting has been called for this week, and it would not be right to foreshadow or forestall its decision by expressing an opinion now as to the course to be followed. The case is a difficult one, as many will guess.

One thing I am very sorry for. Mr. Gott sent out an appeal for funds, for what he calls his propaganda, in connection with which he announced that I had made myself responsible for the costs of the police court proceedings. I regret that this was done. I had no knowledge of the circular until a copy of it came accidentally into my hands, and the use of my name was quite unauthorized. To most readers it would identify me either with the appeal for money or with Mr. Gott's propaganda, or with both. And neither view expresses the truth.

I refrain from saying more now for many reasons. It may even be advisable not to say more until the case is concluded.

CHAPMAN COHEN, *President N.S.S.*

The Sense Organs of Man.

CERTAIN mystical theologians and strictly introspective metaphysicians delight in dwelling on the presumably solemn circumstance that mental processes cannot be translated into terms of matter. Even by some semi-Rationalists psychical phenomena are vaguely regarded as modes of existence which elude the methods of the purely scientific investigator. Needless to state, the highest, and consequently most involved manifestations of mental phenomena are invariably chosen to prove the impassable barrier which is alleged to sunder physical from psychical things. No attention is paid to the self-evident verity that to grasp the various problems concerning the senses and the intellect, the emotions and the will, requires a fair amount of patient scientific labour, and that it is imperative to carefully study, and strive to understand, a few of the simpler processes of sensation in order to obtain anything remotely resembling a clear appreciation of the real difficulties to be overcome.

The famous Dr. Henry Maudsley has always insisted that some acquaintance with the brain and nervous system is indispensable to the true student of psychology. But this plain fact is persistently ignored by the "paper" psychologists who find metaphysical speculation much more easy than the solid work essential to those who grapple with the problems involved. Metaphysical discussions in large measure owe their popularity to the pleasant circumstance that no real information is necessary to enable one to express an opinion. Other things equal, one metaphysical assertion is as good as another, for nothing can be stated as a mere matter of fact by either disputant. Moreover, the debaters are privileged to run before they have learnt to walk; and, in that respect, possess a decided advantage over those who approach unsettled problems by that stonier path in which they are compelled to compare their theories with ascertained facts. It is true that scientific theories display one element of superiority, inasmuch as they have been derived, and, in many cases, demanded by the observed sequences of organic Nature.

When assertions are made in the name of science, they are verified or invalidated by an appeal to the demonstrated discoveries in the department of knowledge involved. But in barren speculation each assertor is a law unto himself. In these hazy realms they meander along "a limitless, lampless labyrinth," and many a man who might have helped in the world's advance has unwisely devoted his days to speculating about the unspeakable, and has even bequeathed to an ungrateful posterity various volumes still spoken of, although seldom or never perused.

The aim of the present series of articles is to state to the best of the writer's ability a few of the reasons which induce philosophical scientists to regard mind as the product of experience. Brain is the organ of mind, and it is significant that all our higher sense structures are confined to the cranium. But the general tactile sense from which the superior senses of taste, smell, sight, and hearing, have been derived, is not restricted to any special area of the body. Almost any part of the skin will respond to the impact of outside influences. Different sensations are produced on the body surfaces by heat or cold, or through contact with solid or liquid substances. But only a few specialized areas of the animal framework are capable of being affected in such a way as to give rise to the complex sensations of the higher senses of vision, hearing, smell, and taste. And these sensory organs are so constructed that they are appropriately stimulated by a few special vibrations or particular substances only.

Changes known as reflex actions are constantly occurring in the body without occasioning consciousness. But we soon become conscious when the sensory or afferent nerves are stimulated by some external influence. Such states of consciousness are classed as feelings or sensations, volitions, thoughts, and emotions. These various forms of consciousness are all the outcome, directly or indirectly, of the stimulation or irritation of nervous tissue.

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Sensations vary within wide limits. Some internal sensations, notably the fancies of ill-health, arise uncalled for and depart unbidden. These subjective feelings assume many forms, and frequently arise from such derangements as indigestion and other ailments of the vegetative system. But however much such morbid sensations may detract from the pleasures of life, they convey no knowledge of the external world.

The senses which enable us to hold converse with surrounding things are so constructed that each sensation to which they give rise is generated by stimuli applied to them, and of which they are the special mechanism. Taste and smell are confined to certain regions of the mouth and nasal cavities. Eye and ear are the respective organs of sight and sound, while the more generalized sense of touch, although spread much more extensively than the other senses, is, however, restricted to the skin, and to parts of the membranes coating the internal cavities of our bodies.

The sensation of touch is a simple feeling of contact that is associated with information concerning the particular region affected. If the tip of the finger touches a hot metal or a cold, rough surface there emerges a double consciousness. We are not only aware of the existence of these external substances, but we are conscious that they are in contact with the finger tip. The sensation seems to be located in the finger, and we attribute this to the material causing it. But it is different with the higher senses, for when we perceive the perfume of a rose we instinctively look for the flower. Unpleasant smells occasioned by bad drains and other causes outside ourselves are similarly regarded, and even those evil odours which accompany certain diseases of the nose itself—we refer to external agencies. In reality we see and hear in the brain, but we are constrained to attribute these sensations to the objects causing them. And with taste likewise, for as Huxley said:—

> When a lump of sugar is taken into the mouth, we are simply aware of a sensation of sweetness and do not associate that sensation of sweetness with any particular part of the mouth, though, by the sense of touch, which the inside of the mouth also possesses, we can tell pretty exactly whereabouts in the mouth the melting lump is lying.

In the course of evolution the special sense areas have been differentiated through the physiological division of labour to minister to peculiar modes of motion. From a primitive lens in the integument of simple organisms the complex organs of vision as they exist in birds, mammals, and others have been progressively developed. The vibrations of the luminiferous ether act on the eye in such a manner that the light rays generate the sensation of sight. The waves which produce such marvellous results when falling upon their appropriate organ evolve no appreciable effect when they come into contact with other areas of the body. In all instances where sensations of a higher order arise each results from the application of a special form of stimulus to its appropriate sense organ, and the arrangement of each organ is so contrived as to render that organ acutely sensitive to its appropriate stimulus.

The sensation of pressure generated when the body is brought into contact with solid substances varies greatly. This pressure sense reaches its maximum on the back of the hand and the skin of the forehead. The finger tip, so sensitive in other respects, is much less responsive to pressure than these bodily areas. And just as there exist "pressure spots," so there are skin regions highly sensitive to heat and cold. Even in one small section of the thigh, as Goldscheider has proved, there lie many localized areas some of which respond to heat only, while the remainder manifest marked responsiveness to cold. Our cheeks are far more sensitive to warmth than our lips, while the palms of the hands possess a greater sensitiveness to heat than their backs.

Tactile sensibility varies very considerably. Weber's experiments with the tactual sense demonstrate wide differences of discrimination and sensibility. The two points of a pair of compasses, if placed only one-tenth or one-twelfth of an inch apart, will be plainly felt as two when they touch the finger tips. If the same experiment is made with the back of the hand one impression only will be felt. The points may be parted for a quarter of an inch on the arm and still only one impression is felt. But the tongue proves extremely sensitive, for that organ will distinctly distinguish the two points when separated by a mere twenty-fourth of an inch. The cheeks and forehead, however, prove dull percipients when tested in this way, while the compass ends may be placed as far apart as three inches on the back and a single sensation is all we obtain.

Then there is the muscular sense which shows itself amenable to education and improvement. For instance, travellers who carry bags, in course of time more or less unconsciously, learn to carry them with the least possible effort. Many traders know without lifting the approximate weight of the goods before them. As a matter of fact the muscles possess nerve fibres which carry messages to the seat of sensation. As Dr. Barcroft states: "And there is but little doubt that we must look to the impulses generated in these nerves, more especially in the nerves of the tendons, as providing the sensations which form the basis of the muscular sense."

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

The Twilight of the Gods.

II.

(Concluded from p. 395).

WE must dismiss the idea that Christianity triumphed over an enlightened and freethinking world. Ancient Freethought, as a matter of fact, flickered out with Lucian in the second century A.D. The weakness of Epicureanism was that it remained a philosophy for the easy and comfortable. Modern Freethought has the advantage of finding a natural, even if unconscious, ally in the democratic movement, which equally has to face the opposition of privileged ecclesiasticism. In the Roman Empire there was no democratic movement, because the basis of industry was slavery, and the slaves were a miscellaneous class drawn from all quarters of the Roman world, without education or the possibility of organization. Epicureanism, therefore, remained the property of those who had hope in this life. After Lucian, the last representative of a dwindling and unpopular school, we meet it no more.

The reason is to be found in the disappearance or enfeeblement of the social class that cherished this philosophy; and this, again, was due to the material decline of ancient civilization. A society whose economic foundation was slave-production, required for its maintenance a continual supply of fresh human chattels, and also an inexhaustible fund of surplus wealth in order to maintain in idleness the destitute freemen for whom there was no work. So long as Rome continued to conquer fresh provinces, both slaves and surplus wealth were virtually inexhaustible. This process, however, reached its inevitable limit in the second century A.D. The time came

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when the inflow of slaves began to dwindle, slave-labour became more expensive, and its inefficiency exhausted the soil. At the same time, the cost of defending the Empire increased. The old Roman armies, drawn from the Italian peasantry, and imbued with a genuine public spirit, ceased to exist when that peasantry itself ceased to exist. The legions, from the first century A.D., were drawn more and more from the provincial populations of Gaul, Pannonia, Syria, etc., who naturally felt no loyalty to Rome, and fought only for plunder and rewards. Discipline slackened, efficiency decreased, and the legions had to be continually placated by largesses of money. After the extinction of the Antonine dynasty, the Empire fell into an ever-increasing welter of mili tary anarchy, in which popular generals, usually not even of Roman blood, were proclaimed emperors by their troops, and rode roughshod over the Senate at Rome. Under this system taxation increased, while wealth diminished, and the old land-owning and slave-owning class were steadily impoverished.

It is an empirical law, which we may legitimately infer from a study of history, that classes and communities which live in prosperity and security, or in a lively hope of reaching it, tend to Freethought and Materialism in their beliefs; while those whose security is seriously threatened, or who in any case have no prospect of it, tend to superstition and supernaturalism. Ancient Freethought, accordingly, died out when ancient society began to be faced with impoverishment and ruin. The contrast between the dominant spirit towards the middle of the second century, when Roman prosperity was at its height, and that towards the middle of the third, when the decline was well under way, is very striking. The former age is still, on the whole, one of education and enlightenment. The Emperor Hadrian, in a letter written from Egypt, ridicules the agglomeration of Oriental superstitions which he finds there, the worship of Serapis, Judaism, Christianity, etc., as on one and the same level of absurdity. A century later, we find the Emperor Alexander Severus, himself not a Roman but a Syrian, placing the images of Abraham and Christ in his private chapel, and the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus on the way.

In the third century, therefore, Christianity had not to contend with a dominant Rationalism, but with mystical and theosophical systems on the same plane as itself. Platonism had ceased to be the more or less logical system that Plato had left it, and had become a super-natural religion, appealing to intuition and "ecstasy" instead of to reason. The Greek myths were interpreted as religious allegories, very much as modern Christians try to get over Old Testament absurdities in the same way. The association with an admittedly immoral mythology was, doubtless, an element of weakness to the Pagan religions in their struggle against Christianity. The latter had the advantage of having taken over its own mythology from the Jews, who had already subjected it to a refining process, in the interests of Monotheism, such as the Pagans had not applied to theirs. The Christians were able to use some of the old Epicurean arguments against the Pagan religions, without the Pagans being able to retort with the same amount of effect. The immoralities of the Greek myths were notorious to all; the Hebrew myths, on the other hand, were little studied by the Pagans, and were, in any case, less outrageous to the prevalent Monotheist feeling than the Greek myths were.

However, as we know, it was not the efficacy of propaganda, but the political sequence of events, which eventually turned the scale in favour of Christianity. Once in the ascendant after the "conversion" of Constantine, the Christians were able to turn against their rivals every weapon of official repression and mob-passion which they had once had to face themselves, with the added incentives of loot—for the Pagan temples were very wealthy—and economy—for animal sacrifices were expensive in an age of increasing penury. The triumph of Christianity was in a sense, as Nietzsche held, the victory of slave morality, inasmuch as a society which had sought to found civilization on slavery was reduced, by its own consequent enfeeblement, economic, political, and intellectual, to adopt the superstitions and standard of culture of its own slaves. It was very far, however, from being the advent of freedom.

Such was the "twilight of the gods" of the ancient world. In the present age, with important differences, we are passing through a similar transition. Once again the established religion has become for the majority an empty form, to which they adhere out of habit alone. Once again Governments continue to support that religion, merely because the "lower classes" must be kept in order by teaching them myths which the educated discard. Once again the genteel, who in the nineteenth century smiled at scepticism, rally to the support of religion when they feel their security threatened by the workers thinking and acting for themselves. But religion is now challenged, not by a newer religion founded on despair of the world, but by a secular movement based on the possibility of making the world better. We indict no longer this or that myth as immoral, but the whole alleged "plan of salvation." We seek to save, not the individual "soul," but the world's future, not by denying the natural man, but by creating an environment which will unite his interests with those of his fellows and his higher self. As with the old gods, so with the new one:—

> Thought made him and breaks him,
> Truth slays and forgives;
> But to you, as time takes him,
> This new thing it gives,
> Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds upon freedom and lives.....
>
> One birth of my bosom;
> One beam of mine eye;
> One topmost blossom
> That scales the sky;
> Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I.

Robert Arch.

Notes from Scotland.

The Scottish Reformation Society has sent a petition to the Home Secretary and the Secretary for Scotland protesting against the Roman Catholics in Scotland holding processions in connection with the "Feast of the Sacred Heart." The Society protests against all such public processions as not only contrary to the laws of this Protestant realm, but most repugnant to the feelings of her Protestant population. This is only another sample of the narrow-minded bigotry of religious bodies towards each other. For my part, either the Roman Catholics or the Protestants can "process" till they are black in the face. I hope the Catholics will now object to the open-air meetings held annually at Queen's Park and Bothwell Brig to commemorate the doings of the pig-headed Covenanters and, likewise, to the uproarious processions of the Salvation Army, who certainly do a great deal to disturb the peace of any community they frequent.

Why all this fuss over "Highland Mary's" grave? I am sure Burns would have been the last man, were he alive to-day, to protest against the removal of an old graveyard, to be superseded by a large addition to works where thousands of workmen will earn their daily bread. Surely, our duty now is to look after the living and allow the dead to look after themselves.

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Rothesay is distressed over the allegation that Sunday boating and fishing are carried on on Loch Fad.

Hamilton Town Council has decided to have Band Performances in the Public Park on Sundays, the music to be provided by the Military Bands in the district. When will the Glasgow Corporation follow suit?

Some amusing subjects are now announced to draw people into church. Last Sunday noticed one in the Gallowgate, Glasgow, which I thought was rather fetching: "Come in, ye thirsty." No doubt quite a number of the thirsty did not go in.

The Glasgow ministers have not yet devised a scheme to take the place of the Tramway Prize Draw. Last week only £50 was drawn instead of the usual £500. However, the ministers now have the satisfaction of knowing what the public think of their interference.

Has the Lord Advocate got his attention drawn to the prize drawing in aid of the Scottish Churches Huts in France, to take place at the end of the month? If not, why not?

Life in Glasgow this week is just similar to what it was before last Tuesday, although the whole of that day was devoted to prayer by a representative from each of the Christian organizations in the city, including the Salvation Army.

A combatant cleric, writing home from the Front, says the fact that at the present moment in Scotland there are more ministers than are necessary for the spiritual needs of the people was in the days of peace a scandal, but in these bloody days of war it is a crime. Is it absolutely necessary that we should have any, either in peace or war? Any way, why don't the young ones go and fight? It is quite evident they can be done without at home.

Now that the country requires all the taxes she can get, how is it that she does not insist on the Churches paying their fair share? Surely it is an absurdity that Churches get off scot free while hospitals, infirmaries, and all charitable institutions are taxed. Only a few weeks ago the Glasgow W. F. Presbytery were discussing the question of taxation on their manses, which they considered was inequitable while the manses of the Established Churches were entirely free. Churches, as well as manses, of all denominations should be taxed, as they get all the protection and privileges given to other buildings which are taxed. The less the Christians pay, the more Freethinkers have to pay.

In handing over a young man to the Military Authorities at Edinburgh, who claimed to be a regular minister of a religious denomination as he was discharging the duties of an evangelist preacher under the Faith Mission, Sheriff Orr said the position of the missionaries was simply that of itinerant preachers who went from place to place, but left no definite organization behind them. What will our religious cranks not do to evade their clear duties as citizens of the State? It is all very well when they can get other people to fight for them and leave them in safety at home, even though they proclaim that this is a righteous war.

CALEDON.

L.C.C. Prosecution.

THE SALE OF LITERATURE IN PARKS.

AT Old Street Police Court yesterday, before Mr. Clarke Hall, there were three summonses issued at the instance of the London County Council against James Neate, of Bethnal Green Road, for unlawfully selling the *Freethinker* without having first obtained in writing the consent of the clerk to the authority.

The defendant was defended by Mr. W. H. Eldridge (instructed by Mr. Charlton Hubbard).

Mr. Haedicke, solicitor, acting for the London County Council, said they did not press for a heavy fine, although the defendant was liable to a penalty of £5 for each offence proved. The proceedings were brought under No. 27 of the Council's by-laws, which provided that no person should sell articles or distribute handbills in the public parks without having consent in writing.

James Joseph Bradley, park-keeper, stated there was a meeting in Victoria Park on May 13, and he saw the defendant selling copies of the *Freethinker*. He told defendant he would be reported, and the reply was, "Very well." Witness bought a copy, and also copies on the other two dates. Defendant had no permit to sell on those dates.

Cross-examined.—There had been no complaint as to the conduct of the persons selling the paper. About twelve months ago witness received notification from the L.C.C. offices that permits to sell any literature had been withdrawn.

Mr. Eldridge.—And it was in consequence of that notification that these summonses have been issued?

Witness.—Yes. That is all I know about it. The defendant had been selling for years, and had permits for the *Freethinker*, among other things.

Mr. Eldridge submitted there was no case. It was admitted, he said, that the defendant had permits to sell literature in the parks, including the *Freethinker*, but now it was said that the park-keeper received notification that the permit had been withdrawn. The point he (counsel) made was that the alleged withdrawal by notice to the officer was not sufficient withdrawal to create an offence unless the defendant also received notice from the L.C.C. He held in his hand letters from that body that the permit was all right, and that he could continue to get a renewal.

A copy of the permit was handed to the magistrate, who remarked, "There is nothing in this permit to limit the time."

The L.C.C. Solicitor.—The park-keeper told him that the permit was revoked, and defendant said, "I know."

Mr. Clarke Hall.—This document is issued, but without any limit as to time.

The Solicitor.—I am afraid I cannot prove that at the moment.

The magistrate said they would go on with the broader issue.

Mr. Eldridge said there was a by-law on the Council's book regulating the question of the sale of literature, and permits were granted, but according to the park-keeper the Council had since thought fit to pass a resolution. He did not know what form it took, but it was sought to show that it had the effect of preventing the sale of literature.

The magistrate asked for a copy of this resolution.

Mr. Haedicke said he had not got it with him.

Mr. Eldridge went on to say that the defendant had had no notice of that resolution having been passed. His other point was that the Council had no right to make such a resolution, as there was a by-law which provided that the Council must deal with applications for permits that came before them. What the Council now said was that, though they had given a permit, they would, by resolution, prevent the sale of literature. It was not suggested there was anything against the character of the literature sold, because it all came before the proper officer, who then decided whether a permit should be granted. So far as he (the learned counsel) knew, there had been no objection to the defendant, who had sold the paper for years. The by-law had been made in pursuance of the London General Powers Acts, and, therefore, the Council must act upon it judicially.

The magistrate pointed out that the by-law was not designed specially against the sale of improper literature. It had to do, among other things, with selling or hiring any article, and was a question as to the parks. Could it not be said that to suit the convenience of the public the Council were entitled to resolve that any article could not be sold there?

Mr. Eldridge replied that what the Council had done was to say this was not proper literature to be sold.

The Magistrate.—I have not seen the resolution. If it was considered undesirable that certain literature shall not be sold they might have the right to say so for all I know.

Mr. Haedicke.—I say that under the by-law the Council have a right to say it shall not be sold.

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The Magistrate.—That is true, but it must be done judicially. I think that at the proper time the Council's resolution should be produced. So far, I have no evidence of it.

Mr. Eldridge.—In fact, there is on the Council's agenda a resolution waiting to be considered in order to deal with the whole matter.

The Magistrate.—Why is this particular Society singled out for prosecution?

No answer was given.

Mr. Haedicke said he had not with him the Council's resolution withdrawing permission to sell literature in the parks. He, therefore, asked that the summonses should be adjourned.

After further discussion, it was arranged that the summonses should be adjourned for a week.—*Morning Advertiser*, June 21, 1917.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 21.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, occupied the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Bowman, Brandes, Gorniot, Leate, Palmer, Roger, Samuels, Shore, Thurlow, and Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes read and confirmed.

The following officers for the ensuing year were elected: General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance; Monthly Auditors, Messrs. Leat and Samuels; Benevolent Fund Committee, Messrs. Leat, Samuels, Roger, Wood, and Miss Kough.

New members were elected for the Sheffield and Swansea Branches and the Parent Society.

The Secretary reported that a cheque for £10, bequeathed to the Society by the late Captain Elvenstone Raggett, had been received.

It was also reported that the London County Council had issued summonses against Mr. Jas. Neate, Secretary of the Bethnal Green Branch, for selling literature in Victoria Park without a permit.

The Protest Committee had engaged a solicitor and counsel for his defence, and the case had been adjourned until June 27 for the L.C.C. to produce further evidence. An appeal for funds from this Committee was discussed, and it was resolved that the N.S.S. contribute £5.

Mr. Cohen reported correspondence between himself and Mr. J. W. Gott, in which the latter informed him of his arrest at Birmingham on a probable charge of blasphemy. The offence was contained in printed matter sold by Mr. Gott. The exact charge was not yet to hand. Mr. Cohen had made himself personally responsible for the engagement of a solicitor to attend the hearing of the case in the police court, and a resolution was carried unanimously endorsing this action. A long discussion followed in which it was pointed out that Mr. Gott was not a member of the N.S.S. and that the Society had no responsibility for the class of literature sold by him, which, apparently, constituted the offence. Mr. Cohen was asked to be present at the hearing of the case, and to report to the Executive, but no unanimous opinion was expressed as to future action.

A somewhat surprising circular on this matter, issued by Mr. Gott, which had not reached the Society officially, was reported, and general disapproval was expressed.

Some matters on the Conference Agenda remitted to the Executive were dealt with, and the remainder adjourned till next meeting.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

A FUNERAL AT SEA.

They'd run out of fire-bars, or shot, to sink the corpse with, and were rather puzzled what to do until some genius suggested a sack of coal. All went splendidly, but the commander noticed an A.B. laughing in what he considered a most irreverent manner. The culprit was brought before him and asked what he meant by such behaviour. "Well, sir," replied the offender, "I seen a lot o' fellers agoin' to 'Ell before this 'ere. But strike me! 'E's the very first one I see what took 'is fuel along wiv 'im."—*Sea Salt*, "*Pearson's Magazine*," June, 1917.

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.

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, July 5, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, H. V. Storey, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, R. Miller, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, E. Burke, "What is Insanity?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Collette Jones, "Secularism: Its Aims and Destiny"

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, E. Burke, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Miss Kough, "The Old Order Changeth."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Yates and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Hyatt and Dales; 6.30, Messrs. Kells, Saphin and Beale.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll; 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 9d. per hundred, post free 1s. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

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Views and Opinions.

Baby Week.

Last Sunday numerous sermons were preached in connection with "Baby Week." Attention has been directed to preventible infant mortality, and it is one of the ironies of life that the War, with its wholesale destruction of life, should be the occasion for the campaign. It is pointed out that if France had had a larger birth-rate, it would have had a larger army against Germany. If our birth-rate can be increased, we also shall be in a better position for future conflicts. The ideal is not a lofty one, nor is the inference unquestionable. To breed children for the purpose of supplying armies may cause some to reflect whether it is worth while breeding children at all. And some may hold the opinion that it is quality of population, not numbers, that is of importance. Mere numbers may create problems, but numbers will never solve them. It is, said Ruskin, of no vital consequence whatever whether a man has two children or four children, but it is of great consequence whether the children he does have deserve to be hanged or not. And in that saying we cordially concur.

* * *

Reprisals.

Quite in accordance with their usual policy, the Churches have tried to convert this question into a Christian one. Father Vaughan and the Bishop of London have, as usual, been very busy, and have dwelt at length on the getting of babies, the rearing of babies, and the care of children generally. And their activity invites reprisals. For there is a sense in which the question of the care of children, particularly the prevention of their neglect and ill-treatment, is a peculiarly Christian one. That is, it reaches its most acute phase in Christian countries. Neglect or ill-treatment of children is seldom heard of amongst Jews; it is practically unknown amongst uncivilized peoples. We do not recall having read of it as existing in any great degree amongst Mohammedans. Japan is said to be a paradise for children. Among the Esquimaux, Nansen said that he never saw or heard of a case of child-neglect or ill-usage, and they seemed unable to appreciate why a child should ever be beaten. If a campaign for the protection of child-life is in any sense a Christian one, it can only be on the principle that a movement for cheap baths is one that peculiarly concerns dirty people.

* * *

Justice for God.

One expression used in connection with children suffering from neglect was striking and suggestive. They were said to be "God's children." Now, on that point we should like to keep a perfectly open mind. We do not say they are not God's children; but if they are not, then it strikes us as a gross libel on Deity. If they are his children, then their state is a grave impeachment of his fatherhood. We are certain that no man would like it said of him that his children were running about the streets in a sadly neglected condition. He would not like it made public were it true; he would be indignant were it false. And we do not observe that evidence is offered that these neglected one's are God's children. All these people do is to collect a number of half-starved and neglected children, and *say* they are God's. Why? do they insist that they bear in their neglect the hall-mark of God's paternity? It seems hardly fair to God. Mark Twain said that in all the attacks on the Devil we never get *his* side of the case, and he would much like to hear Satan in his own defence. One feels like that with regard to God. We hear nothing from him; and one would like to hear what he has to say of these people who, whenever there is an earthquake, or a war, or an epidemic, put it down to God. As an Atheist, we ask for justice—even for God.

* * *

God and Man.

Now, we do not say that these neglected ones are God's children. We are trying to be impartial. All the parents we know are men and women. When they look after their children we say they are good parents. When they neglect them we say they are bad ones. And if the parents abscond, and the care of the children is left to others, we do not find the runaways praised or worshipped. What we find is a small handbill stuck up outside the police station asking for information as to where they have gone, so that they may be pursued and punished. And we really do not see how we are justified in judging God's treatment of his children by any different standard. It is not fair, it is grossly partial to punish a man for neglecting his children, and to praise God when he neglects his. Let us be fair to God, but let us also be fair to man. Or, if we haven't the courage to condemn, do not let us be cowardly enough to praise. Of course, it is not we who say we are God's children. It is Christians who say so. All we contend is that if it be so, it is the primary duty of a parent to stick to his family. And that is in accord with both law and common sense.

* * *

God's Work!

Father Vaughan will tell us that as God's children we are called upon to help him in his work of setting

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the world right. But what is God's work? And why should we do it for him, or even help *him* to do it? It seems to us that, on the whole, God does his work in such a way that it takes man no small part of his time to undo it, or to correct it. On any theological reading of the universe it is God who sends diseases, and man who discovers remedies for them. And how many generations are scourged with these diseases before a remedy is found for them? And, note, that man does not have to discover the diseases; they discover him. They are there ready to operate, part and parcel of God's scheme of creation. Nor are the remedies thus ready to hand. These have to be sought out by laborious, painful, sometimes dangerous methods. It took less than forty years for that hideous complaint, syphilis, to spread from one end of Christendom to the other. It has taken four centuries for man to discover a more or less uncertain remedy.

* * *

Man versus God.

God's work! The best phases of life is not God's work, but man's. God did not leave the world habitable by a civilized being; it was man who made it so. God spreads a river over a countryside and leaves a morass. Man deepens the channel, raises an embankment, drains the land, and so creates the possibilites of development. God leaves man ignorant, and human inquisitiveness gives him knowledge. God leaves man a savage, and human association civilizes. God leaves man the prey of brutal passions; men teach each other how to restrain them, and how to transmute them to worthy ends. And all the time, God—if there be one—is dogging his footsteps, providing a new disease for every change in life, punishing every false step with unfaltering cruelty, afflicting old and young, strong and weak, good and bad with impartial malignancy. Man's only protection against Deity is knowledge; and of all the trees in the Garden of Eden, the tree of knowledge was the one of which he was sternly forbidden to eat.

* * *

Helping God.

God's children! God's work! Helping God! How many and how varied are the brain-benumbing phrases with which religion perpetuates its rule! But the last one contains a helpful and suggestive truth. For man is always helping God, not in his work, but to exist. We see God's blunders, correct them, and then praise his wisdom for making them. Anthropologists enlighten us as to his origin and ancestry, and man straightway invents something of a more reputable character. When the doings of God are made plain, a whole army of apologists help to whitewash him. Of course, it is the duty of children to help their aged parents, and one wonders if that is what Christians have in view when they talk about helping God? We should not be surprised. For God does grow hopeless as mankind reaches maturity. The measure of God's strength is the measure of human weakness. God and man cannot both grow at the same time. As one rises the other falls; and a little less readiness to help God might easily result in there soon being nothing to assist.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Reformation in England.

II.

THE most damning of all evidences against the truth of the Christian religion is the evidence so abundantly furnished by its own history in all its periods. Gibbon mentions as one of five causes of its growth "the pure and austere morals" of its early professors; but it can be conclusively proved from ancient Christian documents that those morals were much more austere than pure. Not even during the first three centuries did the Christians display qualities, or perform deeds, which justified the deduction that they were living under supernatural direction and control. We know from Eusebius and other primitive writers that it was customary to magnify their virtues and minimize, or utterly ignore, their defects. Their own claim has always been and is, not only that they possess the only true religion, not merely that the Christian code of morality is infinitely superior to all other codes, but that they are God's own people, the redeemed of the Lord, whom he fills and leads with his own Spirit; and our contention is that at no period has that claim been verified, but that in all ages and countries alike it has been completely falsified in their actual life and character. Besides, it is historically indisputable, not simply that Christians are not socially and morally superior to their non-Christian neighbours, but that their very religion, or their professed zeal for the Lord's cause, has often given rise to, or served as a cloak for, the most selfish, unjust, and tyrannical conduct on record. History makes it perfectly clear that this was peculiarly the case in connection with the Reformation in England during the whole of the sixteenth century. Of the piety of Henry VIII. and Bloody Mary no reasonable doubt can be entertained. Both verily believed that God had called them to be England's rulers. The following was Henry's Confession of Faith as a monarch:—

> By Scripture it appeareth that it appertaineth unto the office of princes to see that right religion and true doctrine be maintained and taught, and that their subjects may be well ruled and governed by good and just laws; and to provide and care for them that all things necessary for them may be plenteous; and that the people and commonweal may increase; and to defend them from oppression and invasion, as well within the realm as without; and to see that justice be administered unto them indifferently; and to hear benignly all their complaints; and to show towards them, although they offend, fatherly pity. And, finally, so to correct them that be evil, that they had yet rather save them than lose them if it were not for respect of justice, and maintenance of peace and good order in the commonweal (Froude's *Henry the Eighth*, vol. i., pp. 109, 110).

That Confession of Royal Faith was set forth by Royal authority in 1536, when Henry had occupied the throne for seven and twenty years. At first he was immensely popular, and for some years he was almost an ideal king, as well as a model husband and friend. The masses idolized him, foreign ambassadors were never weary of singing his praises, and everybody was convinced that he possessed exceptional physical and mental qualifications for the efficient discharge of his kingly office. Froude says that for nearly twenty years, "as a ruler, he had been eminently popular. All his wars had been successful. He had the splendid tastes in which the English people most delighted, and he had substantially acted out his own theory" (*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 109).

Let us now attend to a few tragically illuminating dates and doings. Henry succeeded his father in his eighteenth year, and in the same year, in conformity to his father's will and the wish of his ministers, he married Catherine of Arragon, his senior by six years. For fifteen years, to a certainty, this union was apparently a happy one, and the king took an active part in all the affairs of the nation. He was an all-round man of the world; a profound theologian, by no means a commonplace statesman, an eager sportsman, a devotee of the New Learning, always affable and free, especially with strangers. If his marriage had continued a success, it is possible that he would have been less of a despot than he actually became. He grew tired of Catherine,

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however, as the years rolled by. Whether he ever really loved her or not, her failure to bear him an heir, her natural unattractiveness, and her seniority, alienated him from her. Besides, even if she had given birth to thoroughly healthy children, their legitimacy would have been open to grave doubts, because of the strong suspicion that marriage with a sister-in law was not lawful. On these accounts, it seems that in 1524 he ceased to share his wife's bed, and in 1527 his demand for a divorce was formally laid before the Pope. It should be borne in mind that Catherine was the aunt of the Emperor Charles V., who naturally opposed such a request, and that in consequence his Holiness dilly-dallied with the subject, seeking safety in delay. Clement's dilatoriness irritated Henry so much that in 1529 he called a Parliament which he knew would support his policy to the utmost, the members being nearly all his own nominees, prepared to sink their own judgment in deference to his. As Gardiner says, "when Parliament met in 1529 it contained a packed House of Commons ready to do the king's bidding." By this time the king fancied he was passionately in love with Anne Boleyn; and Cardinal Pole, in a treatise published at Rome in the winter of 1538-9, accuses him, "among other enormities, of having lived in criminal intercourse with" Anne's younger sister. Whether this charge was true or not we have no means of ascertaining, the only thing we are absolutely sure of being that, for various reasons, he was determined to get rid of his wife, and that, in order to achieve that end, this Parliament was entrusted with the task of freeing the English Church from the Pope's jurisdiction. Henry displayed consummate shrewdness and sagacity in the conduct of this affair. He saw to it that the nation was at his back, and with wonderful ingenuity he obtained the nation's approval of point after point until, by the year 1535, the authority of Rome in England was a thing of the past, and Henry had become the sole Head of the English Church.

Such was the first stage in the English Reformation, and the only purpose it was intended to serve was the securing of the king's much-coveted divorce. Convocation was forced to sign a document which bound it neither to meet nor transact any business without the king's authority. Thus the whole clergy became the mere tools of the Crown. Refusal to accept the Supremacy Act was punishable by death. For this crime Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher, two of the best and noblest men who ever lived, were beheaded. More retained his sense of humour to the end, for when the fatal blow was about to descend, he carefully removed his beard from the block, saying ironically, "Pity that should be cut, that has never committed treason." Christian apologists often refer to the Reign of Terror under Robespierre during the French Revolution, ignorantly exclaiming, "Behold a sample of the state of things which would prevail if Infidels and Atheists had the power." But during the last seventeen years of the believing Henry's reign there was an unbroken Reign of Terror in England. The least suspicion of disloyalty to the Acts of Supremacy and Succession, the remotest sign of theological heresy, or departure from orthodoxy, even though not a word was spoken, served as an excuse for the worst form of execution. At first it was the Protestants who were persecuted and slaughtered. If a man doubted or denied the doctrine of Transubstantiation, he was sent to the flames. Whoever spoke against the sufficiency of communion in one kind, clerical celibacy, the perpetual obligation of vows of chastity, private masses, and auricular confession was sentenced to imprisonment and confiscation of his goods for the first offence, and to the gallows for the second. The statute of the Six Articles was the quintessence of injustice and cruelty. Later on it was the Protestants who persecuted, and they soon became past masters in the art. They broke into churches, and tore down wonder-working crucifixes and burned them in the fields. Green says:—

> The miraculous rood at Boxley, which bowed its head and stirred its eyes, was paraded from market to market and exhibited as a juggle before the Court. Images of the Virgin were stripped of their costly vestments and sent to be publicly burnt at London. Latimer forwarded to the capital the figure of our Lady which he had thrust out of his cathedral church at Worcester, with rough words of scorn: She with her old sister of Walsingham, her younger sister of Ipswich, and her two other sisters of Doncaster and Penrice, would make a jolly muster at Smithfield. Fresh orders were given to fling all relics from their reliquaries, and to level every shrine with the ground (*Short History*, pp. 354-5).

Ere long a reaction set in, and once more the persecutors became the persecuted. "Anne Ascue was tortured and burnt with three companions for the denial of Transubstantiation," and the Protestants generally were very cruelly treated. In 1547 Henry VIII. died, and was succeeded by his son, Edward VI., whose reign lasted only six years, during which revolutionary period the Protestants were in power. The whole country rang with vehement invectives against all Catholic doctrines, and rivers of Catholic blood were flowing in all directions. The Statute of Heresy was repealed, and left to the mercy of the Common Law the adherents of the Catholic Faith were sent to the stake without a moment's hesitation. In 1553 Mary became Queen, and during her reign of five years the Catholics were supreme, while the Protestants were committed in batches to the flames. Five bishops were burnt. In less than four years some three hundred persons perished at the stake. In 1558 Elizabeth came to the throne, and during her reign of forty-four years England became, "as a nation, as a power, essentially Protestant," which it has continued to be to this day. Under Elizabeth persecution descended to the lowest depth of brutality. Bishop Bilson, in his *Christian Subjection*, defended the coercive enactments on the plea that toleration was absolutely sinful. Catholics were sinners doomed to die, and a Christian queen might neither pardon nor wink at their falsehood. As Lecky well says, "there is much truth as well as bitter eloquence in the taunt of an old persecuted Puritan, when he denounced Anglicanism as 'the Church that is planted in the blood of her mother.'"

Are we not fully justified, then, in our contention that Christianity dehumanizes its professors in proportion to the intensity of their belief in it? Both Catholicism and Protestantism, throughout their history, have been equally anti-social and anti human, and they provide the most cogent and conclusive argument conceivable for Atheism. With the history of the Church in mind, it is absolutely impossible for thoughtful people to believe in the existence of a God of justice and love. It is simply because Christianity is gradually passing away that toleration is at last gaining ground. It is an incontrovertible fact that Supernaturalism and Humanism cannot exist and prosper together, the one being of necessity bound to crush the other.

J. T. Lloyd.

Two Antwerp priests have been condemned to five years' hard labour. This is a severe sentence for men accustomed to work one day weekly.

The endowment of superstition is by no means a thing of the past. The late Mr. W. C. Buckley, of Longsight, Manchester, has left the bulk of his estate of £178,000 to the Church of England. The poor bishops will soon be dreaming of a war bonus.

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A Doubting Dean.

This mystery of vending spiritual gifts is nothing but a trade.—*Swift.*

Is not religion a cloak?—*Swift.*

Not a fantastical fool of them all shall flout me out of my calling.—*Shakespeare.*

Swift is Rabelais in his good sense.—*Voltaire.*

THE Christian Church has contained in its fold many great men. Some of them were sincere believers in the doctrines they preached. Others were Christians from force of circumstances, or held to the doctrines for the material gain which has ever been no inconsiderable bait with which to catch men. To which class did Jonathan Swift belong? Was this great genius a sincere Christian, or was he merely a professing believer for the sake of the position he hoped to gain? Would he have remained a Christian had actual deaneries and possible bishoprics with their emoluments had no existence? Should we have found him among the Scotch Covenanters on the field of battle, or in the arena with the lions at Rome, had his birth placed him in different circumstances?

His biographers, Scott, Johnson, and Thackeray, all describe Swift as religious, and the general opinion agrees with them. One hesitates to enter the lists against such eminent writers, but a candid opinion compels us to say that we believe that Swift was a Christian only in name; that he remained in the Church for the same reason that prompted Judas, in the legendary story, to sell his Master. In fact, Swift was not merely a Christian; he was devoid of religious feeling, and he was one of the most irreligious of men. Compared to him, Paine and Voltaire were saints, for these great Freethinkers had at heart that enthusiasm for humanity, that love of their kind, which was entirely absent in Swift. The author of *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Tale of a Tub* was intellectually incapable of being a Christian, and emotionally incapable of loving his fellow-men. *The Tale of a Tub* is one of the most tremendous indictments of Christianity, from the purely intellectual side, that has ever been given to the world. *Gulliver's Travels* expresses such a scorn of the human race, with its Lilliputian bitterness and its Brobdignagian coarseness, that its writer was physically and constitutionally incapable of sympathizing with a religion which claims to be a gospel of love.

Voltaire, a most excellent judge, regarded *The Tale of a Tub* as casting ridicule on all forms of the Christian faith. The man who wrote that book was perfectly aware of the logical inferences of his propositions. The bishops who advised Queen Anne, when they counselled her not to appoint Dean Swift to a bishopric, were not without sagacity. There can be no doubt that Queen Anne and Voltaire were both right when, from their very different points of view, they regarded Swift's literary work as anti-Christian.

Swift was irreligious, and a life-long dissembler. He could be coarser than Rabelais, and profaner than Voltaire. Men have been convicted and sentenced to death for treating sacred subjects less offensively than Swift treats the Holy Communion. Consider the facts of his life. He was brought up in the household of the epicurean Sir William Temple, and educated in the library of an avowed Freethinker. Why Swift took holy orders, except for the loaves and fishes, it is difficult to say. He put the cassock on for a living, but he was choked by its bands. Swift was the boon companion of Pope, and a friend of the freethinking Bolingbroke. He deliberately chose these sceptics as the closest friends of his life, and the recipients of his confidence and affection. It is not difficult to imagine him joining in many a profane argument and blasphemous joke over Pope's port, or Bolingbroke's burgundy. It is significant, nay, almost conclusive, as to the insincerity of Swift's religion, that he advised John Gay, the wildest of the wits about town, to turn parson and look out for a seat on the bench.

The paper Swift left behind him, *Thoughts on Religion*, is merely a set of excuses for not professing disbelief. He says of his sermons, quite truthfully, that he preached pamphlets. They have no special Christian characteristics, and might have been preached from the steps of a Mohammedan mosque as well as from the pulpit of a Christian church. There is no cant, for Swift was too great and proud for that cowardly and sorry device. Tried even by the low standard of the eighteenth century, his sermons are singularly secular. The following amusing passage from Swift's sermon on the fate of Eutychus, who fell out of a window whilst listening to St. Paul preaching, will illustrate our meaning:—

> The accident which happened to this young man in the text hath not been sufficient to discourage his successors; but because the preachers now in the world, however they may exceed St. Paul in the art of setting men to sleep, do extremely fall short of him in the working of miracles; therefore men are become so cautious as to choose more safe and convenient stations and postures for taking their repose without hazard of their persons, and, upon the whole matter, choose rather to entrust their destruction to a miracle than their safety.

But, perhaps, the surest indication of Swift's real irreligion is given in the striking verses on the Day of Judgment, which were not published till after his death. They were sent by Lord Chesterfield in a letter to Voltaire; but everybody now knows the biting lines:—

> Ye who in divers sects were shammed,
> And came to see each other damned
> (For so folk told you; but they knew
> No more of Jove's designs than you),
> The world's mad business now is o'er,
> And Jove resents such pranks no more.
> I to such blockheads set my wit!
> I damn such fools! Go, go; you're bit.

The eye which can perceive sincere religion in these caustic and vigorous lines would regard old Montaigne as a Methodist, and Rabelais as a Roman Catholic.

It is, of course, true that in ecclesiastical and theological controversy Swift always took the orthodox side, for outwardly he was loyal enough to his employers. For the Deists of his time, such as Toland, Asgill, and Collins, he expressed contempt. He refers to "that quality of their voluminous writings which the poverty of the English language compels me to call their style." In his famous and sinister argument upon the inconveniences which would result from the total abolition of the Christian religion, he drenches his opponents with vitriol. But it is all purely dialectic fencing. Swift's polemic was aimed at guarding the material prosperity of the Church, of which he was a paid official; just as a counsel will argue for whichever side pays him his retaining fee. If Swift's sword was sharp, it was a double-edged weapon, as may be seen by the sardonic climax:—

> To conclude: whatever some may think of the great advantage to trade by this favourite scheme, I do very much apprehend that in six months after the Act is passed for the extirpation of the Gospel, the Bank and East India stock may fall at least one per cent. And since that is fifty times more than ever the wisdom of our age thought fit to venture for the preservation of Christianity, there is no reason why we should be at so great a loss for the sake of destroying it.

When face to face with death, Swift let the mask slip from his features, and we see for a brief moment the real man. When he wrote his own epitaph, he disdained any religious allusion. A pillar of the Church, he refused to

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permit any pietistic platitudes upon his tombstone. A dignified worldliness, an appeal to the memory of his fellow-men, but not a syllable of God or Christ:—

> Here lies the body of Jonathan Swift, Doctor of Divinity, Dean of this Cathedral Church, where fierce rage can tear the heart no more. Go, traveller, and imitate, if you can, an earnest, manly champion of freedom.

The original is in Latin, and the dates were the only additions. His allusion to his fight for freedom is genuine, for he fought for the liberty of Ireland.

Rabelais and Renan, both great sceptics, left the Church, and chose the road to mental freedom. Swift stayed in the Church, and failed in his ambition. In spite of a life-long servitude, Swift was a disappointed man. He had to be content with a petty deanery, when his ambition was at least a bishopric. The fierce rage, of which he wrote as lacerating his heart, was intensified by loss of preferment. He had prostituted his great and splendid genius. After all his dissembling he died, to quote his own painful words, "like a poisoned rat in a hole."

Mimnermus.

The Sense Organs of Man.

II.

(Continued from p. 411.)

The sense of taste is situated in the mucous membrane which mantles the tongue and the back part of the palate. This is a curiously deceptive sense, for many of the supposed tastes are in reality complex sensations into which touch, smell, and the temperature sense are apt to enter. Salt, sugar, quinine, and various acid substances possess no appreciable smell, and these materials—the salt, sweet, bitter, and acid substances—we, unquestionably, taste. But, as Professor Haycraft reminds us, "Meat, wines, and fruit are smelt not tasted, and a bad cold dulls our appreciation of these articles of diet." If the nasal apertures are carefully closed, or if the sense of smell is defective, many substances ordinarily palatable become "tasteless." A mild onion tasted with closed eyes may be mistaken for an apple. This also explains the reason why invalids very frequently screw up their noses when swallowing a nauseous draught. It is urged that such "tastes" as depend upon smell should be referred to as "flavours" as they are entirely due to the odoriferous particles discharged by the substances in question. The true sense of taste varies in sensibility on different parts of the tongue's surface. The tip of the tongue is most sensitive to sugary substances, the sides are most affected by acids, while the back of the tongue best responds to bitter tastes.

A higher sense is that of smell, and its mechanism is the delicate mucous membrane which lines the upper portion of the nasal chambers. In this area the mucous membrane differs from the ordinary mucous membrane of the nasal cavities through the nature of its constituent cells, and in the circumstance that it is the recipient of a generous nervous supply from the olfactory nerves, as also by its possession of a number of nerve filaments.

Each nostril leads into a spacious nasal cavity, and the two nostrils are separated one from the other by a partition. This partition is termed the septum, and is formed both by cartilage and bone. In the upper section of the nose resides the olfactory apparatus. This region is the seat of the sense of smell, and is provided with a thick mucous membrane of a dark brown colour. The nerve of smell—the olfactory nerve—ends in the olfactory mucous membrane. From the brain it enters into the nasal chamber in the form of several small branches, and these spread out in the delicate mucous membrane and terminate in tiny fibres which are prolonged into epithelial cells projecting into the surface of the nose. These cells are the olfactory cells, and they are exceedingly sensitive to the impact of odorous particles, and the stimulus thus generated travels to the brain along the ramifications of the olfactory nerve.

So wonderful is the sense of smell that perfumed particles of inconceivable minuteness are able to produce most powerful sensations. A grain of musk will scent a room for many months, and as there can be no perfume apart from a constant discharge of odorous particles these particles must be almost infinitely small. Where the particles are few they may fail to reach the olfactory membrane, but when the perfume is delicate we may displace the odourless air which circulates round it by snuffing up the air, and then we are able to perceive distinctly the perfume of what seemed a scentless flower. In the event of a severe cold the loss of smell which arises is, probably, occasioned by the swollen condition of the mucous membrane which then obstructs the passage of scent-laden air into the olfactory cavity.

The sense of hearing must now be considered, and a much more elaborate mechanism ministers to acoustic impressions than those previously outlined. We have seen that in cutaneous sensation the skin functions in different ways. The auditory organ also performs distinct functions. In addition to its hearing powers, the ear serves to acquaint the brain with the head's position, or alteration of position in relation to surrounding things. These separate functions reside in two different regions of the inner ear. This inner ear lies well within the skull, and between this internal organ and the external ear is found the middle ear. The external and middle ear may be regarded as accessory—the internal ear is the essential hearing apparatus. We hear through the medium of impressions arising from the vibrations of elastic bodies which, as sound waves, are mainly conveyed by the atmosphere. These vibrations are communicated through the complex hearing apparatus to the auditory nerves, and are transmitted from them to the sensorium. All the essential parts of the organ of sound must function properly if we are to hear distinctly. The sense is dulled when injuries or inflammation of the delicate and elaborate mechanism occur.

Remarkable variations in the range of hearing power exist. Many people are wholly insensible to sounds which are distinctly heard by others. Wollaston considers that the normal range of human hearing embraces nine octaves. That is to say, the average ear perceives vibrations of musical notes ranging from sixteen vibrations per second up to about 32,500.

As we have noted, the nerves of smell cannot transmit the tremors of light, nor can the nerves of taste convey to the brain the sensation of smell. So in the case of sonorous vibrations a special nerve is requisite which emerges from the brain into one of the ear cavities, and there ramifies into a number of filaments. This nerve is the auditory nerve, and the sonorous vibrations which reach this from outside are translated by the brain into the sensation of sound. Sound is a mode of motion of the atmosphere, and when the sound waves impart their motion to the tympanic membrane, which is stretched across the ear passage leading to the brain, this membrane which closes the ear drum is made to vibrate. The motion passes to the terminals of the auditory nerve, travels along the nerve to the brain, and there awakens the consciousness of sound.

The drum or tympanum, together with the long canal (meatus) which opens into the external visible ear, constitute the middle ear. The external meatus and the eardrum would form a single cavity were they not

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separated by a membrane, the delicate tympanic membrane, which is firmly spread in a slanting direction over the passage, and thus divides the relatively small cavity of the drum from the meatus.

The tympanic membrane in this manner prevents any communication through the meatus between the external air and the drum. Means for this conveyance, however, are available in a roundabout way by the Eustachian tube which proceeds directly from the fore part of the drum inwards to the pharynx—a muscular sac near the upper part of the gullet—at the roof of which it opens. There are many other structures of the middle ear, but the function of each and all is to secure by means of modified touch the translation of atmospheric vibrations into the various sensations of sound.

The inner ear has been compared to "a very peculiarly formed membranous bag." In early stages of the ear's development this "bag" is a simple circular sac, but as it grows it assumes a very complicated form, and separates into several parts. The inner ear is lodged in an intricate cavity, imbedded in a hard mass of bone, and is situated at the base of the skull. The auditory sac, however, does not quite fill the cavity, thus permitting a space between the osseous walls and the ear sac. This space is interrupted at certain spots where the sac is in contact with its bony receptacle, and at these points of junction a fluid termed perilymph is found. The essential organ of hearing is enclosed within this sac, and consists of a single canal which is coiled in the form of a spiral shell. This wonderful mechanism is the canalis cochlearis, which, with the bony cavity which surrounds it, constitutes the cochlea, the chief organ of hearing. The structure of this organ is too elaborate for brief description. Full details of this and the other organs which build up our knowledge of the external world, and of which they are, indeed, the sole vehicles of communication, may be studied in any standard physiological text-book, while a brilliant exposition of the subject is contained in Huxley's *Physiology*, the sixth edition, 1915, enlarged and revised by that eminent authority, Dr. Barcroft, F.R.S.

All bodies that evolve sound are in motion, and they transfer their vibrations to the air which is thus thrown into waves. These aerial pulses pass into the external auditory passage and influence the outer ear and the surface of the skull. Some of these waves may reach the organs of hearing through the solid cranium, but such waves are too slight to be appreciable in normal conditions. We are mainly indebted for our powers of hearing to the pulses propagated along the meatus, across the channel of which lies spread the tympanic membrane or drumhead. A chain of small bones stretches from the drumhead to the internal ear, and these bones form the instruments of transmission for the movements of the membrane to the cochlea—the spiral organ previously mentioned. Thus we realize that the harmonies and melodies of musical genius, the beauties of human and avian song, the splendours of oratory, and all the countless advantages we derive from aural intercourse, arise from our ability to translate aerial pulses into sensations of sound by means of the bodily instruments now briefly described.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

The Cairn.

SCOTLAND, at least half of it, and comparatively speaking, is a land of mountains. Pimples, Ingersoll has called them, also speaking comparatively. Every cock crows best on its ain midden. There is a mental exaltation and a physical elasticity to be found on the hill-tops. The wind blows free, and cool, and pure. The bleached grasses and brown heath make shaggy but delightful footing for the occasional mountaineer. Narrow sheep tracks lead him anywhere and everywhere; but the cairn is his objective, and the far surrounding view. Some thoughtful soul has placed in a cleft of the cairn—not a Bible, not a bottle of whisky—but a book and pencil in a Kodak tin. We note the names in this "Visitors' Book," and, well pleased, inscribe our own, and again and again, as we revisit the delectable wilderness. The poet has been here, the humanist, Atheist, nature-lover, philosopher—many in one—the pietist, too, perhaps, but so far unconfessed. Not so the others. We read:

> Age with approval sees, and youth should learn
> To venerate and guard the mountain cairn;
> A lonely throne—the dignities of kings
> Compared with this are feeble paltry things.
> Respect the cairn, roll not a fragment down,
> But add your tribute to the mountain's crown;
> 'Tis Nature's shrine, the human family
> Of many faiths here all in *one* agree.

Another describes the objective scene:—

> Clear as a bell, and crisp and cold with snow
> On Arran's length, the solemn sea below,
> And, round, the sober landscape spreading wide,
> While snowy clouds on far horizons rise;
> 'Tis coldly bright, but snugly in the lee
> I smiling sit to pen these lines to thee,
> Excelsior! unknown, unknowing friend,
> Hail, and farewell! again I must descend.

And one remembers absent friends and writes:—

> Also with me in spirit (though I am no Spiritualist) are, and, and, and, and, and—; all great men, if you only knew them; and four *little* men—
>
> > Sandy, and Andy, and Hughie, and Will,
> > All of them here on the top of the hill;
> > Not spirits, or ghosts, or shadows of fear,
> > But living, and loving, and ever most dear.

And one in those "regions, consecrate to oldest time," celebrates in verse the birthday of his old friend and fellow-"sinner":—

> Up here once more with Wisdom by my side—
> My ancient, trusty comrade John Macbride;
> Still hale and hearty, very much alive,
> Although to-day he reaches sixty-five.

And John himself, with laborious pencil, leaves this thought in the cairn:—

> Who said "do good to them that hate you?"
> Who but the God that did create you;
> But surely His is cur'ous teaching
> Who damns in *practice* His own preaching.

After reading—and writing—my share of the above, like a certain "sacred" person, I "went apart" for a space, and in a moment of rare and happy inspiration came upon a broken, half-sunken boulder that almost spoke to me. This hill-top, it is said, had once been flattened for a Roman fort. Talk of moving the stones of Rome! This stone moved me with its ancient, inarticulate tale. Older than the Elgin marbles, in their sculptured shape at least; and chiselled, too, with the quaint, weird artistry of Nature—the pitted eyes; the broken nose, on which a rock-crystal, like a drop of petrified mucous, lay; the imaginary context of mouth and chin; the flat and hoary-lichened scalp; semblance sufficient for the mind touched to sympathy and awe; epitome of all the years, all the dead of time and eternity; pensive, patient; conscious, unconscious; supplicating, resigned—but who will fathom, much less describe, the ancient mysteries of inanimate things? Ah! I have been away *down there*. For the moment I am fay, I am seer, I am interpreter. It is revelation, but to myself alone. It is the exquisite psychological moment. I am loth to, but I *must*, return. Shelley's living lark is soaring in the azure. The wind is hissing in the heath. For me, now,

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the mountain is a Mecca. It has a monument. There is grander music in the cairn. I return to my old friend, who pockets his spectacles and his *Freethinker* to come and see my prodigy.

Andrew Millar.

Acid Drops.

Want of space last week prevented our noting the attempt of the Bognor Council to enforce the Sunday closing of cinema shows. The attempt was made on an application for a renewal of the licence, and the opposition was led off by the Vicar. He confessed that he had no fault to find with the performances, but he thought it was a wrong time for us to go in for a "continental Sunday," especially as "our Allies are trying to get rid of it." We are afraid the Vicar of Bognor is not over scrupulous about the truth. The notion that the French have any intention of copying our English Sunday, in the maintenance of which a visit to a picture palace is treated as a giddy dissipation, is the reverse of the truth. Our Sunday is peculiarly English, and it will remain so—until the British people are sufficiently civilized to kill it.

The professional nature of the opposition was frankly avowed by several clergymen, and was also brought out by a question addressed to the Vicar. "Does it interfere with your Sunday-schools?" the Vicar was asked. "Yes," he admitted; "it did make a considerable difference." Rev. D. G. Evans, Congregationalist, found the "great difficulty, particularly among the elder boys of the school, was the fact that they preferred to go to the cinema rather than to the Sunday-school." Rev. T. Ross, Wesleyan, objected because "the Sunday-schools of England had been depleted by millions" on account of the cinemas. Quite frankly the man of God said that the children "had better die than grow up godless and without such training as we can give them in the Sunday-schools." That is candid. Better have corpses than Freethinkers; and we have no doubt that in other days Mr. Ross would have been ready to enforce the alternative. However, the police raised no objection; they said that the cinemas had taken "rowdyism off the streets"—a thing the Churches had been unable to do; and the Bench renewed the licence. So the thinning of the Bognor Sunday-schools will go on, and the Rev. T. Ross will find neither the death-roll increased nor the people made more unhappy in the interests of his miserable creed.

The Woman Suffrage victory in the House of Commons is a tribute to Freethought, for Freethinkers have advocated the equality of the sexes for generations. It is significant that Mary Wollstonecraft pleaded for the rights of woman over a century ago, and that to-day the Bishops of the Established Church are trying to make up their minds whether women are human beings.

The Bishop of London is in favour of the abolition of deans. Hear, hear! Now, we wonder if the deans are in favour of the abolition of bishops? If they are, we would support both sides. The Bishop says he is of opinion the £70,000 paid to the deans is a waste of money. With that, too, we agree. But he goes on to say that "this money is more needed for the bishops," and with that we do not agree. If it is merely a scramble as to whether the bishops or the deans are to have the money, our interest in the matter ceases.

One of the chief papers concerned in the German plotting in Rome is *Il Bastone*, says the *Daily Chronicle*. This paper, it should be noted, was founded for the express purpose of fighting the famous Freethought periodical, *L'Asino*. The *Chronicle* thinks it deserved a better fate. Other people will have their doubts on that point.

The clergy, who have been exempted from military service, are making full use of their opportunities whilst the nation is engaged in the tremendous world-war, and there are grave suspicions that the Defence of the Realm Act, and other legislative measures, are being worked in the interests of the Churches. Sunday recreations, cinemas, racing, the drink trade, have all been attacked. The fact remains that these things continue to be permitted in France and Germany, and both these countries have been harder hit by the War than we are ourselves.

A newspaper paragraph states that two Church Army huts have been erected in the Holy Land. Many people would wish that the entire organization would go to Jehrico.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley's conversion is not so complete as some of his Christian friends could wish. Speaking at Queen's Hall, London, he said: "There were people who thought the best way to welcome home the soldiers was to give a tea-party, a pleasant Sunday afternoon, and a Brotherhood meeting, but the boys at the Front wanted to come back to the England they had left." A palpable hit.

"A truth that is uttered once is apt to be prevailed over by a lie that is well advertized," said Sir Herbert Tree. Luke-warm Freethinkers should remember that the Christian superstition has 50,000 professional advertising agents in this country alone.

The Prime Minister is in a most perilous position. Sir William Robertson Nicoll tells us, in the leading article of the *British Weekly* for June 28, that "he possesses almost unlimited power," that "he has for the first time had his own way," and that "he ranks with President Wilson as one of the two outstanding figures among the Allies." After this fulsome praise, however, the reverend knight warns him against grave dangers which threaten him. He is on the point, possibly he is actually in the process, of going astray on several vital questions, chief among which is that of the drink traffic; but his downfall may yet be averted if, before it is too late, he will but follow Sir William's advice.

The editor of the *British Weekly* has prohibition on the brain. For months it has been the main subject dealt with in his weekly "War Notes." If prohibition is not adopted the War will be indefinitely prolonged, and the British Empire may utterly collapse, while its adoption would result in speedy victory for the Allies. It never seems to occur to Sir William and his friends that they are guilty of a flagrant and wicked exploitation of the War to promote the interests of a highly debatable, partizan cause. The mischief lies in the fact that these faddists pretend to represent the nation, for they ominously remind the Prime Minister "that it is of capital importance that the dictator of the nation in war time should have the general support and good will of the people." "We use no threats," they say, "and we make no prophecies; but we believe that this hateful measure (State Purchase), if passed, will long postpone any end of the War."

It is worth noting that the Swedish statesman, M. Brantling, about whom so much has lately appeared in the press, has had the experience of being sent to prison for three months for blasphemy. Like so many continental leaders of opinion, he is a Freethinker. Public men develop more courage abroad than they do in this country.

The Freemasons' gathering at the Albert Hall, to mark the bi-centenary of the English Grand Lodge, was followed by a special religious service at which the Bishop of Birmingham preached. The presence of the bishop shows the peculiar position of English Masonry, for Continental Freemasons are Freethinkers, and anathema to the Catholic Church. Moreover, Masonic ritual is not Christian at all, and should a Continental Mason meet an English brother they are as likely to be as fraternal as Kilkenny cats.

At the Albert Hall meeting, amongst the prayers offered was the following from an unnamed speaker:—

> For those also, O Lord, the humble beasts, who with us bear the heat and burden of the day and offer their guileless lives for the well-being of their countries, we ask Thy pity;

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for Thou hast promised to save both man and beast, and great is Thy lovingkindness, O God, Creator of the World.

We are quite in sympathy with the feeling that prompted the prayer, although we do not think there is any doctrinal authority for it. Animals have no "souls," according to the Christian theology, and, therefore, nothing to save. We rather fancy the gentleman who offered the prayer confused some lines from Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* with Christian teaching. He might have recalled, as a corrective, St. Paul's contemptuous "Doth God care for oxen!"

The Rev. Dr. Hutton, of Glasgow, cherishes an amazingly highflown, bombastic, notion of the greatness and dignity of the Christian Church. In an article in the *Christian World* for June 28, he describes it as "that body to which our Lord committed the immense responsibility of creating the moral conscience of the human race." As a matter of simple fact, the Church has had no share whatever in creating "the moral conscience" of the race. In the course of its history it has created many false values for not recognizing which it has sent millions of men and women to the stake, the gallows, and the block. If the Church boasts that the present conscience of Christendom is of its moulding, then we pride ourselves upon our disbelief in both.

Even Dr. Hutton himself admits that the Church has lamentably failed to fulfil its Divinely appointed mission. Ideally, the Church "must be free to summon the entire secular society of the world to its bar." It did once, alas, both possess and practise that awful power; but the base use it made of it will redound to its everlasting disgrace. Morally rotten at its own core, it summoned men and women to its bar, not to be judged on ethical issues, but to be brutally tortured and put to death for daring to think for themselves, or for deviating in the slightest degree from the belief that happened to be dominant at the time.

Presbyterianism anywhere seems a lovely creed, and breeds a lovely character. But the Irish variety seems specially attractive. At Castlecaulfield, Co. Tyrone, the Session decided on introducing a little instrumental music into the service. This was done, but the opposition became so pronounced that it was decided to screen the organ down to the floor. The reply to this took the form of a number of the congregation wresting the organ away from its fastenings and putting it outside the church. It was restored to its place; and then one Sunday morning, prior to the service, it was again seized, taken outside, and smashed to pieces. It seems that no legal offence has been committed, as no disturbance of the service took place; so the Castlecaulfield Presbyterians may go on smashing up organs just so long as they please. But what a delightfully happy place the world would be if Christians could only remould it to their heart's desire! It would make even hell attractive by contrast.

In the *Saltcoats Herald*, "Dumb Man," while thanking Socialists for "varying the sameness of the Sabbath Day," strikes a sound note in the following:—

> One thing the Socialist is mortally afraid of—the Church. Mum's the word there, and the "hush" is passed along, and the fiercest speaker falters on that ancient threshold. Kings and Prime Ministers come in for scathing rebuke, but the Church remains sacrosanct, and "the Nazarene" is spoken of with severest breath. It is not so much the Church objective and material the Socialist fears, but the Church subjective and psychological; the Church in the human breast; the shadow of the ancient caves of dread.

That is well said. And it is certain that if Socialists are sanely serious in their endeavour to reorganize society, they will have to deal with the question of religion in a different way from what they have done hitherto. Vague platitudes about Jesus, or about "genuine Christianity," with endeavours to capture the Churches, are all futile. The Churches may capture Socialism. Socialism will never capture the Churches.

Mr. Lloyd George, speaking at Castle Street Welsh Baptist Chapel, London, said the War was the greatest catastrophe since the Deluge. It would be unkind to suggest that the speaker had water on the brain.

Slang has invaded the ecclesiastical vocabulary. At a meeting of the Actors' Church Union, at Wyndham's Theatre, the Bishop of Willesden, finding the footlights embarrassing, asked the stage-hands to "douse the glim." That sort of talk is better left to the comedians of the Salvation Army.

The *Times Literary Supplement*, in a note on Mr. Archer's *God and Mr. Wells*, complains that his treatment of the subject is "by no means devoid of an inopportune flippancy," which is one of those curious expressions that writers permit themselves. Why should a writer not be "flippant," if he pleases, when dealing with "God"? It is sheer presumption to demand that because one man chooses to talk about "God" with bated breath, that everyone else shall deal with it as though the subject was too great for ordinary human speech to handle. People write flippantly of marriage, mother-in-laws—even of the Food Controller, the Press Censor, and Mr. Lloyd George. And any of these are of vastly more importance than "God." One can get along very well, and ignore "God" altogether. But your attitude towards any of the parties named is of considerable importance. When Christians can be brought to realize that to a Freethinker "God" means nothing, he will cease to make the foolish demand that it shall be treated with all the deference and solemnity properly accorded to the most important of subjects.

Mr. Noah Bailey, a Christian Evidence lecturer, was summoned at Marlborough Street Police Court on Monday last, charged with using language at a meeting in Hyde Park calculated to provoke a breach of the peace. Mr. Freke Palmer defended, and the Rev. M. Drawbridge, with others of the C.E.S., appeared as witnesses on behalf of Mr. Bailey. In the end the Christian Evidence speaker was fined £10, and bound over to be of good behaviour for six months. We congratulate the police on having at last taken notice of the scurrilous and offensive speech of these witnesses for Christ, and we hope their attention will not stop at Mr. Bailey.

The Right Rev. Herbert Bury, Bishop for North and Central Europe, has been unpacking his heart with words concerning the erection of a solitary church at the Belgian headquarters. Had the bishop not better devote his energies to bettering the condition of his diocese, which is as much concerned with homicide as holiness?

Our Great Push.

FOR several weeks we have been inviting the co-operation of our friends in securing new readers for the *Freethinker*. We are pleased to report that this effort is bearing fruit. For two weeks we ran right out of print, and last week we were forced to increase our printing order. We shall not complain if we have to increase it every week.

One reader has managed to secure ten new subscribers. He has, further, undertaken their distribution, having his copies sent direct from this office. That is really splendid help, and we hope others will emulate this achievement. What one can do, others can do. It is a matter of taking a hand in *our* great push. There are thousands of potential *Freethinker* readers in the country. Let us have as many of them as possible, and as speedily as possible.

There has never been a better time than the present in which to make potential readers into actual ones. Thousands of people have had their minds unsettled in relation to religion. It should be for all of us to see that their minds are settled in the direction of Freethought.

We thank heartily all those who have helped. And we hope they and others will continue the good work.

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To Correspondents.

H. T. Burgess.—We should like to see other Freethinkers in Johannesburg joining with you in conducting a regular movement. Perhaps this note may cause some of them to think seriously on the matter. Thanks for compliments. We shall "pull through." We have no doubt of that, hard though the struggle may be.

A. M.—Always pleased to hear from you. We regret that your pen has been absent from our pages of late, but the fault has not been yours, and in the future we hope to see you better represented in our columns.

P. A.—A grasp of real principles will give strength to even a weak character. And where one is not weak it becomes a pleasure to carry them into practice.

F. Colls.—Very pleased to hear from a three years' reader who has now induced four others to become regular subscribers. Your letter cheers one on one's way. We are obliged for the names and addresses sent.

D. Dentith, 27828, C/79 Brigade, R.F.A., B.E.F., will be obliged if some reader will send him his back numbers of the *Freethinker* for use among his comrades.

J. Burrell (Lanark).—Your capture of ten new readers for the *Freethinker* is splendid. It is still more commendable for you to undertake the distribution of these copies among them. That is a plan that might be adopted by others with profit to the Cause. If in each town one or two Freethinkers would take the matter up in this spirit, we should soon find things moving.

T. Fowler writes, as a note to Mr. Mann's articles, that there is a very misleading citation of a passage, Draper's "Conflict," in a work on *The Rise and Progress of Modern Spiritualism in England*, by J. Robertson. Readers who possess the work would do well, therefore, to check the reference.

S. Robinson.—We presume you refer to the persecutions that took place under the early Protestant leader, or with their sanction? The handiest work for you to consult will be Lecky's *Rise of Rationalism*. There is a cheap edition published at 2s. 6d. Shall be pleased to help the work in Belfast in any way we can.

R. F. Tervir.—There is a "Comic Bible" published by the American Truthseeker Company, and also a French one (*La Bible Amusante*). Both are profusely illustrated.

F. F.—We agree that the statements published in Dr. Crauford's *Reality of Psychic Phenomena* are "amazing," but the allegation concerning table-tilting is of the customary kind, and is fairly well known. We regret that want of space prevents our publishing the whole of your letter.

C. W. W.—Naturally, the editor of the *Daily Express* would not insert your letter. Unconsciously, he paid it a compliment by refusing insertion. If you had written praising the clergy, the result might have been different. Will bear suggestion in mind, but you know our difficulty in *that* direction.

Those interested in the National Secular Society, and desirous of helping to revive the propaganda in Belfast, are requested to communicate with Mr. Richard Stubbs, 6 Artana Street, Ormean Road, Belfast.

H. Denis (Stewartstown).—Affirmation in a court of law follows the form of the oath with the excision of the religious words. It is only necessary to ask to affirm, and if the question is put "On what ground?" the reply should be "On the ground of having no religious belief." No further question ought to be asked or need be answered.

J. Martinson.—Next week.

J. A. Reid.—Yes, quite possible, but not very likely.

W. Bromley.—We can hardly deal with your question in this column. It requires an article.

J. Brister (Bloemfontein).—Received and instructions carried out. Story will prove useful.

E. B.—We should have been pleased to reprint portions of Lord Harcourt's speech, could we have spared the space. It is good to find some of our public men alive to the dangers of the present position.

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.

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

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.

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Sugar Plums.

At the request of the N. S. S. Executive and a number of our readers, Mr. Cohen's article on "The Massacre of the Innocents," in last week's *Freethinker*, is being reprinted as a propagandist leaflet. We hope to have it ready in time for an announcement as to terms of distribution to be made in our next issue.

We were over sanguine in our anticipation of the result of the L.C.C. summonses against Mr. Neate for selling the *Freethinker* without a permit. But when the case was adjourned, its collapse seemed almost a certainty. Several strange things happened at the second hearing. The L.C.C. solicitor who appeared at the first hearing was, fortunately, too ill to attend the second time. The Council, fortunately, was able to say that it had sent Mr. Neate notice of the revocation of the permit, although Mr. Neate had never received it. And the postal clerk was away in the Army—an absence which excuses a mountain of faults. So the magistrate found for the Council, refused costs, which were asked for, and fined Mr. Neate the almost nominal sum of 20s. on each summons.

At the outset the Committee never expected to win in the Police Court, so there is nothing to be alarmed at in the result. It was entirely owing to the way the case for the Council was presented at the first hearing that it looked like breaking down. And now that the originally expected has happened, the Protest Committee will proceed with its work. As we said last week, we are at the opening of a campaign. It is a fight against the "Prussianism" of Spring Gardens, and this initial skirmish is no more an indication of the final result than the German overrunning of Belgium was an indication of the ultimate defeat of the Allies.

In order to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Henry D. Thoreau, it has been arranged to hold a meeting at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on the evening of July 12. The Chair will be taken at 8 p.m. by Sir John L. Otter, J.P., and short addresses will be given by various speakers. Admirers of Thoreau's writings are invited to be present.

Referring to some recent notes on the effect of war on morals, a correspondent writes:—

> Kant, in his *Perpetual Peace*, appx. 1, mentions the "wise saying of the ancient Greek, 'War is an evil, inasmuch as it makes more wicked men than it removes out of the way.'"
>
> As a modern commentary on that, the *Albany Law Journal* quoted a New York State judge in 1870 as saying from the bench: "This court will have to be in almost continuous session until such times as this generation shall have passed away, so that the vast majority of men now engaged in the commission of crime shall either be incarcerated, run away, or dead. I use the word generation, because history tells us that after every great war it requires a generation to clear out the bad men that have grown bad as camp followers, swindlers, and robbers."

Whether the after consequences of the present War reverse the experience of other times remains to be seen.

Dean Inge, preaching at All Saints' Church, Ennismore Gardens, referred to the wonderful triumphs of medical science, which he said had raised the duration of life, and exterpated a whole company of diseases. The dean did not mention that "Christian" science is altogether opposed to doctors.

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Religion and the French Revolution.

THE authority of the family, the authority of the State, long synonymous with the will of the autocrat, and all authorities whatsoever, gradually assert themselves, one and all, upon a still higher authority, the authority of religion. In it the principle of authority reaches the absolute stage. The will of God is the supreme authority, to which all must submit. Therefore the principle of authority in general stood or fell with the authority of the Church.

Consequently, when any authority was questioned or attacked, the authority of the Church was attacked, and this is what happened during the French Revolution.

As soon as the Estates assemble the clergy unanimously demand that the Catholic religion should be recognized as the State religion, with an exclusive monopoly of public worship. The revolutionary Abbe Fauchet, who blessed the uniforms of the citizen soldiers after the fall of the Bastille, maintained that those persons who belonged to no church ought not to be able to marry, since no one could consider those persons bound by their word.

When the Estates met as the National Assembly, the clergy were soon compelled to make concessions. For example, in 1790, a number of priests moved that the Catholic religion should be proclaimed as the national religion. This motion was timidly rejected, for men did not dare to say what they thought; thus an Assembly, the majority of which were Freethinkers, took part in Church processions and public worship.

One of the first acts of the Assembly was the "Declaration of the Rights of Man," Article 10, of which was as follows: "No one may be harassed on account of his opinions, not even of his religious opinions, provided that his expression of the same be not subversive of lawful order."

In 1791 all church property was declared to be State property. Voltaire had impressed upon his disciples, who were the Girondists, of the necessity of "ecraser l'infame," that is, of "annihilating the infamous thing."

These times were the great days of the Girondists who followed the ideas of Voltaire, and, as such, were bitterly opposed to the Church.

Roland, as Minister of the Interior, stated: "Mutinous and hypocritical priests, in the sacred name of religion, are exciting fanaticism and arming their misguided fellow-citizens with the sword of intolerance." When the proposal for banishing the priests was under discussion, Verginand spoke of the evil that France might do by sending into another country the criminals of whom she desired to be rid. But he is comforted by the reflection that in Italy they will be received as saints, and that in this gift of *living* saints, the Pope will recognize a humble attempt to express gratitude for all the arms, legs, and other relics of *dead* saints, which he had sent into France during centuries past.

Things reached such a pitch that speakers on church matters began to excuse themselves. Francois de Nantes, as spokesman for a committee, began thus: "Our one consolation in having to take up your time on church matters, is the hope that the measures you will take will prevent the necessity of your ever hearing of them again."

The two great clubs of this period, the Cordeliers' and the Jacobins', perhaps the two most famous clubs in history, both met in chapels. Among the speakers at the former were Marat, Danton, and Camille Desmoulins. Desmoulins, in 1790, when he wished to marry Lucille, one of the finest of the female revolutionary characters, found that no priest would marry him, because, in a newspaper article, he had written that the religion of Mahomet was as intelligible as the religion of Christ. He was obliged to recant and go to confession before he could be married. He now made some return for this treatment. In his famous newspaper, *Le Vieux Cordelier*, he wrote:—

> The whole subject of priests and religion is disposed of when it is stated that they resemble each other in being absurd, and when it is known that the Tartars eat the excrement of the Grand Lama as the greatest delicacy. There is no fool too mad to be honoured as Jupiter's equal. The Mongolians worship a cow, which receives as much adoration as Apis, or any other god. We have no reason to be annoyed by such follies, we who, in our simplicity, have believed that it is possible to swallow a god as one swallows an oyster."

In the newspaper, *Les Revolution des Paris*, a number issued in Lent, 1792, contains the following concerning the shows and fairs of the day:—

> At the time when we had a ruling religion, the tonsured jugglers allowed no competition in Holy Week. When the ordinary conjurer comes upon the stage he wears a cloak, but as soon as the performance is over, he takes off his costume. The priest wears his all day long, and performs off, as well as on, the stage. When will they blush to play the role of the conjurers of humanity?

In April the same paper proposes that priests should be shut up in a house like prostitutes, where they can pray and preach as much as they want, to those that wish, but should be prevented from going out, so that they may not infect the population.

In 1792 the edict was passed which condemned to banishment all those priests that would not take the oath of allegiance to the Constitution. In September of the same year was the slaughter of the prisoners, among whom the priests were the first to fall. About 1,500 human beings were killed. The number is great, but it is noteworthy that this number is not one-twentieth part of the number of men killed in one day during a battle at the present time; and the French people had far, far more to avenge than many of those fighting at the present time.

Lequino, a member of the Convention, writes as follows in a book entitled *Les Prejuge's Detruits* (The Prejudices Destroyed): "Religion is a political chain invented for the purpose of fettering men; its only use has been to ensure the pleasures of a few individuals by holding all the others in check." Concerning the priests, he says: "When they are honest they are stupid or mad; as a rule they are audacious impostors, veritable assassins of the human race." Lequino is not at all an exception, although he carried his war against all in authority by inviting the public executioner to dine with him and his family for the purpose of destroying the prejudice against an official who was to an extent a public benefactor. In *Les Revolutions des Paris*, a number which appeared in December, 1792, concerning the celebration of midnight Mass in Paris, it says:—

> There is no particular harm in holding exhibitions of dancing marionettes or conjurers' tricks in the public streets in the daytime, as it is quite permissible that children and nurses should be amused. But to meet in dark assembly halls at midnight for the purpose of singing hymns, lighting tapers, and burning incense in honour of an illegitimate child and an unfaithful wife is a scandal, an offence against public morality, which demands the attention of the police and strict repressive measures.

About this time the ravaging of the churches took place, and the reports are very interesting and instruc

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tive to those who hope that an English Revolution may take place. One report is as follows: "We have permitted 'brown Mary' (a miracle-working image) to retire, after all the hard work she has had in fooling the world for 1800 years." Another: "There are no longer any priests in the Nieone Dept. The altars have been despoiled of the piles of gold which ministered to priestly vanity." Another is in the sarcastic vein:—

> I have been unjustly accused of an onslaught upon religion. The fact is that I asked most politely before I acted, and three or four hundred saints begged for permission to go to the Mint. I said to them, "Ye who have been the tools of fanaticism, ye saints and holy ones of all kinds, show now that ye are patriots, and help your country by marching to the Mint."

When a few churches were re-opened, the fact was announced in one paper under the heading of "Theatres and Amusements," as follows:—

> On the 18th and 25th of this month a comedy was played in several parts of Paris. The chief character, in an absurd costume, performed a variety of foolish antics, at which the spectators did not laugh. As we are not in the habit of criticizing revived plays when they are neither useful nor instructive, we shall take no further notice of this one.

Such events as these show plainly how the Revolution was attacking the principle of authority. It is noteworthy that patents of nobility were burned in the same bonfire with the images of saints. From the moment when the authority of religion was overthrown, authority in other directions was threatened.

Chaumette, who secured many praiseworthy measures, persuaded the Convention to consecrate the cathedral of Notre Dame to the worship of Reason, and in this cathedral many performances were held. One church was turned into a public-house. Relics, Bibles, images, and other priestly paraphernalia were burnt in huge bonfires everywhere.

All this ended in the Festival of the Supreme Being and the bloody wars in La Vendee, and finally, under Napoleon, the restoration of the Catholic religion, to be finally abolished from the State in France a hundred years later.

The men of the Revolution had failed to comprehend that the great mass of the people were profoundly ignorant and superstitious, and were terrified by the acts of violence, the closing of the Churches, the abolition of the Sabbath, the banishment of the priests. They had been taught for centuries and generations that these things were invented by God himself, and they were prepared to give themselves over to the priests once more, as soon as opportunity presented itself. As was stated at the time, there are only two things that can, and ultimately will, kill the tyranny and vile superstition of religion: complete liberty of the press and complete, good, free, and entirely secular education—for both of which fine ideals the *Freethinker* and its readers stand.

Harold W. Edwards.

[The books used for the above are, *L'histoire des Girondists*, by Lamartine, in three vols., and *Histoire de la revolution francaise*, by Louis Blanc, in sixteen vols.—H. W. E.]

An old Scotch minister, who had been imbibing too freely, fell fast asleep on his way home one night. On of his parishioners, on his way to work next morning, wakened the minister out of a sound sleep. He said he was vexed to see his minister in such a state, especially after the fine sermon he preached the previous Sunday. The minister replied: "Haud on tae licht, Haud on tae licht, never mind the lantern."

Anthropomorphism and Science.

The problem of philosophy hardly exists to what is called the plain man. He sees the world, and the world as he sees it is the world as it is. But to the philosopher the matter is not so simple nor so easy. The world we know is a world conditioned by both perception and conception. When we see a table we get the impression of something of a particular shape and colour, and we believe that if we touch it it will be hard. And yet science will demonstrate this shape and colour and hardness is not really in the table, it is in us. They are affections of our organs. Further, it can be shown that we do not really see all we think we see. To what we actually see at the moment we add our past experiences of exact measurements, etc., of tables and other things. And from the thing seen, perceptions, plus the recollections of things previously experienced, conceptions, we construct what we call the actual table. But what is the table apart from our perceptions and conceptions? What is the thing in itself like, apart from the effects it produces on us through our sense organs? ——?

It is quite clear that the world as we know it is made up of (1) an assumed reality; (2) the contributions made by our sensations, present and past. Professor Kingdon Clifford was the first to propose the term "Eject," to denote the contribution made by our subjective experiences to the totality of our conception of the world or any part of it, and it stands opposed to "Object" as the external thing which affects consciousness. Exactly how much of an "object" is an "eject," or whether there is any "object" at all, is a question over which philosophers have wrangled, and will continue to wrangle. That there is an ejective element in all our thinking of the external world seems clear. This, at all events, is the subject-matter of an extremely able and interesting work, by Miss Oliver A. Wheeler, on *Anthropomorphism and Science; A Study of the Development of Ejective Cognition in the Individual and the Race* (Allen & Unwin; 5s. net). Miss Wheeler says that her main object is to determine the relation between the theological and the scientific interpretation of the world, and we may grant her that both science and theology are incurably anthropomorphic in the sense that neither can escape interpreting the universe in terms of human consciousness. So far, one has little fault to find with her examination and determination of the ejective element in physics, biology, and other sciences. Particularly well done are the chapters on "The Indiscriminate Ejection of the Savage," and "The Passage from Primitive to Discriminate Ejection," as marking the rise of science. But we quite dissent from her classification of science as "the direct descendant of the positive knowledge of the savage" with a function entirely utilitarian, and religion as "the descendant of anthropomorphic speculation" with a function wholly interpretive. Science is as interpretive as religion, and religion aims at being as utilitarian as science. Indeed, if the religious interpretation is accepted as true, its utilitarian character is at once admitted.

So, when Miss Wheeler sums up her suggestive work by saying that if science admits the use of ejection for obtaining a synthetic view of a group of data, it cannot consistently deny the use of religious ejection as a device for obtaining a synthetical view of the whole universe; the reply is that the two cases are not on all fours. The scientist may use his ejective symbols—Force, Atom, etc., realizing all the time that they are symbols, the value of which lies wholly in their making certain groups of data intelligible. The theologian having used his

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symbol, God, forthwith disowns its symbolic character, and insists on it as a positive objective existence. Moreover, the religious method is gratuitous. All that can be done by religion may be, and is, done by science, or by that larger science, philosophy. Miss Wheeler's own chapters show that religion takes its rise in the "indiscriminate ejection"—in plain language, the unbounded tendency to personification—of the savage. Religion in civilized times represents what remains of this primitive tendency after science has occupied stretch after stretch of its territory. And it is too much to expect that when the victory is nearly complete, science will agree to an equal division of all that it has conquered.

CRITICUS.

Correspondence.

RELIGION IN THE ARMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You have already had several letters from Freethinkers at the Front giving their impressions as to the state of religion in the Army. If I mistake not they have all been in agreement on one point—that religion has not gained anything of value as a result of the War. This is my own impression, and if Church parades are anything to go by, there is little room for doubt on the subject. Orders for Church parade bring forth a volume of oaths and foul language from our Christian soldiers, who go to Church by the hundreds when they are forced, but stay away by the hundreds if allowed to please themselves. On the other hand, I have known men to sit in their tents for an hour or so on a Sunday evening singing hymns on their own accord. But not infrequently the men who indulge themselves in this way have very little respect for women, and possess a large capacity for bad language and indecent yarns.

The truth of the matter seems to be, that the average soldier, like the average civilian, thinks very little about religious questions when he does attend a service, or sing hymns on his own, he is giving way to emotion that is neither guided nor checked by reason, and thus indulging in a social habit in a most unintelligent manner. There are, of course, exceptions. One man, in particular, I found to be well read and prepared to discuss religious subjects without bigotry. He has now left the company, so I am deprived of his intellectual companionship. I had two or three interesting talks with him. He called himself an English Catholic, and claimed for every man the right to think for himself on matters of doctrine and worship according to his own desires regarding ritual. He accepted a great deal of modern Biblical criticism, and believed in the theory of evolution, but with certain limitations. He thought good living more important than belief in a particular set of doctrines. I mention this as he claimed that while the number of Freethought followers will increase in future, the majority of thoughtful people will tend to accept a broadminded religious position. On the other hand, he pointed out, in a friendly way, a danger that he believed would beset the Freethought movement. It is one that I myself have thought of before, viz.: as it becomes more and more easy to openly profess Atheism, a large number of people will attach themselves to Freethought societies without understanding Atheism, and thus become a drag on the movement. I had to admit that this danger does present itself, especially as there are many Freethinkers to-day who have done little more than throw off Christianity and accept a few elements of Atheism. They do not seem to realize the necessity of trying to educate themselves by reading the best of Freethought literature and attending lectures as often as possible. I suggest, therefore, that all who take part in propagating Freethought should insist, as often as possible, on the importance of continual self-education. This may not do all, but it will do something in the way of saving the movement from the above-mentioned danger. I am afraid that a good many Freethinkers are under the impression that the future of our great cause is going to be an easy one. This is a very mistaken estimate. We need all the knowledge and all the energy that we can muster for the future. I have been pleased to find men out here who say readily: "every man to his own ideas in matters of religion," but against this freedom from bigotry on the part of some, we have to place the ignorance and indifference of others. And these latter are the perpetual foes of Freethought.

54179 Pte. E. EGERTON STAFFORD,
B. E. F. France.

PROSPECTS OF REVOLUTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—There are two articles in a recent issue of the *Sunday Times* which have a bearing on what is said in the *Freethinker* of June 24 on the probable inertness of the soldiers and their desire to avoid agitation and commotion when they return from the War. The first is by Lord Sydenham, and is entitled "Revolution or Reconstruction?" He points out that revolutions are made by determined minorities. He looks to the British Workers League to do work preventative of revolution. The other article, by H. Dennis Bradley, is entitled "The Sinister Unrest." One extract is as follows:—

> What are we fighting for? The cause is the utter lack of psychology on the part of the few who are attempting to govern. Why is it, when Prussianism stinks in the nostrils of the world, the nation asks, What are we fighting for? That question, as the men who govern fail to understand, is ironical. In reality, it means we are in the third year of the War, and we have lost Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Press, Liberty of the Subject, Rights to Property, A Representative Government. What have we gained? Broken Pledges, Bureaucracy, Profiteering, Corruption.

In reading, I thought of the reactionaries attempt to prevent the sale of Freethought literature, amongst the other results of the War.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

SPIRITUALISM AND SCIENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have thoroughly appreciated Mr. Mann's articles on "Spiritism," but I am rather surprised to find no reference to a splendid book published some years ago in America by a committee in connection with the Pennsylvania College, entitled *The Preliminary Report of the Sybright Commission*. I read it many years ago, and often wondered if there was ever another report issued by the Commission. I got the book through a London agency, and it cost 3s. 6d. Mr. J. N. Maskelyne put me on to it first. Perhaps some of your readers could tell us if there was ever a subsequent report. It is a most scathing and flaying account of interviews with all the great frauds of the spiritology cult.

ARTHUR SPENCER.

REPRISALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your concurrence with the Archbishop as to Reprisals—expressed in "Acid Drops," July 1—seems open to criticism. You distinguish between air raids and poison gas, etc. Now, if a distinction exists, it tells rather in favour of raids, the laws of war having ruled out poisonings, etc., and having not ruled out raids, as these had not come up for ruling.

On the other hand, there is precedent for inflicting suffering on populations: our blockade is primarily an attack on civilians, and incidentally on the fighting ranks.

You note the next war will commence at the point of brutality where this one leaves off. Just so; and most satisfactory too. Germany bombs, say, Colchester: down comes Cologne. Germany bombs London again: bang goes Berlin. Germany ceases bomb-dropping: England drops no more. That is where the next war would do well to start.

You contend reprisals would be ineffective: "the cheap psychology of an uninstructed mind" would alone look for effect. Now, is it cheap psychology that looks for the coward in the bully? Are these tales fictions—of the average

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German soldier being infinitely more frightened of the Tanks than the average English civilian of the Zeppelin? of German officers foaming with rage because, when we out-Krupper Krupp, we are not fighting fair?

Is it a fact that, as you allege, the Germans support their Government in being ready to sacrifice millions of people? If it is, then the sooner the realities of modern war, as exemplified in air-raids, can *incidentally happen (as in reprisals) and be brought home to them* the better, for many think the German people will be the deciding factor.

Randall Hendon.

Obituary.

It is with the very deepest regret that we have to record the death, on active service, of yet another promising young Freethinker. Mr. J. G. Bartram is fairly well known, by name at least, among North Country Freethinkers, and every sympathy will be felt with Mr. Bartram and his wife on the death of their eldest son, Frank. At first reported, on April 16, "wounded and missing," hope struggled with fear against more serious news. This came to hand recently. He had been killed in action on the date named above. Frank Bartram was a lad of whom any parents might well feel proud. He had passed through his school career with considerable credit, and his bright disposition, associated as it was with an alertness of mind and body, held out the strongest hopes for his future. He took a keen interest in Freethought, and in France was active in discussion with his comrades and in the distribution of literature. His death, at the age of twenty, will be felt as a loss by all who knew him. Freethinkers everywhere will sympathize with the family on their loss.

L.C.C. Prosecution.

SALE OF LITERATURE IN PARKS.

At Old Street Police Court yesterday Mr. Clarke Hall resumed the hearing of three summonses issued at the instance of the London County Council against James Neate, of Bethnal Green Road, for unlawfully selling copies of the *Freethinker* without having first obtained in writing the consent of the clerk to the authority.

Last week, when the case was first before the Court, the defence was set up that the fact that a park-keeper had received notice of the withdrawal of permits was not sufficient withdrawal to create an offence unless it could be proved that defendant had also received such notice from the London County Council.

Mr. Greenwood, who now appeared to support the prosecution, explained that a colleague who conducted the case last week was unable to attend owing to indisposition.

Mr. Eldridge (for the defendant) said there was no denial of selling.

James Joseph Bradley, park-keeper at Victoria Park, was recalled, and said the evidence he gave last week referred to offences against the parks by-laws on May 13 and 20 and June 3.

Mr. Greenwood.—Were you in the park every day, and did you see Neate there on October 3, 1916?—Yes.

Was he selling the *Freethinker* then?—Yes.

What did you say to him?—I said, "You know the permit to sell literature is withdrawn," and he replied, "Yes. I can't help the regulations; I must go on selling." On October 29 I again saw him selling, and said to him, "You know the Council has withdrawn your permit to sell literature in the parks." He replied that he did, but that he insisted on selling.

Mr. Eldridge.—What authority had you for saying the Council had withdrawn the defendant's permit?—I had a notification from the Council to say it had been withdrawn.

Mr. Greenwood.—He (defendant) knew the notice had been withdrawn.

L.C.C. Resolution Ambiguous.

Mr. Eldridge.—What all the people in the parks knew—that there was some regulation before the Council, which I am going to draw your attention to if it is put in.

Mr. Clarke Hall.—If the Council as a body granted these permits, surely as a body they can revoke them.

Mr. Eldridge.—All I say is, he knew, as other people knew, as a matter of public knowledge, that there was something before the Council on the matter.

John William Ellis, Clerk to the L.C.C. Parks Committee, produced an official copy of the minutes of the Council for May 30, 1916.

Mr. Eldridge said it was here sought to make defendant guilty of a penal offence, and liable to all sorts of pains and penalties. If the prosecution proposed to do that they must proceed strictly in a clear and unambiguous manner. He contended that the resolution passed voided permission only in part. It said, "To sell literature in certain parks and open spaces." If the Council had intended that to apply to all parks and open spaces under their control it would have been a very simple matter for them to say so. They did not say that; they said "certain parts," thereby, counsel submitted, meaning "some" parts. There was nothing in the resolution to show that Victoria Park was one of the parks referred to. The resolution, he contended, was void by reason of its uncertainty.

Mr. Clarke Hall.—Some notice was necessary. Had defendant said, "I did know the permit had been withdrawn," that would be sufficient. Suppose no notice was sent, and his attention was called to the fact, he would be entitled to say to the park-keeper, "I have had no notice. I do not take it from you." Suppose he had said that, there would be something in the contention which has been raised.

Park-keeper Bradley, in answer to Mr. Eldridge, said he did not tell defendant the notice withdrawing the permits had been sent to all holders. He said, "You know the permit to sell has been withdrawn," and defendant answered "Yes." He did not tell him about the withdrawal of the permit in the terms of the resolution. He said that there was a permit to Miss Vance to sell literature, and that it had been withdrawn. He did not know that a permit had been granted to the defendant. He thought the permit was a general permit to the National Secular Society. He regarded Neate, when he went to him, as the agent of Miss Vance. Witness went to each person selling literature, and said if they had not permits he would have to summon them. He did not then know that defendant had a permit. The order he received said "all permits have been withdrawn," and that persons with permits had been notified.

Permit to Sell Held Since 1905.

Mr. Eldridge.—Do you know defendant had held a permit since 1905?—No.

You asked him if he knew the permits had been withdrawn, what did he say?—He said "Yes."

You did not refer to his permit?—I referred to permits in general, and to the one granted to the Secretary of the National Secular Society.

Witness produced a copy of the letter of instructions sent to him. It read: "Please note that the Council has decided that all permits shall be cancelled as from December 30. In the event of any person stating that he has not received any such communication his name and address should be taken and sent to the clerk of the Council.

Mr. Clarke Hall.—Why don't you, Mr. Greenwood, prove that these notices were sent?

Mr. Greenwood.—As a matter of fact, the officer who sent them is away on active service.

Mr. Ellis (recalled) read the notice, which ran: "I beg to inform you that the Council has decided that permits granted for the sale of literature in the parks and open spaces shall be determined as from December 30."

Mr. Eldridge.—Have you Neate's name anywhere as being one of the persons to whom that was sent?—I have the counterfoil here.

The magistrate, examining a book handed to him, said the name of Neate did appear, and then something appeared to have been torn out.

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The Witness.—That is the permit.

Mr. Clarke Hall.—That only shows the issue of the permit.

Mr. Greenwood (to witness).—Did you yourself check the circular letter sent out with with the Council's authority?—Yes, I checked the letter, which had been previously marked by my assistant.

Mr. Clarke Hall.—I think that is sufficient.

Mr. Greenwood.—For what it is worth, so you produce a letter dated October 30, 1916, enclosing a resolution of protest against the Council's withdrawal of the permits?

Witness.—Yes, and the signature of Neate is attached to it.

INSUFFICIENT AUTHORIZATION.

Mr. Eldridge submitted that the resolution of the Council did not authorize with sufficient certainty the clerk to send out the notices withdrawing the permits.

Mr. Clarke Hall.—Oh, yes, I think so.

Mr. Eldridge.—Then I don't think I can discuss the matter further here, although it may be necessary to discuss it in some other form in the name of some other person. I submit that the case is not one for anything like a severe penalty.

Mr. Clarke Hall.—Oh, no.

Mr. Greenwood mentioned that in spite of those proceedings the defendant was still, or was on June 24, selling papers in the park. If that sort of thing was to be tolerated he did not know how many park constables it might become necessary to employ. Originally the Council had only intended to ask for a nominal penalty had the defendant admitted at the first hearing that he knew of the withdrawal of the permits and expressed regret for having made a mistake.

Mr. Clarke Hall.—But he is entitled to take advantage of any legal point.

The magistrate imposed a fine of 20s. on each of the three summonses, but refused costs.—*Morning Advertiser* (June 28).

Scenes and Portraits.

THE FRIEND OF PAUL.

OUR master, Epicurus, was a lover of children; he knew, no one better, their delicate and insinuating ways, the strange unreal world in which they play, their unconsciousness of time; and he seems to have taken them as patterns and examplers of the life of pleasure, unsuspicious of the future, and forgetful of the past, but living always with a vivid intensity, in that little, shut-in pleasure-house of the senses, the moment. As I thought of my child, I remembered all his caresses, the soft touch of his flower-like hands upon my face, and the grave eyes that seemed to keep a wisdom older than the world; and beside that image in my dreams stooped another, Drusilla, her hands guiding him to me, she whose whole life was like some attenuated fragrance, difficult of apprehension, but inexpressibly sweet; her quiet brows with real bands of hair smoothed against the cool flesh; and the love that grew between us, first for what she revealed to me, and then for what she hid. When I thought of these two brief, beautiful creatures, I seemed to see in them the true fragility of life, as if it were no more than wind in the stops of a flute or sweet vibration from the strings of a lyre, aerial, elusive, never to be wholly imprisoned in any one form, but wandering, vocal, through the whole of creation, illuminating it to one exquisite moment, like light upon hill and sea, and then vanishing, fleeing away into darkness, never to be exactly repeated.

There are in reality only two religions on this little planet, and they perhaps begin and end with man. They are: the religion of the humble folk, whose life is a daily communion with natural forces, and a binding to them; and the religion of men like Protagoras, Lucretius, and Montaigne—a religion of doubt, of tolerance, of agnosticism. Between these two poles is nothing but a dreary waste of formalism, Pharasaism, "perplexed subtleties about Instants, Formalities, Quiddities, and Relations," all that bewildering of brain which comes from being shut up in a narrow system, like an invalid in a poisoned and stifling room.

FREDERICK MANNING.

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Views and Opinions.

On Authority.

We confess to being but little affected by the argument from authority. This is not because we are constitutionally a "rebel," but really because it is so seldom concerned with authority in any genuine sense of the term. Real authority is worthy of all deference; a false authority is wholly mischievous. And the truth is that most of us are an authority in some direction. We defer cheerfully to the authority of a gardener on the burning question of planting potatoes, but should expect him to respect ours on writing a *Freethinker* article. To be eminent in one department does not of necessity imply eminence in others; and to have great names with us, while it may flatter our vanity, adds nothing to the strength of our position. Authority is only genuine when it is speaking on its own field; in other departments it may be of no greater value than that of the man in the street. It is only in the political world that being Minister of Agriculture prepares one for the work of First Lord of the Admiralty; or an apprenticeship as Under Secretary to the Board of Trade fits one to become Minister of War. Everywhere else a knowledge of the subject is counted essential to the expression of an authoritative opinion.

* * *

An Important Book.

What has been said must be taken "without prejudice," as the lawyers say, to an inquiry undertaken by Professor Leuba, of Bryn Mawr College, U.S.A., as to the belief of certain classes of people concerning God and a future life.[1] Professor Leuba has already written several interesting works on religion, which have been favourably noticed in these columns, and *The Belief in God and Immortality* may be taken as a continuation of these. And if we confine our attention chiefly to the statistical part of Professor Leuba's work, this must not be taken as a depreciation of the other portions. On the contrary, the author's examination of the origin of the belief in a future life and its subsequent developments is of great value. It well prepares the reader for a due appreciation of the statistical inquiry, although one is left with the old problem of explaining the persistence of a belief on behalf of which no valid evidence has ever been forthcoming, and which we know to have had its origin in pure delusion. That belief *ought* to have disappeared with the conditions that brought it into existence. It *is* in process of disappearance; but the process is, admittedly, a slow one.

[1] *The Belief in God and Immortality: a Psychological, Anthropological, and Statistical Study.* (Sherman, Trench, and Co., Boston.) 8s. net.

* * *

Religion and Authority.

The pretence that the belief in God and a future life is so general that affirmations to the contrary may be treated as a mental aberration, is sedulously maintained in the religious world, and it must be admitted that the moral cowardice of public men in this country lends support to the pretence. Every now and again we are treated to inquiries amongst more or less eminent men of science to prove that all "authority" is against the Freethinker. Of course, the questions are framed with deliberate vagueness, and the inquiries are made in safe quarters; but they serve their purpose, and the unthinking Christian is lulled to rest with the comforting reflection that nearly all "authority" is on his side. Now, it must be admitted that if numbers are not decisive against Freethought, neither can they be decisive for it. But they are symptomatic; and when, in spite of the inducements to conformity, the rejection of religious beliefs proceeds to an increasing extent, one is warranted in taking that as a quite significant phenomenon. They are symptomatic of a movement of opinion under the pressure of social and intellectual forces, and it is this that makes Professor Leuba's work of first-rate importance.

* * *

The Test of Facts.

Professor Leuba sent out two sets of inquiries; in each case the inquiries being carefully framed so as to avoid ambiguity. One set of questions dealt with the belief in God, including an inquiry as to the difference the belief or non-belief in God made in life to the person addressed. The other set dealt with the belief in immortality, addressed in the first case to the students of a number of colleges. To avoid long tables of figures, it will be enough to quote here the salient facts. One striking result was that the percentage of disbelievers increased as the students pass from juniors to seniors, and as their intellectual powers developed. Thirty-three per cent. of the whole were "unable to profess a belief in immortality, and a considerable additional number (are) evidently indifferent to it." There were, roughly, twice as many women as there were men who professed belief in a personal God, and a large number considered that the disappearance of the belief would make no difference to their lives. Professor Leuba sums up his own impression from the reports as follows:—

> The deepest impression left by these records is that, so far as religion is concerned, our students are grovel-

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> ling in darkness. Christianity, as a system of belief, has utterly broken down.....Their beliefs, when they have any, are superficial and amateurish in the extreme. There is no generally acknowledged authority, each one believes as he can, and few seem disturbed at being unable to hold the tenets of the Churches.

Professor Leuba does not lament this. On the contrary, he shows quite conclusively, in the concluding chapters of his book, that there is neither intellectual warranty nor utilitarian justification for the belief in God and a future life.

* * *

Scientists and Religious Belief.

The more interesting and conclusive sets of figures are, however, concerned with the groups of scientists amongst whom Professor Leuba made his enquiries. Again, groups of 1,000 names were selected in various branches of science which were subdivided into greater and lesser men of 500 each. The questions asked were in no sense leading questions, but so framed as to permit a clear answer either in the positive or negative, or to indicate a state indecision. The result of this inquisition was very striking, and far more favourable to the Freethinking position than many would have anticipated. Thus, taking the lesser and greater scientists together, the believers amounted to no more than 41·8 per cent. The number of avowed disbelievers 41·5 per cent. If, however, we add those who returned themselves as Agnostics, we get no less than 58·2 per cent. of non-believers. The result, we repeat, is striking. Christians are fond of quoting the *number* of believers on their side; it is something to be able to remind them that amongst the most educated class in the United States more than half have thrown over altogether the belief in God and immortality.

* * *

How the Sciences Affect Religion.

An interesting feature of this investigation is the classification of men according to their special science: Physics, Biology, Sociology, History, and Psychology. Of these the physicists provide a greater number of believers than the biologists, the figures being: physicists, 43, biologists 30 per cent. Historians are on about the same level as the physicists, while sociologists and psychologists approximate to the biologists. These results certainly indicate some connection between one's studies and one's religious beliefs, and Professor Leuba is on right lines in saying that:—

> When the student of physical laws has often come to accept determinism in the physical world, he may often and does keep for the less generally understood biological and sociological phenomena, the traditional belief in divine intervention. The biologist and sociologist, however, better acquainted with the natural causes of these phenomena than their brothers of the physical sciences, find it just as impossible to admit God's action in the biological and sociological domains as in the physical.

This is an inference we have often dwelt on in relation to Spiritualism, where the favourable scientific testimony is usually that of physicists, and very rarely that of trained psychologists or even biologists.

* * *

Religion and Ability.

There is one other feature of Professor Leuba's important and interesting investigations. The amount of religious belief not only bears a relation to the subject of study, it also bears a relation to the degree of intellectual attainments. Whether physicists or biologists, there is less belief among the greater men. The smallest percentage of believers is found amongst the greater biologists; they count only 16 per cent. of believers in God and 25 per cent. of believers in immortality. Professor Leuba's enquiry shows beyond the possibility of successful questioning that—

> in every class of persons investigated, the number of believers in God is less, and in most cases very much less than the number of non-believers.....that among the more distinguished, unbelief is very much more frequent than among the less distinguished, and, finally, that not only the degree of ability, but also the kind of knowledge possessed, is significantly related to the rejection of these beliefs.

Hitherto inquiries of the kind with which we are dealing have usually been conducted in the interests of Christianity. The inquirers set out to establish a result and, naturally, achieved their end. Professor Leuba's investigation is about the first one really designed to get at the truth. And the truth is startling—to the Christian. Freethinkers know how much Christianity has lost ground. The chief trouble is to get people to speak out, and thus place Freethought in the commanding position it deserves. We are certain that *The Belief in God and Immortality* will encourage the avowed Freethinker to press on with his work. We hope it will encourage the more timid to lend a ready hand to that great task.

* * *

We may return to other aspects of Professor Leuba's work next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Reformation in England.

III.

NOTHING is more indisputable than the fact that the English Reformation did not even aim at purifying the Church. As on the Continent, so in England, it was a movement calculated eventually to lessen considerably the oppressive power of ecclesiasticism. In some countries, such as France and Spain, the authority of the Church was so generally recognized and submitted to by the generality of the people that such a rebellious movement could not possibly be initiated and conducted on any comprehensive scale. In England, at the commencement of the reign of Henry VIII., ecclesiasticism was a form of hateful foreign tyranny, against which the masses were in a chronic state of silent revolt. It was this unfriendly, if not openly hostile, attitude of the English race towards the jurisdiction of Rome that made it possible for Henry to get his revolutionary measures passed by Parliament. Had the clergy and their flocks been strongly in favour of the Roman domination, the king could never have won his way to the Supreme Headship of the English Church. It was the weakness of ecclesiasticism in England that rendered practicable the divorce of Catherine of Arragon. So far, then, as Henry VIII. had to do with it, the English Reformation was the most discreditably selfish movement in all history. The king did everything for the sole purpose of furthering his own personal ends. And yet it must be admitted that, in spite of the high-handed and despotic character of the ecclesiastical changes introduced by him, their ultimate effect upon the nation was decidedly beneficial. Let it be specially emphasized, however, that even he, cruel tyrant though he was, could not have brought them about had not the people been more or less prepared for them. Had the clergy's loyalty to the Pope been a burning passion, and had they been heartily supported by their parishioners, Henry would have been powerless, for he had not a standing army at his back to enable him to force his will upon his subjects. To the poor within his realm he was uniformly kind, and he did much to protect the workers against the greed and oppression of the rich. On this point both Buckle and Froude are

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in complete agreement. Alluding to Henry VII. and Henry VIII. in their relation to private wars, Buckle says:—

> Those princes, despots as they were, mainly oppressed the highest classes; and even Henry VIII., notwithstanding his barbarous cruelties, was loved by the people, to whom his reign was, on the whole, decidedly beneficial (*History of Civilization in England*, vol. ii., p. 108).

Speaking of the working classes, Froude observes:—

> They enjoyed an abundance far beyond what in general falls to the lot of that order in long-settled countries; incomparably beyond what the same class were enjoying at that time in Germany or France. The laws secured them; and that the laws were put in force we have the direct evidence of successive acts of the legislature justifying the general policy by its success; and we have also the indirect evidence of the contented loyalty of the great body of the people at a time when, if they had been discontented, they held in their own hands the means of asserting what the law acknowledged to be their right. The government had no power to compel submission to injustice, as was proved by the fate of an attempt to levy a "benevolence" by force in 1525. The people resisted with a determination against which the crown commissioners were unable to contend, and the scheme ended with an acknowledgment of fault by Henry, who retired with a good grace from an impossible position (*Henry the Eighth*, vol. i., p. 23).

Thus is explained the comparative ease with which Henry VIII. completely changed the character of the English Church, severing all outward connection between it and the Papacy, and placing it under secular control. It was the deadliest blow ecclesiasticism had ever received, and it is becoming more evident every year that it was the beginning of the end of Christianity in Britain. It was, verily, the laying of the axe to the root of the tree which rendered its eventual fall an absolute certainty. Ever since the Church of England has been a schismatic body, a mere sect, a breach in the unity of Christendom. Indeed, that may serve as a fairly accurate definition of the Protestant Reformation in its entirety. It was a movement which, from its very nature, could make for nothing but the ultimate disintegration of Christianity. It is known as the Protestant Reformation, and its promoters are honoured as the Reformers; but, in reality, to re-form the Christian Church is to demonstrate its fallibility, and this can only be done when the people's faith in it is weak. Luther's mission would have been a total failure had not the popular temper been favourable to it. "In Spain," Buckle says, "the Reformation, after a short struggle, died completely away, and in about ten years the last vestige of it had disappeared," simply because the masses loved the Church, and successfully resisted all attacks upon it. So complete was the dominion of the priests, that it was possible for Philip II. to act upon his famous maxim, "That it is better not to reign at all than to reign over heretics." But in Germany the soil was ready for the revolutionary seed, which was no sooner dropped in than it began to germinate; and in a wonderfully short time the Reformation harvest was gathered in.

The same thing occurred in England, and for the same reason. The Church had sunk into such a depth of all sorts of corruption, the lives of the clergy were so notoriously scandalous, that there was a general, though not openly expressed, discontent throughout the country. While the people remained excessively superstitious, their belief in the Church and her ministers had been on the wane for generations. By Henry's time the measure of the Church's offences was full, which enabled him to put his policy in operation without any opposition from the populace. The Reformation initiated by him was almost exclusively of an ecclesiastical and political character, and did not affect moral and social life in the least. A new Church was created with a secular head, which in course of time formulated for itself a new creed. In these changes the people peacefully acquiesced, and for a considerable period, apparently, it mattered little to them which religion was supreme. There were always a few fanatics who revolted and lost their lives. Even during Henry's own reign and for twenty years afterwards there was no religious stability, Catholic and Protestant doctrines triumphing alternately; and without exception the religion that was up persecuted that which was down. As Freeman succinctly puts it:—

> It was a time of constant change, of change backwards and forwards; the result was that, by the middle of the reign of Elizabeth, there was an established state of things wholly different from the established state of things which had been in the middle of the reign of Henry VIII. (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. viii., p. 333).

Three facts of vast importance stand out in great prominence. The first is that the Reformation of the English Church involved a complete break with the past in creed as well as in polity. The Rev. R. J. Campbell is radically mistaken when he says: "The Church of Augustine and Colman is the same Church in which I minister to-day" (*A Spiritual Pilgrimage*, p. 274). He forgets that Augustine was a Benedictine monk sent from Rome to convert the Anglo-Saxons, and according to tradition their labours were crowned with abundant success. This happened in the year 689; but in the wars that followed the young Church was practically annihilated. Then came another monk from Rome to do the work over again, and in 669 he was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury by Pope Vitalian, whilst Colman, after being defeated in a violent controversy about the correct date of Easter at a conference in 664, had already forsaken his see and settled at Iona. Surely at the Reformation the English Church ceased to be a Branch of the Roman Church, and became a separate, independent organization. The second fact is that in the Anglican Church there are two contending schools, the one cursing the Reformation as the greatest ecclesiastical calamity on record, and the other perpetually returning thanks to God for it. Mr. Campbell now belongs to the former school, and, like all the other members of the Catholic party, has his face towards Rome. Many members of the latter school are gradually drifting in the direction of Free Thought. Between these two great parties there are multitudes of little factions among which no love is lost. This state of things is one of the fruits of the Reformation.

The third and most momentous fact is that the Reformation not only dealt ecclesiasticism a stunning blow, but set in motion a process which can only end in the total disappearance of the Christian religion. It was the revival of classical learning that made the Reformation possible, and it is to the Reformation that we are indebted for the triumph of modern science. Once admit the rights of private judgment, once recognize the claims of reason as the supreme arbiter in all human affairs, and you thereby sound the death-knell of all external authority. Under Elizabeth Protestantism had free scope, and as a result Puritanism arose. Puritanism was ruthlessly persecuted, and the various Nonconformist sects gradually appeared. These all hated the Church from which they went out, and most of them cordially hated one another, in the name of the Lord whom they all alike professed to love and follow. The outcome of it all is, that now at last an overwhelming majority of the population never darken church or chapel doors. Thousands of them are avowed unbelievers,

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thousands more are wholly indifferent, neither actively believing nor disbelieving, while the number of genuine believers is growing smaller every year. The clergy assert that Christianity is on the verge of its final conquest; but the facts show that it is being increasingly abandoned, and that its ministers have ceased to count in the national life.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Iron Hand Under the Velvet Glove.

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

I have searched over the grounds of my belief, and if wife and child and name and fame were to be lost to me one after the other as the penalty, still I will not lie.—*Professor Huxley*

The State has tried to take man's religion under its control.—*G. W. Foote.*

CHRISTIAN apologists never tire of boasting of the tolerance of the religion they profess. Yet the Bible reeks with bigotry and persecution, and the Old Testament Hebrews were expressly ordered to kill heretics. The earliest apostles of Christianity were also imbued with the spirit of persecution. Paul smote Elymas with blindness for opposing him, and John, the "beloved disciple," said, "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, says: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Even in the infant Christian Church the unbeliever is to be shunned like poison, and the history of Christianity after its accession to power justifies the Freethinker in regarding bigotry and persecution as of the essence of that religion. While Christianity survives, the recrudescence of religious persecution is always possible. To say that a superstition which threatened eternal hell-fire for unbelief is opposed to persecution on earth is but to gloss plain facts. The Blasphemy Laws are still on the Statute Book, and are at any moment liable to enforcement. They are the standing menace of a dying creed to those who smile at its childish fables too ostentatiously.

If we turn to the pages of modern history we see at a glance the fruits of superstition and tyranny. Freethinkers suffered terribly for publishing Paine's *Age of Reason.* Richard Carlile, a paladin of progress, endured over nine years' imprisonment in this terrible struggle. The clergy hesitated at nothing. They even attacked women, and Carlile's brave wife and sister were dragged to gaol for two years each. His shopmen stepped into the breach, and one after the other went to prison, and eventually divided among them forty years' imprisonment. Think of it! One small circle of Freethinkers served between them over fifty years for the rights of free speech in a country pretending to be in the van of civilization. Prosecutions marked the whole of the nineteenth century, and in the famous *Freethinker* trials the intellectuals were roused to action. Petitions for release were signed by almost everyone of real eminence in England, and the world-honoured name of Herbert Spencer headed this memorable protest. An agitation was commenced against the Blasphemy Laws, which Judge Stephen well described as "ferocious," but which still disgrace the Statute Book of an Empire which to-day numbers far more non-Christian subjects than Christian. The prosecutions, indeed, elicited such widespread and universal condemnation that for some years the law fell into abeyance; but during the past few years there has been a revival of persecution, directed mainly against isolated and unimportant Freethinkers. But the retention of the Blasphemy Laws for such purposes is none the less a danger to liberty. As Professor Bury has pointed out in his *History of Freedom of Thought,* a great poet like Swinburne was allowed to publish with impunity blasphemies which, put into prose and uttered by an uneducated Freethinker, would certainly have entailed persecution. It is not merely the Swinburnes who ran a risk. The distance is not immeasurable between Matthew Arnold's description of the Christian Deity as "three Lord Shaftesburys" and the efforts of less educated delinquents. It is on any view a most unworthy course to punish the uneducated man for his lack of culture, whilst the utmost license of expression is allowed on Christian platforms and pulpits in attacking Freethinkers.

Imprisonment was by no means the only indignity imposed. Daniel Isaac Eaton, the Freethinker who was championed by the poet Shelley, was not only prosecuted seven times, but had the pillory inflicted and £2,500 worth of books destroyed. Shelley and his friend Thomas Jefferson Hogg were expelled from Oxford University for publishing a Freethought pamphlet. Years afterwards Shelley was declared judicially to be unfit to be the guardian of his own children on account of his opinions. Many years later a similar dishonour was inflicted on Mrs. Annie Besant, who was at that time a prominent Freethought leader. A large number of the prosecutions of the unstamped press were simply disguised blasphemy trials. The authorities covered the odiousness of their acts under cover of proceeding against unstamped papers and pamphlets. Charles Bradlaugh had to fight for thirteen long years for his right to represent Northampton in the House of Commons, and the persecution shortened his life. Only his alertness and extraordinary legal knowledge prevented his imprisonment for blasphemy. A former Marquis of Queensbury was deprived of his seat in the House of Lords on account of his known infidelity. Last, but certainly not least, thousands of pounds bequeathed for Freethought were diverted to other channels; but, happily, the genius of George Foote stopped this highway robbery. In addition, Freethought leaders have been involved in constant and costly lawsuits, deluged with personal abuse, and have also been the victims of a concerted press boycott.

The plain fact is that superstition is scotched, not slain. Fortunately, the clergy no longer have poor and isolated Freethinkers to deal with, but are now confronted with a compact army, upon whose banners is inscribed the significant and stirring phrase of the great Voltaire, "Crush the Infamous." Such an army is not easily to be quelled by a small minority of shouting fanatics.

MIMNERMUS.

A Degrading Religion.

"MY dear Stanley," said Charles Penfold to an intimate friend of his, "I have often wanted to have a chat with you on religion, and I should be glad if you would state what are your chief objections to the Christian religion."

"Well, Charles, I have so many objections that it would take me some time to state them all. But take a few. Of course, my chief objection to Christianity is that it is *not true.* If that objection holds good, it would not be necessary to state any other, because I do not suppose you would be prepared to argue that a religion that was not true could be so useful to mankind that it would be worthy of being upheld even when it was known to be false?"

"No," said Penfold, "I should not take that ground.

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But it is merely an assertion on your part to say that Christianity is not true—you could not prove it, or at all events you could not prove it to my satisfaction."

"Another objection I have to Christianity is that it is a degrading religion?"

"A degrading religion! What do you mean by such a statement?"

"Sit still for awhile, and I will tell you. Christianity is a degrading religion because only mental slaves or moral cowards can accept it. A believer must begin by abandoning his reason and end by shifting the burden of moral responsibility from his own to other shoulders. Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, in stating his noble eightfold path to happiness, put first the acceptance of 'right views.' But in order that a man should know what views are right, he must have freedom to think. Gautama saw this, and therefore urged his followers to inquire diligently after truth."

"But surely Jesus did the same?" said Penfold in earnest tones.

"Wait a minute," replied George Stanley, the Rationalist advocate in this little controversy. "I want you to hear me for awhile, and then you may reply. In my judgment, the founder of Christianity was not so wise as Gautama in his desire that men should learn the truth. In fact, he cared not how stupid or thoughtless men were so long as they believed in him. He declared that he was 'the way, the truth, and the life,' and that no man could be saved from the wrath of a merciful God but by accepting him. 'Believe and be saved; disbelieve and be damned' was the foundation-stone of all his teachings."

"But does that not show, my dear Stanley, that Jesus thought he was the Christ?"

"No doubt; but you, as a Unitarian Christian, could not possibly accept such a claim on the part of any man, however great or good."

"No; I admit that."

"Well, Jesus, as a peregrinating preacher, became so arrogant and dogmatic that he led many to suppose he was God Almighty, and Christians to-day are driven into the position of regarding Jesus as the very God or of repudiating him altogether as an impostor."

"Not quite that," retorted Penfold, with some warmth. "I remember Dr. Sexton used to talk like that in his debates with the Secularist, Charles Watts; but I do not think either Secularists or Unitarians take that ground to-day. Unitarians believe Jesus was the Son of God in the sense that all good men are the sons of God."

"But most Christians," responded Stanley, "even to-day say that Jesus must have been a supernatural being or he would not have made such bold pretensions. There was no hesitancy about Jesus. He spoke as though he knew everything. But nearly all religious enthusiasts do that."

"Yes; I quite admit that," said the other.

"Dr. Parker and the great Charles Haddon Spurgeon were little God Almighties to their respective followers. Sidney Smith once satirically remarked: 'I wish I could be as cocksure of anything as Tom Macaulay is of everything.' And Christians to-day take the strong declarations of Jesus as being sufficient guarantee of their truth because they are foolish enough to imagine that his boldness would have been tempered with a little discretion if he had not been certain of their truth. But when Jesus said, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,' he laid the foundation stone of a religion that is degrading to humanity."

"Although I admit that there is some truth in your declaration," said Penfold, "I cannot go all the way with you when you affirm that Christianity is a degrading religion. You do not take into account the value of the moral teachings of Jesus."

"I am prepared to consider them on another occasion; but for the present I will continue my argument," said the other.

"Well and good."

"It is the first duty of every man to think for himself, and examine the credentials of whatever system he is asked to accept. Is that not so?"

"Agreed."

"Well, then, every man must do his own thinking and express his own views."

"Agreed again."

"Why should Jesus state the whole truth, which persons must not disbelieve on penalty of damnation, in an obscure corner of the earth, to a number of ignorant and fanatical followers, and leave mankind without a written statement of them, except that which was supplied by persons who never saw nor heard him, nor even lived until years after he was dead?"

"Why ask me these conundrums, my dear Stanley, when you know, or ought to know, that I do not believe in the divine inspiration of the Gospels any more than you do?"

"Then why call yourself a 'Christian Unitarian' when you really do not believe in the divinity of Christ at all?"

"I think that Jesus was divine only in the sense that all good and noble men are divine. And all men are inspired who speak imperishable truths in noble language, like Shakespeare, Milton, or even Shelley."

"And do you not think it is a degrading feature of the Christian faith that it asks the believer to accept the death of the innocent as the only medium by which we can have our sins blotted out? I cannot help thinking that the doctrine of the Atonement is very immoral."

"I cannot agree with you, Stanley, on that. Does not every great moral reformer suffer, and in some cases die, for his fellows? In other words, he offers himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of his fellows. Look at Bruno, Vanini, and other great heroes. Did they not offer themselves up for their fellows on the altar of truth and honour and justice? And all the reformers really do the same, do they not?"

"But do they by their death blot out the sins of the guilty? You cannot answer in the affirmative. You are using the word 'Atonement' in a new sense, and the story of the death of Jesus on Calvary and his alleged atonement for the sins of mankind will not bear such interpretation. Anyhow, I thank you for hearing my statement of the case against the ordinary orthodox Christian. Though we disagree on many points, there is one thing I like about you: we can agree to differ, and part good friends. *Au revoir!*"

Arthur B. Moss.

Superstition.

The Bible versus Little Children.

When reading Addison's *Essays on Popular Superstitions*, it occurred to me that superstition begins its work early; it has done, and is still doing, great harm to the young. The case that I am going to quote from among the many that he mentions is, apparently, very simple, yet, nevertheless, very mischievous, for it fills the child's mind with ideas of wonder, awe, and mystery.

Mentioning how rife superstition was in his days (1672-1719), Addison states that on one occasion when visiting a friend, a little boy at the lower end of the table told his mother that he was to go into "join-

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hands" (writing in which the letters are joined, running hand) on Thursday. "Thursday," says she. "No, child, if it please God, you shall not begin on Childermas Day. Tell your writing master that Friday will be soon enough."

He went on to say he wondered that any one could establish it, as a rule, to lose a day in each week. Upon his return home he fell into a profound contemplation on the evils that attend these superstitious follies of mankind: additional sorrows that do not properly come within our lot and how they subject us to imaginary afflictions.

Let us see what is the meaning of Childermas Day. It means Holy Innocents' Day, to commemorate the massacre of 14,000 children two years' old and under (Matt. ii. 16). Three days after the advent of Christ, Church Anniversary put and held as December 28, it was, probably, first celebrated at the fifth or early part of the sixth century.[1] The word comes from Child, Mass, and Day.

So far as the advent of Christ is concerned, there is not a particle of evidence, either Biblical or traditional, for the claim or December 25 to be the birthday of Christ. Archæologists and professors of the Church own this (see Vivian's *Church and Modern Thought*).

Again, a little child when put to bed, was told, like many others, that God would protect her. Suddenly a large black cat sprang on to her bed, awakening and frightening her more than I can adequately describe. That terror gave her her first doubts as to the all-protecting God, consequently she asked many questions, all unanswerable.

In another case a mother, obsessed with superstition, was putting her child to bed, and with the usual platitudes, after bidding her good-night, turned to take the light away. "Jesus is with you, dear," she said. "Mother, take Jesus away, and leave me the light," said the little one. That was what superstition had done for her.

We read in history of a terrible calamity caused by superstition—that tragic crusade of the children to the Holy Land. The imaginative nature of a French boy wrought upon by preaching was the starting force. He had a revelation from heaven, he said—this highly strung imaginative child—and possibly he had just as much revelation as a good many grown-up mystics of his day. This little Stephen, just twelve years of age, was obsessed with the idea that Jesus wished him to save he Holy Sepulchre or tomb of Christ from the Mohammedans. His alleged revelations caused great excitement; men and women believed that he might be right, for was it not stated in the Bible that "a little child shall lead them." So 20,000 dear little French children gathered at Marseilles, and were allowed to start on their crusade. Many of them sailed for Palestine, but were sold as slaves by those who were taking them. Many thousands sailed from the eastern coast of Italy, and were never heard of again. Christ did not protect these children who went in absolute faith to save his tomb.

Turning to the Scriptures, I cannot see tangible teachings of love and care for little children. Certainly Christ said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me," for even his followers and imitators rebuked them. Suffer means to allow or permit. In Proverbs we find: "He that spareth the rod, hateth his child." All true Humanists are against the beating of children, for it mostly leaves hardness of heart and a bitter outraged feeling. Ingersoll says: "I would have the photograph taken of the angry parent when beating the child."

[1] This day of the week throughout the year corresponding to that on which Holy Innocents' Day fell; considered unlucky by superstitious persons.

A leading newspaper recently stated: "It is urged that experience has shown the futility of flogging for juveniles as for adults."

In the Psalms we find: "Let his children be vagabonds and beg.....Let his children be fatherless..... Neither let there be any to have pity on his fatherless children.....Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against stones."

In 2 Kings ii. 23, 24, Elijah the prophet was annoyed at little children calling him bald head, and he cursed them in the name of the Lord; and, apparently, in answer to that curse two she bears came forth out of the wood, and did tear forty and two children of them.

Esther is known as the poetry of hatred, and so on. Yet Christians call this book "the Holy Bible," and it is put into the hands of a child of tender years to read as he or she may choose.

Children should have every care and protection. Superstition is a danger to their highly strung nerves. Mystery brings terror into their lives at what should be their happiest time. We should be honest with them.

How many of us are so contented and happy in this world that we are anxious to bring others into it to share our sorrows and joys! Since, through no will of their own, children are brought into this world, we should at least live for their happiness, as something that we owe to them. Bright, healthy, happy children are an asset to a country.

Happiness is conducive to health. When I look at a little child, and see all its innocence and sweet ways, I often wonder how anyone can do anything to crush that happiness, or bring a shadow of fear across the sunshine of that young joyous life.

I have noticed that a child brought up with simply a religion of love, and kindness, and rational teaching, free from fear, from ghosts, goblins, bogies, darkness, and every form of superstition, will be twice as happy as those brought up in a religion of fear, with all its attendant ignorant and irrational omens. Moreover, the nerves of that child will be twice as strong.

When the latter is finally a thing of the past, when truth prevails in its stead, all these things will be. May the great work of Rationalism continue, and speedily attain its noble ends.

I have given just a few cases of the mischief of superstition which is directly or indirectly caused through Holy Writ. Parents would do well to adopt the advice of Professor Bury, M.A., F.B.A., in his work *A History of Freedom of Thought*. "Nothing should be left undone to impress upon the young that freedom of thought is an axiom of human progress." He also says: "It should be a part of education to explain to children so soon as they can understand, when it is reasonable and when it is not, to accept what they are told on authority."

We might at all times apply the following lines to this great cause of Rationalism:—

> Plough deep and straight with all your powers,
> Spare not, nor look behind.
> Your labour is for future hours.

H. J. BAYLIS.

While, however, there is an enormous improvement, if we compare the administration of human affairs by Jehovah (*i.e.*, the Old Testament God) and by God (*i.e.*, the God of the New Testament), there is, nevertheless, a blot upon the character of God (*i.e.*, the God of the New Testament) which suffices, if rigorously balanced against the failings of Jehovah, to outweigh them all. It is the eternity of the punishment which he inflicts in a future life. No amount of sophistry can ever justify the creation of beings whose lives are to terminate in endless suffering.—*Viscount Amberley.* "*Analysis of Religious Belief*," vol. ii., p. 371.

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Acid Drops.

The attempt to re-establish a monarchy in China was crowned with success—for less than a week. Then the Republic reasserted itself, and the boy emperor retired once more into obscurity. A people who have once experienced republican institutions do not easily return to a monarchical *regime*. It is true that the English people did re-establish monarchy in the seventeenth century, but it is questionable whether that would have occurred had not religious bigotry under the Commonwealth paved the way. But in China the re-establishment—for a week—of the monarchy was entirely a military manœuvre. And it is curious how militarism, monarchism, and religion hang together. They hang together for fear of hanging separately.

The latest appearance of the Rev. A. J. Waldron is on the film. He figures in a new comic picture entitled "Men Were Deceivers Ever," and some who know the late Vicar of Brixton may find something suggestive in the title. Mr. Waldron's posturings have always been amusing, and never more so than when he aimed at being serious. We should not be at all surprised if his acting in a comic picture play moves the audience to tears.

The Congregationalists claim that last year showed an increase in the number of their adherents everywhere, except in Great Britain. In Great Britain the decrease of Sunday-school scholars alone totals nearly 60,000 in four years. The important thing about these figures is, that even where an increase is shown, they never mean more than a shuffling of the cards. An increase to one Church is at the expense of other Churches. Meanwhile, in relation to the non-Christian world, there is a decrease all round. The number of non-Christians steadily increases, and it is that which is, after all, of vital importance.

The exemption of the clergy from military service is not unnoticed among Christians. A letter was printed recently in the *Spectator* from a correspondent who admitted his orthodoxy, and who wrote: "I am hot with shame whenever I see a lusty and hearty curate, with white hands and sleeky parted hair, selling woolwork at bazaars." And there are thousands of "lusty and hearty" parsons of military age.

In an interesting note on modern slang expressions, particularly the word "blooming," the *Daily News* refers to an intelligent anticipation of the expression in one of Charles Wesley's hymns, in which Satan is said to essay his "thousand arts" to "blast the blooming work of grace." This is almost as amusing as the line in another hymn, which introduces a more popular expletive, "All hail the bleeding lamb."

An advertisement in a daily paper invites subscriptions for the "War Work" of the Salvation Army. Surely, the Salvation Army is engaged in a spiritual fight with Satan; whilst England and the Allies are fighting the godly Kaiser and his satellites.

Speaking at the Annual Meeting of the Scottish Women's Protestant Union, Miss Augusta Cook said that Germany was no longer a Protestant nation. The Protestantism of Luther had gone. What does she mean by such a statement? Is this only another way of saying that Germany is not a Christian country while Britain is?

A correspondent to a Glasgow daily newspaper, signing himself "Country Minister," says the prestige of the Church has diminished enormously, and is steadily diminishing. Forty years ago nearly half the membership was composed of men; now there is scarcely one man to three women. He says the Church, instead of re-charting the kingdom of heaven, which is righteousness, keeps on prattling of the lost continent far above the bright blue sky. Now, what would happen to a Freethinker if he were to make such a declaration? He would run the risk of being prosecuted for blasphemy. Yet this "Country Minister" openly states that the kingdom of heaven is "righteousness," and is not a place beyond the sky.

The Church of England has much resemblance to Mr. Facing-both-ways, of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The Archbishop of Canterbury and some other bishops have condemned reprisals in war; but the Bishop of Birmingham considers that they are justifiable "in self-defence." Probably, the Fathers-in-God find their justification in the Old or New Testament, just as it suits their purpose. For, as a famous old Protestant once pointed out, the Bible is a nose of wax, which is moulded at pleasure.

Special appeals have been made in countless churches and chapels on behalf of "Baby Week"; but this newly found zeal requires much explanation. If the Churches really cared for children, there would be little need for a National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which for a generation has shown how thin is the veneer of civilization in a Christian country.

"Poplar is the apple of my eye," said the Bishop of Stepney. Did his lordship wink with the other eye?

Canon Gamble points out that "the abolition of the Crown would mean the dissolution of the British Empire." He probably means that the Crown and the Church support one another, and in the event of the abolition of the Crown, the Church would share the fate of Humpty Dumpty.

In view of the Irish situation, the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland have issued an "Instruction" to priests, warning them against movements opposed to the "Church or lawfully constituted authority." Priests are forbidden attending meetings outside their parishes, and are reminded that "the authority by which temporal rulers govern their subjects comes from the same divine source as that by which God's kingdom on earth is maintained." One wonders whether one is living in the twentieth century or the twelfth on reading this; but then one remembers it is the Roman Catholic Church that is speaking, and that explains things.

We can quite appreciate the dilemma of the priest in Ireland. No one knows better than the higher priesthood that self-government in Ireland means their downfall. English mis-government identified the religious with the national cause, and with the national aspirations satisfied there will come the inevitable separation of the secular aspect of life from the religious. This means a weakening of priestly power, and the priests know it as well as we do. But to oppose the national aspirations is to lose the support of the people. To help its realization is to pave the way for their own dowfall. Thus the priest stands between the devil and the deep sea, and a realization of this position helps to explain much that is otherwise confusing in the Irish situation.

The City Tribunal gave exemption to a man who acts as representative for a firm which collects beeswax for the Russian Orthodox Church, the wax being used for making candles. The vagaries of these Tribunals are almost past understanding.

Convocation has decided to eliminate from the Church Service the whole of the fifty-eighth Psalm, and a number of verses of a similar character from other psalms. As a sample of religious "cussing," the fifty-eighth Psalm holds an easy first place, and it is illustrative of the mental digestion of the average Christian that he could sing of the blessings of love and brotherhood, and the virtues of meekness and at the same time exhort the Lord to "Break their teeth in them, O God, in their mouth," "Let them melt away as waters which run continually," "The righteous shall rejoice, when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked," etc., etc. The *Daily Telegraph* remarks that such language "may be apt to the services in honour of the tribal divinity of the House of Hohenzollern, but they ill become the offices of the Christian Church." We would

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remind the *D. T.* that the Bible is not a German production; it is the *Christian* Scriptures. The House of Hohenzollern has nothing to do with it. If the *D. T.* means that parts of the Bible are fit only for savages, we agree. And we would add that it is this book which the *D. T.* thinks ought to be kept in schools for the benefit of children.

An article in a labour paper suggests that the workers should have £7 weekly. This should make the Bishop of London smile, for this bachelor-parson enjoys a salary of £200 weekly, which is sufficient to keep fifty working-class families in comfort.

A parallel between the German folk-tales of the Twilight of the Gods and the threatened disaster to the house of Hohenzollern is drawn in a recent publication. The parallel is not so complete as one could wish, for the Kaiser is not a God, but only the friend of one.

Although there are prayers for rain and fine weather in the Government Prayer-book, Christians never seem to get satisfactory results from their earnest supplications. In the recent rain-storm, affecting the Southern and Western counties, enormous damage was done to kitchen-gardens and allotments, growing crops being washed out of the ground.

The War, says *Life*, a Melbourne monthly magazine, is creating in the keenest minds of to-day a sense of the necessity of Christianity. That is quite an easy thing to say, but we should much like to know where these keen minds are to be found that are clamouring for Christianity? The keenest minds have been giving up Christianity for several generations, and it would be passing strange if this War, with its unanswerable indictment of Christianity, had sent them back again. We take it that what *Life* really means is, that the War has made Christian leaders realize that it is best to pretend the world is clamouring for Christianity. That may impose upon fools, and it is numbers always that the Churches are after.

Bishop Frodsham was one of the speakers at the Trades Union Conference held last week at Gloucester. Opposing the introduction of coloured labour, he said, in justification of certain labour restrictions, "It was no insult to the Chinese and the Japanese, and even to the less developed races of the world, to say that they were lower organisms than the English and Americans and the white races." So much for the Bishop's professional belief in the brotherhood of man. He evidently believes in the right of every Englishman to kick his own "nigger"; and "nigger" includes everyone who has not a white skin.

The impertinence of Bishop Frodsham speaking of Japanese, Chinese, and Hindoos as "lower organisms" would make one gasp if it did not express a common and a familiar mental attitude. And the conceit of the assertion is only equalled by the stupidity of believing that these hundreds of millions of non-white races will submit to be kept in a state of perpetual servitude or labelled inferiority. To Germany, the rest of Europe is filled with "lower organisms" that need be kept under control. To the European and American, Africa and Asia are filled with "lower organisms" that must be kept well in hand. The mental attitude in both cases is identical. And it is the root cause of our present trouble. A straightforward course of robbery or piracy is comparatively harmless. It is the piratical exploitation of these "lower organisms" by the white man in the name of religion and morality that is the difficulty. For it helps to disguise the real character of the operation, and so makes the cure the more difficult. The great evil of "Prussianism" is, after all, that it does not belong to Prussia. It flourishes to some degree all over the world.

Dr. Henry Van Dyke, late U.S. Minister to Holland, says that he hates Germany with a "holy hate" on scriptural grounds. Well, we are quite certain that if a man wants to do any "hating," he can always find scriptural justification for it. The Bible has been responsible for more hatred than any other book in the world.

Lately, no less than 5,000 mentally and physically defective children belonging to Glasgow were entertained by the Corporation to a day's outing in Ronken Glen Park. And yet Christians affirm that man was made in the image of God. What an image! and what a God!

Speaking at the 238th Anniversary of the Battle of Bothwell Brig, the Rev. Mr. Black said the Covenanters did not fight for Scotland's rights so much as to make Scotland right, and to make the Scottish people a people of God. I am afraid the Covenanters would get a great surprise if they were to return to-day if they only knew how little their efforts have succeeded in making the Scottish people a people of God, and to know how many people in Scotland were doubting even the existence of such a being. And while on this subject we should like to know how many of the vast crowd turned out to hear the preachers, and how many turned out to hear the band?

Father Bernard Vaughan has been advocating four children to each family. Yet his Church has consistently upheld sexless ideals, and filled Europe with monasteries and nunneries.

We are rather pleased to find the Bishop of Southwell declaring that "it is now or never for a united effort on the question of religious education." It bears out what we have said many times as to the importance of the friends of Secular Education being alert. For, if it is now or never for the Churches, it is certainly a question of *now* for us. When the Churches are active, we should be active also. And it is absolutely certain that the Churches are hoping to make capital out of the present situation.

We do not, and never have, shared the anticipations of an outbreak of beneficial social enthusiasm after the War. We shall have all we can do to recover our lost liberties, and fortunate if we recover the whole. And the ease with which the suggested educational reform is put off time after time is itself significant. But there will be a very determined attempt to re-establish a more definite form of religion in the schools, and it is against that we shall have to be on our guard.

July 17 is "Mascot Day." Captain Berley, who owns a mascot in the form of a small pre-Inca idol, is having a number of replicas made to be sold at one guinea each, which will entitle the holder to a "draw" for the idol itself. The proceeds are to go to private hospitals for officers. It seems that the mascot is supposed to exercise a wonderful influence over the health of the patients in certain hospitals. The whole thing is another illustration of the strong hold superstition has upon masses of the people; and also that its hold on the "upper" is as great as on the "lower" classes.

Mrs. Besant has been forbidden by the Madras Government to speak in public, and ordered to reside in certain specified areas, and angry letters of protest have appeared in the press. The protestors appear to overlook the fact that the power of the Mahatmas is limited by a few Madras policemen.

Dr. Lang, Archbishop of York, addressing the Leeds Chamber of Commerce, prophesied a bright future for labour after the War. This will raise hopes in the breasts of Church organists, choristers, and bellringers.

"General" Booth has appointed an official to extend the work of the Salvation Army in Russia after the War. By that time the Russians ought to have had enough of "Blood and Fire."

Providence doeth all things well. A plague of caterpillers has appeared in Derbyshire, and has done much damage to vegetation.

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To Correspondents.

W. O. Jones.—Thanks for verses, which we much regret we are unable to use.

C. Underwood.—We can only say once more that we care very little about the character of the clergy, so far as our rejection of Christianity is concerned. If they were all good men, it would not prove Christianity either truthful or useful. It would only prove that good men may be mistaken. And few sensible persons will question that.

S. Hammond.—The worst that was ever said of us was that we had once been in the Salvation Army. After that, anything else would be, by contrast, a compliment.

J. Burrell (Lanark).—Adding four more new subscribers to your previous ten is great work. A hundred like yourself, in different parts of the country, would, indeed, ease our "worries." We are inclined to agree with you so far as what you say of the "Covenanters" is concerned.

T. Morley.—We had planned a whole series of new pamphlets, but the paper shortage stopped our going on with the work. Still, the plan is only suspended, not abandoned.

E. Smith.—Thanks for copy of your friend's letter. We quite appreciate its tone and contents.

J. G. Bartram.—Pleased to have portrait. It is an anxious time, and you have both our sympathy and good wishes.

S. R. (Belfast).—We gave you one reference to the opinions of Luther and other early Protestants on persecution. Chandler's *History of Persecution* and Bohn's edition of the *Table Talk* of Martin Luther will give you further information. The latter will also give Luther's attitude towards the peasants when they rose against their feudal lords.

J. Murphy.—It was good of you to so promptly send copies of the paper in response to our appeal last week.

Vera.—We are doing both, we hope. And surely conducting a direct defence of a threatened public privilege in no way conflicts with the aim of educating the public intelligence.

F. De Lisle (Auckland).—We are obliged for copy of magazine. The religious policy of misrepresentation and exaggeration seems much the same all over the world.

J. Effel.—Next week.

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.

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

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.

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.

In the course of a few days the reprint of Mr. Cohen's "Massacre of the Innocents," from the *Freethinker* of July 1 will be ready for circulation. The leaflet is issued by the National Secular Society, and the price will be 9d. per hundred (postage 3d.), or 6s. per thousand (postage 7d.). The leaflet is timely in its message, and, now while the massacre of the London children is fresh in everyone's mind is the time to give it the widest possible circulation.

Sheffield Freethinkers will please note that Mr. Percy Wild, of London, will lecture in Poole Square, Sheffield, to-day (July 15), at 7 o'clock. His subject will be: "A Criticism of Christianity." Mr. Wild is lecturing under the auspices of the N.S.S., and it is hoped to follow up this meeting with others.

We are asked to announce that on June 4 the Societe Londonienne de Morale Fondee sur les Lois de la Nature was constituted at an enthusiastic meeting held at the Emerson Club, W.C. An energetic programme of lectures (in French) is being arranged to start at the Club in October. Dr. Lionel Giles was appointed President; the Secretary is M. Deshumbert, of 4, Dunheved Road, West, Thornton Heath, to whom communications and adhesions may be made. On Sunday, July 15, the Society starts a series of social functions by a visit, organized under its auspices, to Kew Gardens. Members and friends will meet at the principal entrance at 3.30 p.m., and will be conducted by a guide. Mr. Heaford will be glad to meet there English sympathisers with this French and Belgian effort to keep aflame the principles of naturalism in ethics.

We learn from Mr. Heaford that the Secretary of the Portuguese Federation of Freethought at Lisbon, Senhor A. J. Vieira, has just reported to him that, in spite of the War, the Freethought movement in Portugal is in a flourishing condition. The Federation has now 248 Branches in Portugal and its Colonies, and a membership of 39,842. The Federation, whose President is Dr. Magalhaes Lima, the founder of the Portuguese Republic, sends its greetings to English Freethinkers.

Birds of a Feather.

A field of ripened corn—tawny, yellow, creamy, golden, rich, quiet, satisfying in the autumn haze, not in marked contrast either, but comingling with hedgerow, woods, and green fields, and solemn skies, hushed in the calm of matured content.

An easy chair in the evening and the *Freethinker*: exquisite hedonism! and the day dying out of the sky, and the gaslight yellow on the gray page: another harvest. The reaper and the sower in serious mood sadly seeking truth, wistful for wisdom. Waving corn—waves on the sea of thought—nor wanting music and sparkle and foam where falls

.....that faint thin line upon the shore.

Suddenly the seeker laughed, and at nothing, to wit: "where ignorance is bliss. A stitch in time gathers no moss." In the next paragraph he was grave again, moved, suffused, inspired, to whoo! "*En passent* it may be said that ignorance leads us blindfold through the beauties of youth, and age rudely snatches the bandage from our eyes to show us the glories we've left behind." That is worth being said again. It is deeply and profoundly true. Heaven is behind us, not before. We cannot return. We cannot "become as little children." But Tristram and Joan may collaborate in the creation of a quite delectable paradise—a delightful Ingersollian world, congenial to "The Owl" and his confrere.

The Crow.

The Hymn of Love.

(Sung by the Bishop of L——n.)

Safe at home in my Holy See,
Full of wisdom and sanctity,
This is the message revealed unto me,
This is the anthem the angels sing:
"Nature is red in tooth and claw,"
And man was born that he might kill;
This is the Ever-lasting's law,
Thus we fulfil the eternal will.
The Lord of Love is Lord of Hell,
'Tis he who sends the submarine;
He watches o'er the bursting shell,
Incarnadines with blood the green.
For some are good, and some are bad,
And all have sinned at birth;
So let them rot, it is their lot
To stain with blood the earth.

P. A.

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The Sense Organs of Man.

III.

(*Continued from p. 422.*)

As we have seen, the senses of taste, smell, and hearing are all modifications of the primordial sense of touch. The auditory sensation is initiated by the touches of the moving air particles, while taste and smell arise from the touches of sapid or odorous substances. And in vision, the eye is affected by a highly attenuated material whose vibrations transmit movements which affect the organs of sight, evolve the sensations of light, the perception of objects around us, and even enable us to view celestial orbs untold millions of miles in space. The medium for the transmission of light is the luminiferous ether, whose vibrations generate changes in the optic nerve and in the brain, when we become conscious of the existence of external entities.

Extremely sensitive, the eye is well shielded from harmful influences. Seated in soft fat, the eyeball is fixed in a socket of strong bone. The lachrymal gland secretes a watery fluid which keeps the eye moist, while the eyelids and eyelashes protect the delicate organ from dust and other detrimental substances. The ball, or globe, of the eye is a circular body, which moves easily in its receptacle, the orbit, an opening in the skull. The optic nerve, which is rooted in the brain, enters the back of the eye-globe, and, having penetrated the globe's integument,—

> it spreads out into a very delicate membrane, varying in thickness from 1-80th of an inch to less than half that amount, which lines the hinder two-thirds of the globe and is termed the retina. This retina is the only organ connected with sensory nervous fibres which can be affected by any agent in such a manner as to give rise to the sensation of light (Barcroft).

The light which enters the eye is regulated in amount by variations in the diameter of the pupil. The iris is provided with contractile fibres, and when these contract the pupil expands; but if the light penetrating the pupil prove too strong, a round band of muscle fibre placed close to the pupil's margin contracts and the pupil—an aperture in the iris—decreases in size. In producing the sensation of sight, the most important function of the retina consists in its ability to convert the ethereal vibrations which form the physical basis of light into a stimulus of the fibres of the optic nerve. Nerve fibres converge from all regions of the retina, and become massed together to form the optic nerve. The phenomena of visual sensation are lucidly summarized by Professor McKendrick and Dr. Snodgrass, in their *Physiology of the Senses*, as follows:—

> The optic nerve from each eye passes backwards, and entering the hollow of the cranium by a passage at the back of the orbit, joins with its fellow in a union called the *optic commissure*. At the commissure some of the fibres pass directly upwards into the brain, but in the human eye the most of the fibres from the inner or nasal half of each retina decussate, or in other words cross over, and pass backwards to the half of the brain opposite to the eye from which they have come, while fibres from the outer or temporal (next to the temples) side of each retina pass back to the brain on the same side of the eye from which they have sprung. Hence it will be seen that almost all the fibres affected by rays of light which come from objects on the left side of the body will transmit impressions to the right side of the brain, while luminous impressions from the right side of the eyes will be transmitted to the left half of the brain. The bundles of nerve fibres continued behind the optic commissure are known as the *optic tracts*, and they pass to certain ganglia at the base of the brain, from which again fibres pass to the occipital or posterior part of the cerebral hemispheres, the stimulation of which gives rise to the sensation of light.

The brain centre for vision is termed the visual sensorium, while another area which forms the seat of the sensation of hearing is known as the auditory sensorium. It must, however, be clearly understood that the sensation of light is brought about in the visual sensorium, and does not arise in the retina. The retina is, of course, an essential instrument in evolving visual impressions, but it has been demonstrated that if certain brain centres are destroyed, or even diseased, no visual sensation arises even if the retina and the entire optic nerve remain intact. In these circumstances blindness results because the visual sensorium is unable to function.

Waves of light, again, when falling on the optic nerve, fail to excite it. The fibres of this nerve in themselves are as insensible to light as any other region of the body. But in the course of evolution the highly complex structures of the retina have been adapted so completely that they are capable of transforming the almost unthinkably delicate throbbings of the luminiferous ether into light-creating stimuli of the optic nerve fibres.

Thus we, in company with our fellow-animals, derive the totality of experiences which builds up our mental existence from the external world. Moreover, those latent powers which are ours at birth, and are therefore not the outcome of our individual experiences, must have descended to us through inheritance from our ancestors, who bore in their germ-plasm the accumulated mass of registered impressions gathered by the race during its development. The mental powers potential in the infant's brain represent the evolutionary outcome of the countless centuries' experiences which have been slowly stored, to be subsequently bequeathed, principal and interest, in terms of heredity, to succeeding generations. For it is essential to understand that in sober truth heredity is really the transmission of the experiences, bodily and mental, which our ancestors, immediate and remote, have amassed through their contact with the environing conditions which have constituted their lives.

External energies generate all the multitudinous phenomena to which the several senses of man respond. Light, sound, and other agents act on special organs, and along these, nervous impulses are transmitted by the sensory nerves to the central nervous structures. Within these central nervous structures molecular activities arise which, on their subjective side, constitute our states of sensation; and ancestral experience, combined with individual experience, has constrained us to instinctively regard certain phenomena in the outside world as the immediate causes of consciousness. The feelings which arise within ourselves as the result of the impact of external forces on our sensitive structures may manifest themselves either as voluntary or involuntary actions.

Many are the body organs that are subject to impressions from without. All our higher mental activities are directly or indirectly determined by our converse with surrounding Nature. The same principle applies to physical activities. These are largely voluntary, into which the group of feelings termed the "will" enters. But there are also the involuntary movements which are all practically automatic. The increased throbbing of the heart, the quickening or arrest of breathing, the irrepressible smile, the pale face of anger or fear, and the rosy hue of nervousness or shame, are all the outcome of reflex action. But the functions of the central nervous structures and those of the sensory organs are so nearly related that it is hard to say where involuntary

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or reflex actions end and those of volition begin. It is important to realize that the entire nervous system operates as a whole, and although certain organs are more complex, both in structure and function, than others, all branches of the nervous mechanism perform their part in rendering us aware of the happenings around us.

Presumably, no one can think without having something to think about; and all the problems presented to the mind are the resultant of the impressions received from without, either in the present or the past. For we are conscious not only of immediate events, but of those that happened at a recent or remote time. Generally speaking, we cannot really think of coming things; we can only speculate concerning them. In dealing with past events we revive old impressions, while in our anticipations concerning approaching occurrences we are unable to range, except in imagination, beyond that circumscribed region of legitimate expectation which is invariably based upon our experiences of the apparently eternal processes of natural causation.

(To be concluded.) T. F. PALMER.

New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

I.—BABY HEAVEN'S-GIFT.

THE Greek people told the tale of the maid Danae, who was shut up in a tower of brass, so that she might never be free to be a wife and mother; for her father had heard the wise voice of an Oracle say that his daughter's son would slay him. One day, a shower of gold fell in glittering rain from the sky; and the gold was the gold of Zeus, the Heavenly Father. Danae's child was born in the tower of brass, and her father, not daring to kill the wee Son of Heaven, put mother and babe in a wooden box, which drifted and drifted near to an island-shore, where it was entangled in a fisherman's net, and drawn to land. The boy became the hero Perseus, who, with wings on his feet, and a magic bag slung over his shoulder, and a sickle-shaped sword in hand, and a helmet that made him invisible, flew to the place of the horrid Gorgon Medusa. This creature was like an octopus, and Perseus cut off its head. It was Perseus, too, who saw the girl Andromeda chained to a seaside rock, and about to be devoured by a dragon. So the hero slew the dragon and married Andromeda. He killed his grandfather, but not meaning to, for in the games of the Greeks, he flung a flat stone discus, and it slipped aside and killed the old king who looked on. Such is the tale of the Son of Heaven, who made war on dragons, and delivered the Dawn-maiden from the Monster of Darkness; or we may say he delivered the earth, chained by winter, from the Monster of Cold.

And now we will hear of other babes and other wonders.

* * * *

An old priest, bearded, white-capped, and robed, held a handful of powder before the altar. On the altar top were spread red-hot bits of charcoal.

"Incense!" cried a voice.

At this command, the priest dropped the powder on the altar fire, and smoke rose up to the roof of the Temple of Jerusalem; and a murmur of prayer rose from the crowd of Jews in the hall near by, as, with uplifted arms, they watched the smoke, and thought of heaven.

Then the old priest saw, as it were, a shining man on the right side of the altar, and at the sight of this angel his knees shook and hands trembled.

"Fear not," said the bright one; "your wife Elizabeth will have a son, whom you must call Heaven's-gift, or John. A great man shall he be, strong, though never drinking wine; and, as a messenger, he shall teach the people to be good and wise."

"But,—but," stammered old Incense-burner, "but—but".....

"Ah, you don't take my word," said the angel; "then I tell you I am Gabriel, courtier in the halls of God in heaven. You shall be dumb, and not a word will your lips speak till baby Heaven's-gift be born."

So, of course, the priest could not walk out and say to the crowd, "Go, and peace be unto you." He moved his silent lips, and waved his wrinkled hands, and the folk went home, wondering much and chattering much. They had not seen the angel.

About six months after that, the bright one entered a small cottage in the town of Nazareth, in Galilee; and there was a maid there named Mary, or Maria.

"Hail, Mary, favourite of God," he said, "Blessed among women are you."

Like Incense-burner, she trembled.

"Fear not, Mary. I come from heaven to tell you that you will be mother of Jesus the Saviour of Men. Great shall he be, and God, his father, will give him the throne of David, and King Jesus will rule his kingdom for ever."

Mary bent low in a salaam before Gabriel, the courtier of heaven, and she answered meekly,—

"I am the maidservant of God."

Gabriel flew back to cloud-land.

Mary packed a little bundle for a journey, and set out, at a quick pace, across the hills, to visit her elder kinswoman, Elizabeth; for the cloud-land messenger had told her Elizabeth's secret.

The two women smiled and chatted together; and if the fig-trees, and the olive-trees, and the grape-vines in Elizabeth's garden could have heard, they would have heard the maid Mary sing,—

"My soul praises the Lord, for all people in days to come shall call me the Blessed Lady, humble though I am. The Lord pulls down the mighty folk, and lifts the lowly ones; and he richly feeds the hungry, and sends the rich empty away; and he forgets not his people the Jews; he forgets not the children of Abraham."

Of this praise-song, the old priest heard every word; but he could speak no word to this happy girl of Nazareth.

About three months later, Elizabeth's neighbours, with laughter and chatter, and joyous greetings, swarmed into her house, telling how glad they were to hear she was mother of a babe; and it was a pleasure, indeed, to be present at his naming, when he was eight days old.

"Blessings on the little Zacharias!" cried the friends.

"No, no, no, kinsfolk," said Elizabeth. "His name is John,—Heaven's-gift."

"Nonsense! it is not a family name."

"Yes," she insisted, "John, John, John."

They turned to the old man, whose name was Zacharias.

He moved his hands as if holding a pencil, or pointed stylus.

They understood, and hastened to lay before him a tablet of wood, over which was smeared a smooth varnish of wax. Every eye followed the motion of his stylus, and in the silence, all could hear the scratching, as he wrote,—

"The child's name is John."

They stared; and yet more did they marvel when the old priest flung up his arms, and shouted,—

"Praise Heaven for Heaven's-gift!"

Crowds gathered in the village street to talk of the

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wonder; and every shepherd, and ploughman, and vine-dresser in the hill-country gossiped for days about the dumb man's speech, and the naming of John.

"It will be a wonder-child," said everybody.

The old priest also had his song to sing,—

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel. Our horn is lifted up in triumph; our foes will be laid low; and my little Heaven's-gift will be the great Runner-before, and he will go before the king, and give news to the people of the coming Dawn. Light, light, light to the folk in the shadow! Light to lead our feet in the way of peace!"

In after-years, a young man dwelt in the wild region of the hills; his food was plant-food, his drink was water from the rippling burn; his coat was rough; he climbed rocks with the sure foot of a goat; his thoughts were of the Dawn, and of the Light, and of the King who would come to burn the Wrong in the fire of the Right.

The young man was Elizabeth's son, John the Fore-runner, John the Pioneer. Strong man of the wilderness was he; and when he shouted, the echoes of his voice rang from cliff to cliff.

* * * *

Such is the legend given in the gospel known as the gospel of *Saint Luke*.

The Fore-runner who lived in the wilderness was a sort of monk, or Essene. These Essenes were Jews who dwelt apart, in lonely places, in a society of their own. They all sat at one table to eat their simple meals. All wore garments of like pattern. All laboured, either in tilling the soil, or at some craft for the making of things. They placed all their goods in one store, and the overseers bought for all whatever was needed. If any man was sick, the Brethren nursed him. No slaves were kept; no monk sold any wares that he made; and none ever handled a deadly weapon. Often and often they washed, and such was their zeal to wash at day-break that they were sometimes called Morning Baptists. They sent gifts of incense to the Temple at Jerusalem, but never went there themselves. They never slew animals for sacrifice. If sickness fell on any, they deemed it the work of demons, or devils, and sought to cast out devils by whispered magic words, or the use of magic roots and herbs. Listening, they thought they could hear voices from heaven; and in cloud-land they believed there was a happy realm, where winds blew soft, and souls might live in peace.

Some people think that John the Baptist (Heaven's gift), and Jesus, son of Mary, were Essenes.

And some people think.....

Oh, there is no end to what some people think, and other people think; and, after all, I am only telling legends.[1]

F. J. GOULD.

Going! Going! Gone!

THE *Fra* readers will permit me to apologize to them for an erroneous article published some months ago, entitled "Blatherskite Billy." Therein I called Billy Sunday a grafter, a rogue, a charlatan, a soul-snatcher, a money-changer in the temple, a master of chicanery, a braying ass, a crooked seeker for effects, a mountebank, a clown, a tawdry egotist in grease-paint, a trafficker in the trite, a shrewd seducer of the people, a contemptible, low fellow, a vile-tongued betrayer of "the Word," a spiritual harlot. Twenty of his sermons I had read thoroughly for their mob psychology. Ten men, whose judgment I respected, had attended his tabernacle-feast, given me their minute and unprejudiced impressions in writing. The Baltimore newspaper accounts I had devoured with the zeal of a convert. I thought I knew ball-player Billy, the hell-devil Evangelist. I had never heard Sunday—never seen him, but I thought I knew his mind, his kind. God help me—I erred. I must apologize.

Billy Sunday is now in Buffalo. Last night I saw him—heard him—sat at his feet. East Aurora sent in a special train. Four hundred and fifty of us made the trip. We bought Peter's chocolate and salted pea-nuts in lieu of supper. Streaked it for the revival shed.

Fifteen rows from the rostrum we found seats directly in front—an ideal situation. Five people constituted the immediate party: a Protestant Christian, a Roman Catholic, a Swedenborgian, a neutral and me, Myself! Probably we formed a complete unit in that vast concourse of human varieties, Philistines and Publicans, Greeks and Romans. We expected all there was to expect—yielded he who could draw together such multitudes must offer *something*.

'Twas yet early. Then the tabernacle contained not more than two hundred people. Soon the mass flocked in—thousands—14,000 I believe is the capacity. 'Twas filled when Mr. Rodeheaver appeared with his trombone to lead a picked choir of 1,200 voices. First surprise! Rodeheaver is, unquestionably, able. How he ever became ambitious to blow strange and fear-some noises through the twin pipes of a trombone I cannot say. God moves in mysterious ways his blunders to perform. Rodeheaver has brains.

He welcomed the invited groups, including the "East Aurora Bunch," with aplomb and well-measured patron-age. Asked each to name a favourite hymn. Requested some safe and sane groups to sing their selection. Passed out a few Class B jokes and complimentary personalities. Excellently well opened up the meeting. Turned over to Sunday an assembly warmed up, cheered, jollied a bit, pleased with *its* part in the show, in an altogether complacent, non-resisting frame of mind. A thankless task, sympathetically and artfully carried through. "Rhody," by the cut of his clothes, his selection of vests and neck-wear is not a "gentleman"; by his paucity of words, and slurrings, and repetitions, he's not educated. Yet for a' that he's a considerable man. There lurks animal power behind the easy exterior!

Hear me say it—I apologize. Sunday is sincere—he believes every word he preaches. He's not a grafter, a rogue, a charlatan—he's not in it for the money. I doubt whether he gets much more than his board and clothes for his share. Driven into a corner, a personal decision demanded, I am sure he would offer to preach Christ free.

I doubt he knows the feel of the thousands that have poured into his consecrated tin pans! Poor Billy Sunday is a blithering, babbling, grimacing paranoic. Once before I used this word to describe Sunday. But then lightly, contemptuously, as one who designates a crafty crank. Now I weigh my word, seriously, as one who wishes to earnestly convey to you that Billy Sunday is a crazy man · a loon, beset by hallucinations, seeing visions, hearing voices, talking direct to heaven and hell! Please do not mistake my intent, I do not desire to disparage his theology. For the sake of this article I will accept the Sunday religion, in its entirety, without equivocation. I want to hold your attention to the most ghastly joke, the most tragic fraud ever foisted on the American people.

What I saw made me sick in the pit of the stomach,

[1] In this series of sketches, the chief authority for details as to geography, manners, customs, etc., is the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. 4 vols., edited by Canon T. K. Cheyne and Dr. J. Sutherland Black.

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weak! (We were all expectant—we especially wanted to hear his "Oratory"!) He came on the high platform, and sat down on the lone kitchen-chair. His mind seemed far off. He put his hand up to stroke his face, and when he touched his face, it twitched horribly. When he removed his hand, the face and neck continued to twitch strangely; now here, now there! Now the chin and behind the ear at the same time! If I exaggerate a word of this I hope Billy Sunday's God will paralyze me where I sit!

Soon his time came to speak. Rodeheaver motioned him, signalled him. He stood, tottered, and then ran the fourteen feet that separated the chair and the pulpit, *on his toes*, tilted forward. Oft I have seen men drunk and men heavy in drugs make progress like this. I could not believe my eyes. I dare not look at my companions—what were they seeing?

Rodeheaver knows. He stands by Sunday every minute. He permits Sunday no duties but the sermon. He sustains him; holds him together.

Sunday announced the text: "God commanded all men to repent!" "Get that!" he squealed. "Not me! God! God commanded—not Billy Sunday—God!"

Some one to my left murmured: "Egomaniac!" But 'twas more than ego! His poor emaciated body served simply to hang clothes on. His long, thin shanks failed him as he walked. His physical deterioration is marked. His nerves are gone. His brain cannot remember more than one paragraph. He may never get more than three feet from his notes. Yes—he talked with note!

For one hour and ten minutes he excited himself, raved, stood on one leg, shook his fist, made faces at the Devil, talked to God, exhausted his voice, shrieked with diabolical laughter that sent shivers along the spine. "Oh, Felix," whispered the young woman next to me, "he's crazy!" "Aye, poor man, he is!"

Unbalanced! Deranged! Obsessed! Gone—his mind gone! No wonder he attracts crowds! And not by what he says—I assure you that. He said not a single memorable word—not one. Not a thought. Not a joke. Not a vulgarity. Not a story. Not an apt illustration. Not a word-picture; nothing!

He ranted and he tore his body for physical reinforcement! His body lacks virility to help him. He was *flat!* and dull! He is flamboyant without force. Erratic without originality. Jocular without humour. He talked from his vocal cords. He never went below them for power. Imagine the condition of his voice—hoarse, wheezy, disagreeable. Imagine the agony of his facial expression as he tried to reach 14,000 with a worn-out voice, a sick mind, a wandering will, and a body that stumbles.

Applause seems to surprise and delight him. In mid-air he stops his harangue, retires behind the pulpit, walks up and down, rubs his hands together, smirks and gibbers to himself, apparently oblivious of his audience.

Twelve words he mispronounced—either through mental lapses or ignorance. Five times he started sentences, and when half through lost his thought, and never recovered it.

Lincoln and Douglas in the historic debate averaged 100 spoken words a minute. Practically no variation in the vocal speed of the two. Sunday would seem to average 200; when frantic he goes up to 300! When he finished, just seventeen people of the 14,000 voluntarily "hit the trail." Then the man-to-man solicitation began. "Secretaries" struggled behind every row of seats to reach the individual. Three times in twenty minutes I suffered while some person to me unknown wrapped his arm around my shoulders, breathed dewy breaths in my face, asked me: "Are you ready to take Christ?" "Take him where?" I answered the last salesman. He tartly responded: "The Devil has got *you* all right!"

Compared with the impertinence, the embarrassment, of the solicitation, any ordinary person will find the sawdust trail and Sunday's aspen a haven of refuge! His originally small undisciplined mind stressed emotionally, driven by a tremendous physical energy, has become addled, muddled, witless! No wonder in his religious frenzy he sounds the call of Brotherhood to other undersized, unused, undeveloped, withered minds, balancing on the brink, amazed at the immensity of life's proportions, the human odds and ends that clutter his sawdust trail. For years overworked! Night and day with one subject, and that one subject the contribnting cause of more than two-thirds of all insanity, Billy Sunday has reached journey's end. 'Tis a crime against civilization to let him go on. The night he falls frothing on his platform will drop the curtain on Protestant Christianity in America. Not that that would be fatal in itself, but think of the reaction on his thousands of dupes!

Billy Sunday's "light that shines" is the phosphorescent glow which hovers over the dead.

Readers of the *Fra* are urged to go and hear Billy Sunday. Do not take my word. Invite a friendly doctor to go along professionally. What he notes, what you see with your own eyes, will largely explain the "eccentricities" of this pathetic figure, like John Brown, another crazy man who came down and took the town.—FELIX SHAY in the *Fra*.

Correspondence.

CIRCUMSCRIBED JUDAISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—There is one consideration which, to my mind, presents an insuperable difficulty against the Divine authority of the Jewish religion—inasmuch as it shows an absurdity—which I have never seen put forward except, indeed, as a hint coming from Julian, surnamed the Apostate, given in Schaff-Herzog's *Encyc* (third ed., art. "Infidelity"). The difficulty is that of believing that an ubiquitous God of infinite power should have allowed his religion to have remained shut up within the narrow limits of Palestine during so many centuries. From Moses to Christ was fifteen centuries, or thereabouts.

JAMES MASTERSON.

THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In his article of June 24, Mr. Mann tells us that the report of the exposure of the Davenport Brothers "is a fable circulated by our great and glorious free press." Let me assure you that Mr. Maskelyne did expose them, and that most effectually. A full account is to be found in a work written by Mr. Maskelyne, *Modern Spiritualism*, published by Warne & Co. It bears no date, but was apparently issued in the late seventies. Chapter vi. is devoted to "The Juggling Gemim!" which was Maskelyne's playful way of designating the Davenport Brothers. He tells us how he discovered their tricks:—

> Being present at a morning cabinet *seance* given by the Davenports at the Town Hall, Cheltenham, I was elected a representative of the audience, and by the accidental fall of a curtain, hung over a window to exclude the light, I got a key to the *knotty* problem, which I have ever since used with such effect to reproduce all the tricks of the Brothers, that Spiritualists are in the singular dilemma of either branding them as impostors, or of claiming Mr. Cooke and myself as mediums. The latter is the course usually adopted.

The Brothers failed to release themselves on many occasions. The "Tom Fool's Knot" that Mr. Mann mentions, was cut

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by a coadjutor, and the performance abruptly terminated. Mr. Maskelyne informs us:—

> In Ireland, at a private *seance*, Ira Davenport and William Fay were baffled by a gentleman whom they thought to be a Spiritualist; and after sitting an hour without manifestations, they were untied at their own request.

A search through the files of the Freethought journals of the period, the *National Reformer* and the *Secular Chronicle*, would probably discover many references to the Davenport Brothers.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Mann's articles will be produced in book form. That his previous series of articles on Nietzsche were not reprinted is regretted by many.

A. G. B.

SOCIALISM AND RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your comment on an article taken from the *Saltcoats Herald* is obviously due to the fact that you have in mind only those professed Socialists who claim that religion and Socialism are in harmony. We Socialists claim that Socialism is a science based on the materialistic conception of history, and, as such, quite impossible to reconcile with any religious beliefs. The Socialists' case against religion differs widely from the usual Freethought position.

There are Rationalist superstitions as well as Christian. Religion was not the wicked invention of charlatans, nor is the passing of superstition simply to be explained by the triumph of reason." The progress of science, and, therefore, the decay of religion, is ultimately explicable only from the evolution of economic conditions. Ideas play a secondary part in social development. They are the effects of the material environment upon human beings. Therefore, in his worship of the "idea," the *bourgeois* Freethinker is like the Christian, attributing miraculous powers to the figments of mens' brains. We Socialists are under no illusion as to the value of religion as a means of keeping the working-classes in subjection. Meekness, mildness, and contentment are the essence of religion. Many Christians have never been under any illusion as to Socialism being opposed to religion. Dr. Shadwell, at the 1909 Church Congress, held at Swansea, said "The purely materialistic view on which Socialism is based is absolutely opposed to the Christian teaching." And I could quote many others who speak in a similar strain. In conclusion, may I suggest that you have been led astray by the remarks of pseudo-Socialists?

M. STREIMER.

[It would help considerably to an understanding of the dictum that "the decay of religion is ultimately explicable only from the evolution of economic conditions," if we were informed on what the evolution of economic conditions depend. Until that is done the phrase reads like one of those "blessed words" which satisfy without enlightening. Further, the Freethinker does not attribute miraculous powers to ideas; what he does see is that man is always under the dominion of his ideas, and it is these that are the chief determinants of social conditions. And, presumably, the *idea* of Socialism plays some part in the making of Socialists. Finally, no human society exists, or ever has existed on an economic basis. The social bond is essentially a psychologic one. —EDITOR.]

Consolation.

ONLY add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable,
Add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance,
Add love—
By name to come called charity—
The soul
Of all the rest; then wilt thou
Not be loth
To leave this paradise, but shalt
Possess
A paradise within thee,
Happier far. MILTON.

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.

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, July 19, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

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KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, Mr. Thurlow, "Christianity *v.* Miracles."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 6 30, Miss Kough, "He Can't Do Anything."

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, H. J. Stenning, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, E. Burke, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, H. Spence, B.Sc., "Has Man Fallen?"

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Yeates; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Hyatt; 6.30, Messrs. Saphin, Beale, and Kells.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (12A Clayton Street): 6.30, Members' Meeting.

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SHEFFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (Poole Square): 7, Percy Sl Wilde, "A Criticism of Christianity."

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Views and Opinions.

The Decay of Faith.

In dealing with Professor Leuba's *The Belief in God and Immortality*, we were concerned last week with the statistical aspect of the work only. The statistics were, it is true, striking enough. So far as America is concerned—and in this respect there is no reason whatever for assuming that America is different from other countries—the figures showed that Christianity is following the course of other religions. It is dying from the top. The brain is leaving the creed. When half the most educated portion of a community deliberately reject the belief in God and personal immortality it shows, as Professor Leuba says, "the futility of the efforts of those who would meet the present religious crisis by devising a more efficient organization and co-operation of the Churches or by more attractive social features." When the educated intelligence of a country reject such fundamental religious ideas as the belief in a God and a soul, it is idle to think that the situation can be retrieved by mere organization or by disquisitions on social subjects. Save for the degree to which they may arrest the rate of rejection by distracting attention from the main issues, such efforts are, in themselves, evidence of the extent to which first rate mental ability has already departed from the old faith. The rejection of religious belief is, in short, an inevitable accompaniment of civilization. It is "a rejection apparently destined to extend parallel with the diffusion of knowledge and the moral qualities that make for eminence in scholarly pursuits."

* * *

The Utility of Religion.

The eventual disappearance of supernaturalism from civilized society may be taken as a fact. There is no other intelligible explanation to be given of the advance of naturalism on the one hand, and of the modification of supernaturalism on the other. It is not here a question of what is desirable or undesirable, but simply one of observation and inference. True, the process of disappearance bids fair to be a lengthy one, and yet if we contrast the advance made by rationalistic thought during the very brief period which it can claim to have been an ordered force, with the many centuries during which supernaturalism held control, the advance has been astonishingly rapid. The question, therefore, remaining is the supposed utility of the belief in God and a future life, and to this question Professor Leuba devotes the concluding portion of his book. "Is humanity better off with than without this belief?" he asks, and his answer is that to-day the belief costs more than it is worth. Even in earlier days the same answer might have been given. In nearly every age the indifference of the majority of people to religious influences has been a commonplace of preachers. In moments of stress or of passion earlier generations may have turned to religion, but the occasion over, the non-religious forces of life began to re-exert their influence. To-day the spontaneous resort to religion is no longer observable. In that fateful August of 1914, a people to whom religion was something vital would have flocked to the Churches. What we did see was a complete ignoring of religious forms and formulæ. A nation that had never heard of a God or a future life could hardly have ignored both more completely. Only the professional fussiness of the clergy managed to keep religion in the field of vision.

* * *

Some Home Truths.

On the lack of value of religious beliefs, and also on the social origin of moral ideas and feelings, Professor Leuba is commendably clear and outspoken. The following, for example, is well said:—

> Our alleged essential dependence upon transcendental beliefs is belied by the most common experiences of daily life. Who does not feel the absurdity of the opinion that the lavish care for a sick child by a mother is given because of a belief in God and immortality? Are love of father and mother on the part of children, affection and serviceableness between brothers and sisters, straightforwardness and truthfulness between business men, essentially dependent upon these beliefs? What sort of person would be the father who would announce divine punishment or reward in order to obtain the love and respect of his children? And if there are business men preserved from unrighteousness by the fear of future punishment, they are far more numerous who are deterred by the threat of human law. Most of them would take their chances with heaven a hundred times before they would once with society, or perchance with the imperative voice of humanity heard in the conscience.

And here is another deliverance worth citing:—

> The heroism of religious martyrs is often flaunted as marvellous instances of the unique sustaining strength derived from the belief in a personal God and the anticipation of heaven. And yet, for every martyr of this sort, there has been one or more heroes who has risked his life for a noble cause, without the comfort which transcendental beliefs may bring. The very present offers almost countless instances of martyrs to the cause of humanity, who are strangers to the idea of God and immortality. How many men and women have in the

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> past decade gladly offered and not infrequently lost their lives in the cause of freedom, or justice, or science? In the monstrous war we are now witnessing, is there a less heroic defence of home and nation, and less conscious self-renunciation for the sake of others among the non-believers than among the professed Christians? Have modern Christian nations shown a more intense or a purer patriotism than ancient Greece or Rome, where men did not pretend to derive inspiration for their deeds of devotion in the thought of their gods..... The fruitful deeds of heroism are at bottom inspired not by the thought of God or a future life, but by innate tendencies or promptings that have reference to humanity. Self-sacrifice, generosity, is rooted in nothing less superficial and accidental than social instincts older than the human race, for they are already present in a rudimentary form in the higher animals.

These are familiar truths to Freethinkers. To thoughtful Christians they may come with all the force of a new revelation.

* * *

Two Things Needful.

Neither the belief in God nor the belief in immortality are necessary to the wellbeing of mankind. Both these beliefs are rejected by a very large number of educated people, and are with other classes losing their influence. These are the two conclusions driven home by Professor Leuba; and, one may add, the need for his work is a reflection upon the character of our civilization. The battlefields of Europe are showing to day how easily man relapses into the life of the savage on the material plane, and the Churches of Europe demonstrate with equal clarity that we have not proceeded far above the savage in the world of intellect. Nor are the two things so unconnected as a superficial survey might lead one to suppose. In justification of the savage, it might be urged that he knew no better, and could know no better. His gods were the expression of his undeveloped intellect. The retention of "gods" by civilized man admits of no justification. The possibilities of knowing better are here. Two things only are required to realize this possibility and to express its result in life: the desire to know and the courage to speak. And of these, the courage to speak is most needed. For it is idle to pretend that nowadays the profession of religious belief is with a very large number other than pure hypocrisy. And many assist by their silence, even when they do not aid in other directions. Professor Leuba's *Questionnaire* elicited the fact that amongst the scientists of America, fifty-eight out of every hundred have given up all religious belief. If that fifty-eight per cent. could be induced to make their opinions well known, and if their example were to be followed by the scientists of this country, we should find the social status of religion reduced to its legitimate proportions, and, with the destruction of its social status, the final disappearance of supernaturalism would not be very long delayed.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Sanctified Piffle.

EVER since the War broke out the divines have been talking and writing nonsense on a scale to which even they had previously been unaccustomed. To a Freethinker supernaturalism is a subject upon which it is utterly impossible to make any sensible statement because no knowledge about it is obtainable on any terms whatever. When told that a most powerful discourse on the love of God in Christ was delivered the other day by a certain popular preacher, we simply laugh in our sleeve, being well aware that nothing is easier than to wax movingly eloquent on a theme concerning which one is totally ignorant. But the present War has enormously accentuated the nonsensical character of most theological utterances, particularly of those which bear upon the supposed relation of God to the brutal carnage. Generally, we neither use nor admire slang, but "piffle" expresses in so apt and piquant a fashion the true quality of much of what we hear and read about God and the War that we make no excuse for employing it. "The Correspondence of Rev. Prof. David Smith, D.D.," in the *British Weekly* for July 5, is devoted to a discussion of the following series of questions asked by "Rifleman":—

> Did God ordain that Abraham Lincoln should die when assassinated by Booth? Is it within our Father's power to frustrate a murderer? Can we trust our lives to him in all dangers? What is the meaning of this sentence (Matt. x. 29): "Even a sparrow does not fall without the Father"? Would it be correct if I added "leave" or "permission" — "without the Father's leave"?

"Rifleman" has been severely wounded in Flanders, and he has formed a resolution to lead henceforth a good life, and try to be a faithful and useful member of the Congregational Church to which he belongs. Dr. Smith congratulates him on the good resolution which he has taken, and hopes he may have courage to carry it out. Then he begins to piffle in the usual pulpit style of the day. He tells this wounded soldier that if he has courage to carry out his resolution he will make the following strange discovery:—

> You will then see ever more clearly that your cruel experience has been a gracious visitation of God, and discover that, though it was the wickedness of man that wounded you, the Father's purpose was behind it. It is thus—not by blind argumentation, but by hard experience sanctified by patient faith—that the problems of life are solved; and you will be wise if you concentrate on the indubitable certainties, and meanwhile refuse to be bewildered by riddles which experience alone can answer, and which will never receive their final elucidation in this dimly lighted world, but only in the Eternal Glory.

It is perfectly true that experience is the greatest of all teachers, and that there are problems which experience alone can solve. Man is a being who learns the art of living only by actually living. But the idea that a God of justice and love sends a young man to Flanders and allows him to be severely wounded in "this game of beasts" in order to induce him to form good resolutions is monstrous to the last degree. Do all wounded soldiers make up their minds to turn over a new leaf for the future? If not, what becomes of the Father's purpose behind the grievous event? And what about the millions who have been killed—blown to unrecognizable atoms many of them? Does Dr. Smith believe that their cruel murder is "a gracious visitation of God"? The reverend gentleman admits the existence of riddles which cannot be fully elucidated in this world; but as we have absolutely no knowledge of any other world, it is sheer mockery to predict a final solution in a wholly imaginary "Eternal Glory." The story which Dr. Smith tells of the Freethinking and free-living Major who took to posing the regimental Chaplain with sceptical conundrums at an officers' mess in India is ridiculously irrelevant. The major said: "That old yarn now, about Jonah and the whale— what do you make of that?" The chaplain replied: "Well, no doubt there are puzzling things in the Bible; but then there are other things which are quite plain. For instance, there is the Seventh Commandment, what do *you* make of that?" Granting that the incident occurred as related, and that the chaplain scored over his opponent, it has no bearing whatsoever

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upon any of the problems raised by "Rifleman." And yet on the basis of that irrelevant tale Dr. Smith says to his correspondent: "So, if you are wise, you will not fret over the ancient antimony of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom." One would like to know what on earth or in heaven Jonah's whale or the Seventh Commandment has to do with God's foreknowledge in its relation to man's freedom? But the article throws no manner of light upon the point.

Now, on the assumption that the Christian God exists and that he made man in his own image, how are we to account for the so-called fact of sin? Dr. Smith sneers at the contention that the Creator "should have so ordered it that man would never have encountered temptation," or that he should have hedged up his path and made it impossible for him to err, and declares that "man was originally created in God's image, his Son, intelligent and free," and that "that necessarily involved the power of self-determination and the possibility of sinning." Then comes the following extraordinary passage:—

> No doubt God could have interposed to stay the assassin's hand, but that would have been to make the assassin an automaton, and not a man. So long as man is man, his will is free; and the possibility of sin could have been precluded only by the elimination of man and the reduction of the world to a pile of stocks and stones. Here the question arises whether it would not be better so—whether, in view of all the anguish and woe of sin, the creation of man was not a ghastly blunder.

Ignoring for the moment the testimony of science as to the evolutionary origin of the human race, let us critically examine Professor Smith's theory, which, by the way, is the accepted theological theory of the day. What the Professor maintains is that had Adam been incapable of sinning, "he would not have been man at all, but a machine." Is God, then, a machine? Theologians are all agreed that infallibility and impeccability are two of the attributes of the Supreme Being, in which case, according to Dr. Smith, he is not a moral agent at all, but a machine. Now, the Bible affirms that man was created in God's image and after his likeness; and yet Dr. Smith agrees with Milton in holding that had he been so created, "he would have been 'a mere artificial Adam,' like a figure in the motions (that is, a puppy show), moved not by his own volition, but by an unseen hand pulling the wires." That is to say, had man, like his Maker, been incapable of thinking and doing wrong, he would have been, not a thinking creature, but a machine. Does the reverend gentleman not realize how infinitely absurd such a theory is? Is he not aware that the existence of power and inclination to love and do evil would have been a flaw or defect in man's constitution, or that the slightest impulse to deviate from the path of right and duty would have been a sign of serious imperfection, for which the Creator alone would have been responsible? But the most curious thing of all is that the theory of human freedom has been resorted to by modern theologians in the attempt to relieve the Creator of that moral responsibility. Knowing full well what man is and what his life has always been, they argue that God must have had a high and noble purpose to serve by making him capable of such a life, and knowing also that such an explanation gives rise to problems which they are powerless to solve, they fall back upon another stupid theory, namely, that we must wait for the final elucidation until we reach "the Eternal Glory."

Of course, Professor Smith does not even attempt to answer the wounded soldier's puzzling questions, but says to him, "Refuse to be bewildered by riddles which experience alone can answer." But experience cannot answer the riddles which disturb "Rifleman's" peace of mind, and the Professor himself admits it. The reverend gentleman admits further that God could have prevented the assassination of President Lincoln had he not set a much higher value upon the freedom of action of John Wilkes Booth, the wicked conspirator, than upon the preservation of the greatest and best man America has ever seen. Would it not have been immeasurably better for the United States and for the world had Booth been an automaton rather than a madman and murderer? Moreover, according to Dr. Smith's teaching, he was God's creature, and he became what he was and performed his dark deed under God's omnipotent and all-wise government of the world. More amazing still, "God created the world with clear foreknowledge of the ensuing tragedy"; indeed, the tragedy was even foreordained, because without it the ultimate issue of richer life and fuller glory in a future life would have been impossible.

The only sensible answers to "Rifleman's" questions are of necessity in the negative. God and his Providence are theological inventions with nothing to support them beyond the bare assertion of the inventors. No Heavenly Father has ever frustrated a single murderer, and experience affords abundant evidence that if we neglect to order our own lives along right lines we shall certainly be overtaken by disaster and ruin. The creation story is a myth. Man has slowly risen in the scale of existence, and moods of tiger and of ape are still strong within him, and are alone responsible for the present deplorable situation in Christendom. What man stands in superlative need of just now is not trust in God and his Providence, but in himself and the glorious potentialities lying latent within him.

J. T. Lloyd.

A Kid-Glove Secularist.

> The most efficient, the surest-footed poet of our time.
> —*Swinburne on Matthew Arnold.*
>
> The times are ripening for his poetry, which is full of foretastes for the morrow.
> —*Augustine Birrell on Matthew Arnold.*
>
> The common anthropomorphic ideas of God and the reliance on miracles must, and will, inevitably pass away.
> —*Matthew Arnold.*

When Matthew Arnold returned from a visit to the United States full of delight at the unbounded hospitality with which he had been received, he told with glee a story of Barnum. The great showman, he said, had invited him to his house in the following terms: "You, sir, are a celebrity. I am a notoriety. We ought to be acquainted." Matthew Arnold was, indeed, a celebrity. From the outset of his literary career he managed to get talked of. Report spoke highly of his Newdigate prize poem on Cromwell, whose memory was then execrated at Oxford. The lines formed a very striking contrast to the Oxford prize poems of his time, which were almost invariably feeble imitations of Pope and Heber, beginning with a sunset or an invocation, and ending with an imaginary millennium and the conversion of the Jews.

Although Arnold's work always attracted the attention of cultured people, he never was a popular poet. With the exception of *The Forsaken Merman* and *Desire*, which are met with frequently in anthologies, he cannot be said to have gained really extensive notice. The bulk of his verse, outside intellectual articles, is little known; but his work stands, in a remarkable way, the wear and tear of the years, gaining rather than losing as time passes. Its admirers, while they avoided invidious comparisons with Browning and Tennyson, whose work appealed

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more powerfully to the average reader, yet thought that in Arnold's intellectuality they found something which attracted them.

Arnold possessed an exquisite tact, a self-restraint in details, which is only paralleled by the great writers. He is so free from the straining after perpetual metaphor. This perfection of style is a very much higher merit than is usually acknowledged. So many poets not only show the lily trembling like a bridal veil, and the wild flower shaking to the music of the waterfall; but they tumble the roses upon the unfortunate readers until, like the guests of Heliogabalus, they are in danger of being smothered. Arnold's use of epithets is masterly:—

> His eyes be like the starry lights—
> His voice like sounds of summer nights—
> In all his lovely mien let pierce
> The magic of the universe.

Once more:—

> So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
> From the wet field, through the vext garden trees,
> Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze;
> The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I.

In Arnold's verse there is an ever-present sense of the largeness and of the austerity of Nature:—

> The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,
> But to the stars and the cold lunar beams,
> Alone the sun arises, and alone
> Spring the great streams.

It is said to be a wise child which knows its own father, and so it was with Matthew Arnold. Brought up in a strictly evangelical family, he broke completely and finally with his father's orthodoxy, but retained his admiration for his parent's character. Matthew Arnold had too great a love for the great classical writers to have been long enamoured of the Christian religion. The world in which his favourite classical writers lived, their views of life and death and necessity, met his instincts better than the popular superstition. It must always be borne in mind that he belonged to a very orthodox family, and in religious matters his foes were those of his own household. Yet he held his own way manfully. Writing to his mother in 1863, he said:—

> One cannot change English ideas so much as, if I live, I hope to change them, without saying imperturbably what one thinks and making a good many people uncomfortable. The great thing is to speak without a particle of vice, malice, or rancour.

In a letter to his sister in 1874, he said:

> The common anthropomorphic ideas of God and the reliance on miracles must, and will, inevitably pass away. This I say not to pain you, but to make my position clear to you.

Nobody can doubt that the writer meant every word that he wrote, and the irresistible inference is that in all his theological works – if, indeed, such playful works can be so called—he intended to work to that end.

In the highest and noblest sense of the word, Matthew Arnold was a Secularist. How essentially his imagination had become secularized is seen in his language about death. Thus, in his monody on his friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, he sings:—

> Bear it from thy loved, sweet Arno vale
> (For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
> Their morningless and unawakening sleep
> Under the flowery oleanders pale).

In *Geist's Grave*, his fine poem on the death of a favourite dog, he strikes the same iconoclastic note:—

> Stern law of every mortal lot,
> Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
> And builds himself I know not what
> Of second life I know not where.
> But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
> On us, who stood, despondent by,
> A meek last glance of love did throw,
> And humbly lay thee down to die.
> Thy memory lasts by here and there,
> And thou shalt love as long as we.
> And after that thou dost not care!
> In us was all the world to thee.

In his magnificent lines on *Dover Beach* he is explicit enough:—

> The sea of faith
> Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
> Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd;
> But now I only hear
> Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
> Retreating, to the breath
> Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear,
> And naked shingles of the world.

His language concerning man's relations to Nature is equally striking:—

> Streams will not curb their pride,
> The just man not to entomb,
> Nor lightnings go aside
> To give his virtues room;
> Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man's barge.
> Nature, with equal mind,
> Sees all her sons at play;
> Sees man control the wind,
> The wind sweeps man away;
> Allows the proudly riding and the foundering bark.

His poetry is not wanting in moral profundity:—

> Tears are in his eyes, and in his ears
> The murmur of a thousand years.

This is an example of his didactic verse:—

> The sophist sneers: Fool, take
> Thy pleasure, right or wrong.
> The pious wail: Forsake
> A world these sophists throng.
> Be neither saint nor sophist led, but be a man!

The Oxford manner has been described wittily as that of a deity addressing a bug. Arnold added the blessed gift of urbanity. Although no one understood better the value of reticence in literature, he knew the worth of ridicule as a weapon. He realized, as well as Voltaire, that there are delusions for which laughter is the proper cure. Arnold poked fun at the Trinity, and he never showed weariness of the pleasant pastime of bishop baiting. Even the divinity which hedges an archbishop had no terrors for him. He was all his life girding at the Nonconformists, and used to quote his own front name with humorous resignation as an instance of the sort of thing one had to put up with.

Beside his poetry, Arnold wrote much on literature and religion. His theological opinions were not original, for they were adapted from the works of other Rationalists. He also wrote on education, embodying much practical knowledge. In his literary work he admired rather than imitated Sainte-Beuve, the prince of critics. In his prose, no less than in his verse, he cuts out his thought as if in marble. With a strong, haughty, careless grace, he has expressed himself freely. He tells us that Addison's attic elegance "gilds commonplace." Jeremy Taylor is "a provincial Bossuet." Burke is "Asiatic," and Macaulay "a rhetorician." John Stuart Mill is logical, but knows nothing of style; and the Christian Trinity resembles three Lord Shaftesburys.

Arnold was inimitable. He combined, with great poetic gifts, the mental and imaginative resources of a scholar, a philosopher, and a man of the world. His literary work was done in the scant leisure of a busy life, for he was an inspector under the Education Department; but he found time to write prose and verse of enduring value. The muddy streets of men's traffickings chafed him. "O, back to the fields with the dew on them, back to the birds with their singing," his heart cried. And he voiced his regrets in verse of calm pathos and wave-like melody. There are pages redolent

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of the breath of sweet English meadows, or the scent from the pines of Switzerland. And rarely has Liberty found a tenderer interpreter or a sweeter singer.

He has the style of the great masters. In the still cool atmosphere of the future, his voice will be clearer, stronger, than it sounds to us amid the alarms of war. We who read him will pass away, but his message of Secularism will remain, a source of strength and joy.

> The majestic river floated on,
> Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
> Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
> Rejoicing.

MIMNERMUS.

Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

> Where the miraculous is concerned neither considerable intellectual ability, nor undoubted honesty, nor knowledge of the world, nor proved faithfulness as civil historians, nor profound piety, on the part of eye-witnesses and contemporaries, affords any guarantee of the objective truth of their statements, when we know that a firm belief in the miraculous was ingrained in their minds, and was the pre-supposition of their observations and reasonings.—*Professor Huxley, "Science and Christian Tradition,"* p. 329.

> You urge, in vain, that science has given us all the knowledge of the universe which we now possess, while spiritualism has added nothing to that knowledge. The drugged soul is beyond the reach of reason. It is in vain that impostors are exposed, and the special demon cast out. He has but slightly to change his shape, return to his house, and find it "empty, swept, and garnished.—*Professor Tyndall, "Fragments of Science,"* p. 322.

THE contest between science and the mediums—resembling that between the art expert and the faker of antiquities, or the safe-maker and the burglar—has been decided in favour of science; that is, for all reasonable people with an adequate knowledge of the facts. With the fall of Eusapia, the last of the great wonder-workers disappears from public view; even her one-time faithful defender, Sir Oliver Lodge, has not a word to say for her, does not even mention her name, in the whole 400 pages of his latest spiritualistic book, *Raymond*.

The defenders of Spiritualism have, for the most part, retreated from their old positions, leaving the false beards, dirty muslin, rag dolls, phosphorized oil, etc., in the hands of the enemy. They have retreated to what they consider stronger and more easily defended positions. It will be our task to show that the new defences are no more impregnable than the old.

The latest form of Spiritualism relies on Telepathy, or the power claimed for certain people of being able to communicate with other people at a distance by means of the mind. Starting with this belief, they go a step further. They say: "If mind can communicate with mind, irrespective of distance, why should not the mind survive the death of the body, and continue to communicate with the living?" And they further claim, not only that it may be possible, but that it is so; that they do receive messages, and know that they come from spirits of the dead.

Sir Oliver himself came to believe in Spiritualism by way of Telepathy. In an article contributed to last month's *Strand Magazine*, entitled "How I Became Convinced of the Survival of the Dead," Sir Oliver says: "I gradually became convinced of the reality of experimental telepathy between persons in each other's proximity, though not necessarily in contact with each other.....Concerning the immortality of the soul, I was at that time agnostic, and probably quite sceptical. Nor did the question arouse any emotional feeling in my mind. I did not think that we could know, and I felt satisfied with the fact, whatever it was."[1] After becoming convinced "of the reality of thought-transference," he proceeds, Sir Oliver joined the Society for Psychical Research, where he became the close friend of F. W. H. Myers, the author of *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, that enormous compilation of superstition dealing with hypnotism, mediumship, trances, death-warnings, hallucinations, telepathy, etc. "Under Myers' guidance," says Sir Oliver, "I perceived that telepathy itself, in so far as it demonstrated mental action outside the ordinary channels and organs of sense, implied some promise and constituted some indication of the persistent existence of mind and memory after the bodily vehicle or instrument had been sloughed off." Although not absolutely convinced, says Sir Oliver, "my mind became open to the evidence if it should be forthcoming." The evidence, in Sir Oliver's opinion, was provided by the famous American medium, Mrs. Piper, who crossed the Atlantic on a visit to this country in 1889, at the invitation of Mr. Myers, and with whom Sir Oliver held several sittings. "It now began to appear to me," he proceeds, "that although a brain and nerve mechanism and a muscular organism were as needful as ever for effective and demonstrable communication between mind and mind, yet that it was possible to use such an organism vicariously, and that identity of instrument was not absolutely essential so long as some physiological instrument was available. In other words, that the brain and organism of a living person might be utilized by deceased personalities whose own body had ceased to work. Mrs. Piper went into a trance, and seemed, as it were, to vacate her body for a time. In this condition it appeared temporarily revivified, not by her own personality but by another; and this secondary personality, or whatever it ought to be called, was able to manage what they call 'the machine,' so that through her bodily mechanism communications were received from persons deceased but still apparently mentally active and retaining their personal memory and affection, though now able to display them only in a fragmentary and imperfect manner" (pp. 565-6).

It is quite intelligible, in theory at least, that the brain might be capable of sending out waves of energy comparable with those used in wireless telegraphy, although there is no evidence that will stand scientific examination that one brain has ever communicated with another at a distance by this means. But how on earth is one brain going to communicate with another, when one of them is dead and turned to ashes? One could as easily believe that two wireless stations could continue to communicate after their destruction. And as for the medium "vacating her body for a time" and allowing it to be possessed by spirits of the dead, why, this is going back to the Middle Ages, when the Church exorcized evil spirits from the possessed; or the first century, when devils were cast out of men into pigs!

We have, then, to consider the evidence for Telepathy, and then the evidence for communication with the dead. It will be admitted that Telepathy is not a fact of everyday experience. The diplomatist has not the slightest fear that anyone will read his secret thoughts, and the criminal makes his plans in similar security. Millions are invested in telegraph cables and wireless telegraphy, which would be rendered useless if mind could communicate with mind regardless of distance. Many have claimed to possess the power, but there is not a single living person to day claiming this power who will consent to be tested by a competent scientific committee.

The last public exponents of thought-reading were the Zancigs, who excited a great deal of interest with their performance in London, at the Alhambra Music

[1] *Strand Magazine* (June, 1917), p. 564-5.

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Hall, in December, 1906. Mr. and Mrs. Zancig came over from America, like the Davenport Brothers, Slade, Home, Mrs. Piper, and many others. The English climate does not appear suitable for rearing really great mediums; we import them. Eusapia Palladino was an Italian, and Madame Blavatsky a Russian; and if we are to have Tariff Reform, the Government might do worse than put a heavy tax on these imports.

The Zancigs claimed to be able to read each other's thoughts. Mr. Zancig claimed that what he saw, Mrs. Zancig saw; that, in fact, they were two minds with one single thought. They had previously toured the United States with their performance without exciting more than ordinary attention, but in London they caught on. This was due to the late Mr. Stead, who wrote in his *Review of Reviews* (December, 1906): "I can say without hesitation that the Zancigs at the Alhambra Music Hall gave a more conclusive demonstration of the power of telepathy than is to be found in all the literature of the subject. On each of the two occasions on which I experimented with them in private, the results were the same as those witnessed by anybody at the Alhambra. The only difference was that at the experiments in private I had ample opportunity to impose conditions which rendered fraud or trickery impossible."

Mr. Sinnett also testified to their powers, and Mr. Harold Begbie recorded his conviction that the Zancigs obtained their results by the aid of hypnotism; but it is doubtful if he knew what he was talking about, for how being hypnotised would enable one to read another's thoughts is past all understanding. But the usual nemesis waited upon the Zancigs' initial success. Mr. Stuart Cumberland, the cleverest exponent of thought-reading, wrote to the *Daily Chronicle* (December 31, 1906), declaring that the Zancigs used a code of words and signs, and that if they wished to demonstrate their power of thought-transmission, they must submit to test conditions under which they would be unable to use a code either verbal or by sign. Upon this the *Chronicle* sent to arrange for a test meeting with Mr. Zancig. They were met with an absolute refusal; no test meeting could be arranged for love or money. When Mr. Stead wished to test their powers, they received him with open arms; but then Mr. Stead did not require any proof of Telepathy—he was a firm believer already. But when Mr. Stuart Cumberland, who disbelieves in Telepathy—and, what is more, knows all the tricks of the so-called thought-readers—asked for a test, he was indignantly refused.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

The Altar Boy Alters.

ABOUT eighty years ago, my maternal grandmother, then a young Scottish woman of the Protestant faith, had a Catholic girl companion. Through attending Catholic services, reading Catholic literature, and talking with her companion, my grandmother changed her religion. She married a Protestant who "turned" with her, and they had a large family, each one of whom married in the Church, so from that first "conversion" a full hundred Catholics have been reared.

I, however, am the one black sheep who has dared—as did my grannie of sainted memory—to question and reject inherited opinions. When I was sixteen, some quarter of a century ago, I first saw the *Freethinker*. It was on one of the tables of our local reading-room (doubtless it took a struggle to get it placed there). I picked it up just out of curiosity, for I did not then know what a Freethinker was. I opened it at a "Comic Bible" type of article, and was horrified to see in cold print allusions to J. Christ, Esq., Mr. H. Ghost, and "blasphemies" of a like nature. Being a Catholic lad, an altar boy, and thoroughly well "pithed" from birth, I was profoundly shocked. *Yet I went back again to read the "Freethinker,"* and soon became a convinced Atheist.

I have taken care to mention exactly what fascinated me, for I have frequently heard good Freethinkers disapproving of ridicule as a propagandist weapon. It is no use registering our impressions unless we do so without the faintest deviation from verity. At first I thought of the infidel scribes as low, immoral scoundrels who ought to be boiled in oil; and yet, had the number of the paper which I first saw contained nothing but scientific and philosophical essays, I would have disregarded it. Nowadays, I am not much tickled by jokes about Jonah and the whale, Joshua and the sun, etc.; yet, I think, I have demonstrated of what value that type of criticism is with young minds. Once knock on the head the "reverence" for the ridiculous, and you have gone a long way towards sanity.

The *Freethinker* became a great educational influence to me. Practically everything I have read in the Rationalist way, I owe to the brave little paper. Although never a public man, I have had many a great fight for my principles, but I have never capitulated; "my head has been bloody but unbowed."

After twenty years' fairly strenuous fighting for "advanced" ideas, I have been driven to the conclusion that it is no earthly good trying to do anything with those who, while hankering after freedom, wish to retain the shackles of superstition. My political creed is that all authority has to be questioned, and God is the first dogmatist from whom all authority comes; therefore, let us begin with clearing men's minds of childish opinions and speculations. We can have no real progress without a rational people.

I have a pretty good list of "converts" (I always insist on them becoming subscribers), and I have a small Secular Society at home, where I have four "howling Atheists" who have had a great deal of instruction in religion—from their mother and myself. Reversing the Jesuit principle that if a child is trained under them until it is seven years old, it is safe against irreligion, we have never allowed our children to go to school. My oldest is nine, and his views on God and Creation are extremely diverting. There are many Freethinkers to whom I should say, Start your propaganda first at home. See what my grandmother did for the Church. Think what I may have done for Freethought.

J. EFFEL.

MATTER AND THOUGHT.

That "blind, unconscious matter could not think" was held as a victorious argument, in spite of the assumption implied in the epithets (for the aphorism amounts to this—blind matter cannot see, unconscious matter cannot be conscious). To anyone who looks steadily at the question, however, it may be shown that, as a matter of fact, the nervous tissue, and *that* only, being sensitive, the biological proposition simply is: "Sensitive matter can be sensitive." To claim for this nervous tissue any superadded entity called Thought is to desert the plain path of observation for capricious conjecture. As well call Strength an immaterial principle superadded to muscular tissue. The muscular action and the nervous action are two special phenomena belonging to special tissues. Science can tell you no more. If your mind is dissatisfied therewith, and demands more recondite explanation, invent one to please yourself, and then invent one for heat, for attraction, for every phenomenon you conceive; the field is open; imagination has wide-sweeping wings; but do not palm off your imagination as science!—*George Henry Lewes, "Comtes Philosophy," p. 201.*

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Acid Drops.

We heartily congratulate the Sheffield shopkeepers on their victory over the bigotry of the Watch Committee. A little while back an attempt was made under the Lord's Day Observance Act to prohibit Sunday trading. An association was formed for the purpose of fighting the authorities, and, for the time being at least, the Watch Committee has surrendered. Ninety-two shopkeepers were summoned for trading on Sunday. On behalf of the shopkeepers, Mr. Clement Edwards started by applying for summonses against the following people for following their usual vocation on Sunday, or for "aiding and abetting":—

The publishers of the two local papers for printing them on Sunday last for sale on Monday.

The Lord Mayor and leading members of the Watch Committee for aiding and abetting by purchasing the paper on Monday.

The lodge-keeper at the Botanical Gardens for following his usual occupation on Sunday.

The town trustees, including Sir Samuel Roberts, M.P., Sir William Clegg, J.P., Sir Joseph Jonas, Sir William Mappin, for aiding and abetting by providing the lodge-keeper with his wages.

The Rev. E. R. Everson, as editor of a local church magazine, for offering the magazine for sale on Sunday.

His warden, Mr. C. Birks, for selling a copy on Sunday for 1d.

A city park keeper for following his usual vocation on Sunday, and the Lord Mayor for aiding and abetting by providing funds for his wages.

As a result of this move, the Watch Committee withdrew all the summonses against the shopkeepers, and there for the moment the matter rests. We hope that other towns will follow the example set by Sheffield.

We understand that the Watch Committee propose approaching Parliament for further legislation on the matter. We hope this is so, as an expression of opinion, *pro* or *con.*, would be helpful. We expect that it would mean the clearing away of a piece of legislation that ought to have been abolished long since. There is no genuine public demand for these restrictions. They are purely police prosecutions, engineered by some local bigots and busybodies who have influence with the leading officials. The maintenance of these Sunday laws, and the vexatious prosecutions to which they lead, is an example of the evil done by maintaining on the Statute Books laws which belong to another age altogether. They serve no purpose save that of giving bigotry and malevolence an opportunity to express themselves.

Even newspaper editors sometimes let the cat out of the bag. The *Evening Standard* says: "We could never get a decent education system because of the fight of bigoted Churchmen and Dissenters, representing a mere fraction of the general population and but a small part of their own body." We have said the same thing for many years; but it will bear repetition.

Miss Rebecca West, whose delightful articles illuminate the sober pages of the *Daily News*, has some very pertinent remarks on the clerical statement that the ordeal of war is for the moral uplifting of the nation. Miss West retorts crushingly that this "suggests the appalling conception of a Providence who is capable of deluging Europe with the blood of the innocent and the gifted in order to bring a man home from a night-club."

That some of the clergy are not overworked is shown by a newspaper paragraph which states that two parishes in the Oxford diocese contain four houses and thirteen houses respectively. The two parishes are combined in one living.

In some interesting reminiscences of the late Sir Herbert Tree, Mr. Harold Begbie states that the great actor remarked, "All the harm in the world has come from taking God too seriously." There is much truth in the statement.

Logic is not usually a strong point with pious folk, but one seldom finds so flagrant a contradiction as appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*. Mr. Harold Begbie, writing of the London air-raid, said: "The Englishman does not rave, and does not call upon Jehovah." In another column of the same issue, Mr. Hall Caine, describing the raid, said: "It was an awful spectacle of unbridled wrath. The women shrieked at the police and almost spat in their faces. 'Christ, let us pay those German devils for killing our children. If the Government won't do it, by God, we will."

Two churches were damaged in the London air-raid. As one was Catholic, and the other Church of England, it shows the impartiality and indifference of Providence.

A writer in the Paris *Revue Bleue* pens an appreciation of the English Universities, and remarks on the "atmosphere of leisure and slow development" of Oxford and Cambridge. The writer has hit the nail on the head, for Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* was a text-book in those seats of learning for nearly a century; several generations after the work was hopelessly out of date.

The Government has agreed to a watering down of the beer. Not to be behindhand, the House of Convocation has agreed to a wholesale watering down of the Church Service, deleting a number of Biblical references that are offensive to modern ears and modern intelligence. Light beer and easy doctrine seems now the order of the day.

Mr. Sidney Low writes in the *Contemporary Review* on the probable revival of Arabian culture. He only does them justice in pointing out the high civilization the Mohammedan Arabs developed in both Europe and Asia in the Middle Ages. Here is a passage that Christian readers would do well to ponder:—

> Where they conquered they knew how to establish a settled administration which did not rest entirely upon military power; they fostered agriculture, trade, manufactures, irrigation; they had good laws and good judges; they showed a high respect for art, learning, literature, science, and philosophy. They were the inheritors of that ancient Semitic civilization, older than Christianity or Mohammedanism, older even than Rome and Greece, which, with its Hellenic and Iranian tincture, seemed at one time destined to prevail all round the Mediterranean lands and far beyond them.

To complete the picture, it only needs to point out the period above named coincided with the most uncivilized period of European history. But the uncivilized portion of Europe was Christian. That's all.

The exemption from military service of the clergy and their satellites is still going on. At Lambeth Police Court a Church of England lay-assistant was exempted, and a similar course was taken with regard to his brother. Yet conscientious objectors are penalized, and even threatened with loss of the vote in Parliamentary elections.

Thirty-five religious societies, including representatives of the Church of England, Free Churches, the Salvation Army, the Roman Catholics, and others, waited on the Home Secretary in order to press forward the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which deals with the social evil. What a commentary on the pathological religious mind! At a time when the nation is struggling for its very existence these pious folk are interesting themselves in the question of prostitution. "An ounce of civet, good apothecary."

The Rev. Dr. Charles Brown, minister of Ferme Park Baptist Church, London, devoted his morning sermon on Sunday, the 8th inst., to a discussion of the air raid of the previous day, in the course of which he delivered himself of the following "wonderfully uplifting" message: "You may be quite sure that it is not God's will that bombs should fall on innocent people. I think there is a call in it to us to provide such means that the invader shall be driven back into the sea, and not to whine about God permitting it." From such a statement the inevitable inference is that there is

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nothing so "wonderfully uplifting" to a Christian congregation as a public insult offered by its minister to the God they both pretend to believe in and worship as the Supreme Ruler of the world. The sermon was clearly a tacit denial of the absolute and invincible Divine Sovereignty in which preachers used to glory so loudly not so long ago. Dr. Brown's one lesson from the recent disastrous raid is, not that we should trust in God's care and protection, but, rather, that we ourselves should devise the means as shall render such raids impossible in the future. We fully agree with him; but where does God come in at all?

One part of the Christian teaching is that God can change the hearts of men, and that being so, it is possible for him to affect the hearts of the Germans so as to cause them to abandon the practice. Apparently, all he does is to move the Allies to drop bombs on German women and children, so that when enough have been killed, both sides will agree to "drop it" in another and healthier sense.

Having explained why God does nothing, Dr. Brown next declares that God has done something. He has prevented the realization of the German plans. But how has he prevented that? And if he could prevent that, why not have prevented the other? Dr. Brown should make up his mind which position he is upholding, and what kind of a God it is that he believes in. All that we gather is that his God can interfere when he has a large army to help him, but he cannot interfere when it is a matter of looking after women and children with no army to help. Blasphemy is, legally, holding up the Christian God to ridicule or contempt. All we can say is, that Dr. Brown's God is ridiculous, and if he escapes contempt, it can only be because he fails to rise to its level. That may be blasphemy, but it is also commonsense.

The War, with all its attending horrors, is either an expression of God's will or a wicked violation of it. If the former, who can believe in such an Almighty Fiend? If the latter, then God is discredited for ever as the embodiment of the most contemptible impotence. In either case, the Christian God is an utterly impossible being, and believers in him can be but the most pitiable gulls of superstition. When Dr. Brown practically ignores his superstitious creed, he is eminently sensible; but he is not sensible enough to wholly disavow such a creed.

The *Daily Sketch* states that in the porch of a Young Men's Christian Association hut a poster of a theatrical garden party was displayed. Why not? The Y.M.C.A. huts are places of entertainment.

The Bishop of Hereford, who is eighty-three years of age, has announced his intention of resigning next year. The position is worth £4,200 yearly, which is more than Judas obtained for the Founder of the Christian religion.

"Many war memorials are in questionable taste," says the Dean of Worcester. Was he thinking of the twopenny warshrines?

The Bishop of Southwark wants the paltry sum of £3,000 "at once" for spiritual work in munition areas in his diocese. The revival of religion appears to be a costly matter.

In the ages of faith the laying-on of hands was supposed to confer spiritual benefit; but the process is now more simple. In Billy Sunday's New York crusade, he persuaded 60,000 people to shake hands with him. After pump-handling such a vast number, Billy must have been tempted to tell the rest of the crowd to go to the place he preaches of.

Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Junior, offered a prayer at one of Billy Sunday's meetings, and thanked the Almighty that so many people were not interested in "money-making." It is only natural that he should feel grateful, for it gives himself and his father so much more chance of securing the dollars.

Everybody agrees that it is a good thing to diminish the present rate of infant mortality. Having brought babies into the world, it seems a sheer waste of human endeavour to hurry so large a number out again. All the same, the sooner the movement is relieved of cranks, faddists, pious old ladies, district visitors, and professional philanthropists, the better. These people threaten to worry the life out of the poor, and it is only the poor on whom they bestow their attentions. Suburbia is safe, and the upper world is safe. No one would have the impertinence to offer advice there. It is the poor who are badgered, and we can picture some exasperated mothers battering the heads of some of the visitors with the very babies on whose welfare they are being advised.

After all, poor mothers are not less affectionate towards their children than wealthy ones. And if the difference in the death-rate of the two classes is largely due to a change in home and income, the line of improvement is at once given. To perpetuate miserable homes and handle out tracts or establish nursing societies to counteract the ills the miserable homes produce, is obviously futile. It is the policy of a society not sufficiently strong in its brutality to ignore an evil, not wise enough to see the way out, and not unselfish enough to act on it even if it did. Charitable effort is a poor apology for perpetuated evil, although it is often the principal condition of its continuance.

The objection of the Convocation of Canterbury to the "cursing" psalm is that it is unchristian; but is there anything worse in the Old Testament than the Gospel text: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels"?

The Church Army is asking for "several hundred new clergy and laity as volunteers for hut work." It would be better if the Church Army advertised for waiters, and paid them proper wages.

A Y.M.C.A. official, responsible for book distribution among the troops, is making a special appeal for the works of modern essayists. Apparently the Bibles which are so plentifully supplied to the soldiers are not much to their taste.

A memorial service to the memory of Sir Herbert Tree was held at the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields on July 11. The Bishop of Birmingham delivered an address, and remarked that he would not enter into the eminent actor's religious opinions, which we must take as a tactful admission that Sir Herbert's belief in Christianity was a *minus* quantity. We may rest assured that had it been otherwise, the fact would have been dwelt on. Sir Herbert Tree's last words were, according to the Bishop, "Will you open the window?" We do not think very much religion can be extracted from that.

At Rossyth some pious folk desired a new church. But permission to employ the necessary labour had to be obtained from the Ministry of Munitions, and a letter was received in reply stating that the Admiralty had been communicated with to obtain their opinion as to whether the increased output expected at Rossyth as a result of the extra spiritual facilities provided would compensate for the demand on labour to erect the church. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, who narrated the incident in the House of Lords, said he could not make out whether the letter was sarcastic or silly. But as permission was given, we assume the letter was simply silly.

The *Times* laments the position of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. Its Dublin correspondent writes that Unionists are "alarmed," and that "The authority of the Churches, hitherto accepted as a sure bulwark of conservatism, seems to be crumbling in many parts of the country." And, of course, if the Churches cannot keep the people "in order," those who find the money for their support may wonder what they are paying for.

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To Correspondents.

A. L. M.—We really do not know what was the bishop's line of argument, hence our reply to your question. Thanks for congratulations concerning the *Freethinker*.

D. NICHOLLS.—(1) The Secretary of the N. S. S. will send anyone a badge who writes for it. It is intended primarily for members of the N. S. S., but there is no objection to unattached Freethinkers wearing it. (2) We are pleased to think that we have many friends like yourself who would not forgo the *Freethinker* even if it were a shilling a copy. Sorry to hear of your loss.

We regret that owing to a printer's error, the signature to the letter on "Socialism and Religion," in our last issue, should have been N. Streimer, not "M. Streimer" as printed.

G. GROVE.—Pleased to know that your newsagent sold all his copies of the *Freethinker*. We hope all newsagents will have a similar experience.

W. PANCOTT.—We are always ready to publish a criticism of any article which appears in this journal, but a letter which merely expresses dissent does not carry the matter any further.

BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: H. Spence, 5s.; H. Reeve, 2s. 6d.

W. MATHER.—Thanks. We hope one day to avail ourselves of your kindness.

E. E. STAFFORD.—We hope to publish in the course of two or three weeks. Pamphlet sent.

W. C DODD.—We cannot say if we have subscribers in Rhyl. May probably order through newsagents. All that can be said of the Duke of Argyll is that he is a good Christian. Many will think that enough.

W. DENTITH thanks those friends who have been good to send him parcels of the *Freethinker* for distribution among the troops.

A. T. (Birmingham).—Have sent on your letter to Mr. Mann. We intend reprinting as soon as possible.

J. T. W. (Forest Gate).—Next week. Crowded out of this issue.

W. DODD.—Address 107, Morley Street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne. There will be an opportunity to help the *Freethinker* presently.

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.

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

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.

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 Pioneer Press is now offering for sale two books of great interest to Freethinkers. The first of these works, *Darwinism To-day*, by Prof. V. L. Kellogg, is a careful discussion of the present position of Darwinism in relation to recent theories of the formation of species. The book contains exactly what those interested on the subject require, and presents the present day position of Darwinism in a clear light. Originally published at 7s. 6d. net, the book is a handsome volume of 400 pages, and is offered at 3s., postage 5d. Only a limited number of copies are available.

Dr. E. G. Hardy's *Studies in Roman History* is a work in 2 vols., and while appealing to a more limited circle than Professor Kellogg's book, is of considerable importance. The first volume is confined almost wholly to a study of the position of Christianity in the Roman Empire, with special reference to the persecutions. The second volume is concerned with a study of Roman military affairs and kindred topics. *Studies in Roman History* is a careful and scholarly work, and was published in 1910 at 12s. net. The two volumes are for sale at 3s. 9d., postage 6d.

We learn from a South Wales correspondent that great interest is being shown in the *Freethinker* and its message by the men employed on the railway at Swansea. Some of the officials are doing what they can to arrest the loss of faith which is apparently imminent by circulating some startling literature in the shape of tracts bristling with threats of hell, and if these efforts were intended to cause merriment, one would have to compliment these zealous Christians on their success. Meanwhile, we suggest to all interested that they should get into touch with the Local Branch of the N. S. S. with as little delay as possible.

Mr. Noah Bailey writes that our paragraph in the *Freethinker* for July 8, respecting his appearance before the magistrate at Marlborough Street Police Court, does him an injustice. He says he was not *fined* £10, but only bound over to be of good behaviour for six months. Mr. Bailey also says that he was not charged with using "scurrilous language," and that the paragraph, therefore, misrepresents him. We have not the slightest desire to misrepresent Mr. Bailey or anyone else, and we regret our error in saying he was fined £10. We presume the fact is that he was bound over in his own recognisance to that amount. And if Mr. Bailey will re-read the paragraph he will see, perhaps, that "scurrilous and offensive speech" is applied to Christian Evidence speakers as a whole. Moreover, as Mr. Bailey points out that he was bound over to keep the peace for six months, we must assume that our description of his language as being calculated to promote a breach of the peace is an accurate one.

"One who does not know" writes in the *Daily Mail* of July 11 protesting against men entering the Army having to write themselves down as professing some sort of religion. He says:—

> We are supposed to be a "free" people, fighting the greatest fight ever known for the purpose of freedom, and yet we (alone, I believe, of all the nations engaged in this tremendous conflict) are ourselves in fetters in the matter of "religion."

We quite sympathize with the spirit of the letter, but "One who knows" is not quite correct in thinking that a soldier must write himself as a member of some religious sect. He can insist upon being entered as Freethinker, Agnostic, or Atheist, if he prefers one of these terms. Unfortunately, all men, and all officers, are not aware of this. But it is certainly time that Britain followed the example of France and left religion out altogether. There is nothing the matter with the French Army without God, and it will hardly be maintained that the British Army needs this extra stimulus.

The *Musical Standard* for July 8 reprints from these columns Mr. Farmer's article on "The Musical Scale in Primitive Culture." The source of the article is duly acknowledged.

At the last meeting of the Camberwell Borough Council a proposal to accept the offer of the Carnegie Trust to clear off a debt of about £5,000, providing the Council appointed a chief librarian, and brought the library up to date by the purchase of a number of new books, was passed unanimously. Councillor A. B. Moss pointed out the danger of accepting such a proposal until they knew something of the person who was likely to be appointed as chief librarian, and whether he was likely to be a person who was up to date in his knowledge of books, and of an independant type of mind, who would not fear to purchase books of an advanced character, no matter how much they might offend certain members of the libraries' committee. He could not forget the fact that certain professional and amateur theologians—members of the committee—removed the *Freethinker* from the tables of our libraries, notwithstanding the fact that that paper was the best informed journal before the public dealing with the

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latest deductions of modern science on philosophy and religion. He also remembered the hostility of many members of the committee towards some of the publications of "The Rationalist Press Association." He reminded them that a man who was not up to date in his knowledge of the evolution of religious beliefs must also be out of date on sociology and other subjects, because there was a unity of evolution relating to all forms of belief.

Special.

THERE were two trials for "Blasphemy" at Birmingham last week. J. W. Gott was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment for publishing a pamphlet called *Rib-Ticklers*, and J. Riley was sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment for using "blasphemous" language in the Bull Ring. In Mr. Gott's case there were two trials. The first, on July 11, resulted in the jury disagreeing, and a new trial was ordered. This took place on the 14th, and a verdict of guilty was secured.

Now that these cases are disposed of, it is possible for me to write more fully on the matter than when I referred to it in the *Freethinker* for July 1. What I have to say now cannot prejudice Mr. Gott in the eyes of anyone who cared to help, and if I could not advise that the Freethought Party should support, I was desirous of doing nothing that should injure him.

When Mr. Gott first wrote me, on June 13, I had not seen the pamphlet which was the subject of the prosecution, but I undertook the responsibility for the expenses of the Police Court proceedings, so that he might, as I said, have fair play. I also went down to Birmingham for the hearing, had a lengthy consultation with the solicitor, and discussed the question of what could be said in defence. But it should be understood that what was done was in response to an appeal for advice and help, and did not in any way commit the N.S.S. That opens up a very different situation.

Let me say at once, and I desire to say it as lightly as possible, but quite plainly, that in my judgment Mr Gott's pamphlet was indefensible from any point of view. It was coarse and offensive; it was devoid of argument; and I cannot conceive any cause being advanced by its publication. As I said this quite plainly to Mr. Gott himself, I have not waited for his imprisonment to express this opinion.

But it seemed to me that the time had arrived when a clear policy should be adopted by the N. S. S. in this class of case. They nearly always—if not always—crop up in connection with unauthorized speakers and propagandists; and either the Society must commit itself to defending an indefinite number of people charged with "blasphemy," and, so to speak, follow them about the country with an open cheque-book, or we must make up our minds what we will defend and what we will leave alone. It is a decision the responsibility of which I fully appreciate, and I should have been glad had it fallen upon other shoulders. But one cannot be President of the N. S. S. without shouldering responsibilities; and while I can do without them, I hope I shall never run away from them.

So after carefully thinking the matter over, I decided that I could not advise the Society to undertake the defence of this case, or these cases. And I suggested to the Executive two principles that should govern its decisions, and which met with its approval.

First, where the language complained of by the prosecution as offensive would not be considered offensive if applied to a subject other than Christianity, the prosecution should be resisted as a discrimination in favour of religion and against Freethought. We neither desire nor do we encourage offensive speech. It is discrimination in favour of religion to which we object.

Second, where the language complained of forms part of a reasoned attack on Christianity we may resist a prosecution on the ground that it is aimed at the opinion which is the subject of the argument rather than the particular words singled out for complaint. This need not involve a justification of the particular words on which the indictment is based, but it does enable us to say clearly that the offensive language is only an excuse for attacking Freethought opinions.

Unfortunately, the Birmingham case admitted of no such defence. Had the language of Mr. Gott's publication been connected with any other subject than that of Christianity it would have been highly reprehensible. Being what it was, I could advise no other course than the one pursued. The Executive of the N.S.S. fully endorsed this view, so have all who have written me on the subject, and I think I may say that every responsible person would who was cognizant of the language used in the publication.

It is a pity that it should be necessary to make this statement, but it is better to say a thing publicly when it must be said. There can then be no misunderstanding. Mr. Gott, too, would be well advised to modify the nature of his propaganda in the future. He is not wanting in courage, and I believe he is earnest enough in the cause. But both qualities need to be yoked with judgment and tact if they are to be productive of good.

Finally, it must not be taken that what has been said—and I am saying this as much on behalf of the N.S.S. Executive as on my own—is in any sense an endorsement of the maintenance of the Blasphemy Law. This is an iniquity and a disgrace to a country that calls itself civilized. While it exists it is a menace to freedom of thought, and it ought to be swept out of existence. What has been said only amounts to saying that the cases which are taken up by the N.S.S. must be such as can be defended with credit to itself and the Freethought cause. But we cannot and will not place ourselves at the mercy of any person whose temper, or lack of taste, leads them to use language in attacking religion that would not be tolerated by people in connection with other subjects. And I, for one, hope that this plain indication of the Society's position will have a restraining influence where it is most needed.

CHAPMAN COHEN, *President N.S.S.*

"The Fool Hath Said."

"THERE is no God," the fool hath said,
In wrath and misery;
"For lo, the heavens are as brass,
And none doth answer me."

"There is no God," the scientist sa
"But only natural laws,
Without beginning or an end,
And red are Nature's claws."

"There is a God," the bishop said,
"Lord of the human mart;
His throne is built on flesh and blood
Give unto him your heart."

"I don't know," the Agnostic said,
"If God exists or not,
I cannot worship in blind faith
The God of Cain and Lot.

"But this I know, the world might be
A paradise indeed,
If man would love his brother-man,
And not a priest-made creed." P. A.

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The Sense Organs of Man.

IV.

(Concluded from p. 443).

As already intimated, all the senses contribute in the building up of mind; but, perhaps, the sense most essential to the complete acquirement of mental power is the sense of sight. Physically considered, a disturbance is set up in the brain when we become conscious of the presence of surrounding objects. In a condition of coma or deep sleep, in which dreams are wholly absent, the brain enjoys perfect repose. And after the restoration of consciousness we possess not the slightest remembrance of anything having occurred during the interval embraced by the period of profound slumber. All the knowledge, then, that mortals possess has been obtained during their waking hours.

All modes of sentiency, save in their dimmest states, consist in perceptions of differences and agreements. The active human brain, however busy, is the constant recipient of new messages from the outer world which require and normally receive attention. The areas of the brain, which respond to visual impressions when they receive a stimulus from the eye that denotes the presence of danger, proceed to send a message to the muscles which directs them to move into a position of safety.

A large amount of mystery is still in many minds associated with the circumstance that after a limb has been amputated, a pain may be seemingly felt in hands or feet that have been severed from the body. But during our own individual existence, and throughout the lives of our countless ancestors, whenever the nerves of the upper or lower extremities have been irritated a sensation has been sent to the brain. Now, even when a limb has been separated from the body the nerves above the amputated part remain, and, as a result, whenever these are subjected to a stimulus a message is despatched to the sensorium along the nerves which reproduces the impression that originally arose when sensitive toes and fingers formed part of the body. Both individually and ancestrally the brain has been trained to associate certain sensations set up along given channels with pains in fingers and toes, so that one may still seem to suffer pain in organs no longer present.

The stimulus and the ensuing sensation are linked together as cause and consequence. As a matter of fact it is utterly unthinkable that any state of consciousness, whether in the form of thought, emotion, or any other sensation, can arise apart from some external influence. When a hungry boy sees an appetizing apple a desire to devour it appears immediately in his mind. He secures the apple and greedily eats it, and the entire performance seems quite simple while it is really very complicated. First, there exists the condition of consciousness termed hunger, then arises the added sensation supplied by the sight of the apple, and later, when the pippin reaches the mouth, a highly involved message is sent from the tongue and mouth muscles to the brain which then directs the movements of the tongue and teeth in masticating and swallowing the fruit. But these instinctive movements do not occur when no craving for food exists. The brain must inform us of our hunger before these instinctive processes can be carried out.

Many parts of the body participate in informing the brain that the stomach needs replenishing. So that in addition to the messages sent to the sensorium by the superior sensory organs there are the messages forwarded from the internal body—the stomachic sensations, as G. H. Lewes called them.

With reference to impressions derived from the external world, some initiate instinctive actions, while others occasion thought. When impressions from outside travel to the lower part of the brain instinctive acts result; but when they reach the higher brain centres a consciousness of choice arises, and we deliberately perform a given act. A message is communicated to one part of the brain—the optic thalamus for instance—which conveys it along nerves to the upper region of the cerebral hemisphere which returns it to another section of the brain's gray substance—the streaked body (*Corpus striatum*) which transfers the message to the muscles that are to be moved. In this case an appreciable interval has been occupied in the process, and we feel that we have deliberated before the performance of the act and then performed it. Thus arises the subjective illusion of the freedom of the will simply because we are unaware of the complex causes which have constrained us to choose in a certain manner.

In our illustration we considered the sense of hunger in the sight of food. The stomach sends information to the brain of its anxiety for food, and we are made conscious of the feeling of hunger. The brain forwards its received intelligence to the muscles which, in the absence of food, cannot function, although they are rendered more completely conscious of a state of hunger. Hence animals are driven to search for food in order to satisfy the demands of the stomach. The feeling of hunger being a very disagreeable one, its sensations are so irritating that creatures craving sustenance are not only anxious to secure it but are prepared, if necessary, to fight for it. Here other phenomena come into play, and the unpleasant emotions generated by hunger transform themselves into action.

All our rational activities are based directly or indirectly upon our experiences of the external world. Memory, as Bain said, is the sole basis of intellect, and, doubtless, Loeb is correct in his contention that "the most important problem in the physiology of the central nervous system is the analysis of the mechanisms which give rise to the so called psychic phenomena." Mental states always arise in close association with memories of past experiences. These mental phenomena form conditions of consciousness known by the term associative memory. In the central nervous system past sensations so impress themselves that they become capable of reproduction even when the circumstances under which they originally arose are quite different. A further important feature is that two processes which occur simultaneously, or in rapid succession, produce impressions which fuse into one another so that when subsequently one of the processes is repeated the other is also reproduced.

In remembering one event we are apt to recall other happenings associated with it. To annex Professor Loeb's illustration: "The odour of the rose will at the same time reproduce its visual image in our memory, or, even more than that, it will reproduce the recollection of scenes or persons who were present when the same odour made its first strong impression on us."

Now, memories of past sensations lead to the formation of mental propositions. That is to say, experiences of the external environment are registered in the brain through the medium of our sense organs and the general sense of touch. Word images probably play a larger part than picture images in the mental activities of the more cultured races of mankind. Out of simple signs complicated concepts have gradually been evolved. When a thing is given a name that name denotes not only the individual thing, but all the various sensations associated with that thing, as

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well as all other things or bodies resembling it. All sensations bound up with any particular object appear as part of it. There is, therefore, the object itself, combined with all the sensations linked with it, and these become grouped into a general concept. As Professor Clifford put it:—

> The whole process of the evolution of reason is an attempt to pack into an exceedingly small box, the human brain, a picture of the enormous universe that is outside of it. Every step which was made in packing things closer together was a step in making a correspondence between our actions and the knowledge we get from outside.

The possession of language has proved of priceless value in enabling man to employ signs to signify a great host of separate facts. The word tree embraces all the trees on our planet. But just endeavour to imagine the state of a man who requires a separate sign for all the world's trees, or even for each of the arboreal growths in the New Forest. Language signs would, then, be too numerous for serviceable use. But the general term "tree" not only represents all the tree's attributes, numerous as these are, but it calls up a host of other images associated with the tree. The earth in which it is rooted, the air around it, the sky above it; the tree's stationary state in calm weather, its swaying in the wind, its leafless winter sleep, the sweet beauty of its spring, summer, and autumn foliage, its blossoms, fruits, and seeds, or even its ever green appearance, all these, with countless other concepts, arise in the human mind when we think about a tree.

Our intellectual lives, then, are composed of a simultaneous and successive procession of compound sensations to which all our senses have contributed. And man's acquisition of these complex impressions is immensely facilitated by the fact that he is a social creature. All the knowledge he possesses he may be permitted to impart through his language faculty to all who understand his speech. Through the use of tongue or pen, by example or precept, he may convey to others his personal or social impressions, and thus influence their actions for weal or woe. Born into an environment he did not create, and which the mightiest of the race can little more than shape in some small measure only, man not merely partakes of his social heritage, but inherits multitudinous impressions treasured from the past. But whatever the form of his mental capital, whether he possess an aptitude for the successful pursuit of astronomy, for a distinguished career in medicine or surgery, for eminence as a poet, artist, philosopher, or social and religious reformer, all his qualities and desires are built up out of ancestral and individual converse with surrounding nature.

We have every reason for our belief that mental phenomena must be regarded as a subtle mode of energy contrived and conditioned by the properties of protoplasm, the physical basis both of life and mind. Psychical manifestations, particularly in their higher aspects, are exceedingly complicated, and many remain very obscure. But no single fact has emerged during the advancing course of modern scientific investigation which countenances the curious theory that mind as its exists in the animal kingdom is the outcome of supernormal mind. Rather we should contend that, built up as it is, and has been through the ages, through the action and reaction of organism and environment, it must be regarded as the resultant of living matter's capacity to store up impressions received from the external world, combined with its ability to transmit in terms of heredity an increased aptitude to cultivate and harvest the ripened products of experience.

T. F. PALMER.

The Lord's Advertisement.

THE following are extracts from an advertisement that appeared in the *Times* on June 30:—

THE LORD'S MESSAGE TO THE NATION.

VICTORY AWAITS PRAYER.

Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me.—*Psalm 107.*

Remember God's deliverances in the days of old.

How He brought up the Israelites from Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.—*Psalm 78.*

The great deliverance He wrought by Gideon.—*Judges 7.*

How He delivered King Hezekiah when he prayed from the boastful Sennacherib.—*2 Chronicles 32.*

How when the Spanish Armada threatened our country "He sent out His arrows, and scattered them: and He shot out His lightnings, and discomfited them."

LET THE LEADERS OF THE NATION CALL THE PEOPLE TO PRAYER.

The Author of this advertisement may be addressed—"Messenger," c/o Mr. ———, Advertisement Agent, — Paternoster Row, E.C.

It is rather a shock to find the Lord so up-to-date as to make use of the services of an advertising agent, and I have been wondering what that excellent man of business would say if his letter-box became loaded with communications for "the Lord"?

I have thought it worth while to look up the passages of Scripture to which attention is called, with a view to discovering whether they have any, and if so what, bearing upon the War.

(*a*) The deliverance of the Israelites was managed by dividing the waters so that they might march through them, and flooding the division again when the Egyptians (who had learned nothing for all their experiences of the tricky ways of the God of Israel) essayed to follow them. This is a simple device, and the suggestion apparently is that the Lord is quite prepared to take sides in some such treacherous manner on behalf of the Allies if they do but put their trust in him. The Lord knocks the Germans into a cocked hat when it comes to a disregard of the laws of war.

(*b*) The deliverance wrought by Gideon is an even less complicated method of getting victory. For Gideon, who was out against the Midianites, was told that he had too many soldiers. Conscription would never have been necessary if only England had thought of the Lord. Gideon had thirty and ten thousand men, and of these twenty and two thousand were discharged. The Lord wanted to show what he could do without their aid; but, with that curious inconsistency which characterized him, he didn't manage without some of them. Of the ten thousand that remained, he selected three hundred men. And this was the method of selection:—

> The Lord said unto Gideon: The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there.....So he brought down the people unto the water. And the Lord said unto Gideon: Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

There turned out to be three hundred lappers; and the Lord said:—

> By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand.

The Midianites, it may be mentioned, "lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude." It must not be supposed that the three hundred lappers licked the Midianites. No. "The Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host." Only the Lord knows what he wanted with the three hundred

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lappers at all; for, you see, he did the job himself in the end. Here the suggestion seems to be that the Lord is not unwilling to repeat his performance in our interest. But as we have asserted that we are not fighting the German people, we might have some scruples in availing ourselves of his aid in order that the German Army might turn their swords every man upon his neighbour.

(c) The third example of the War Lord's work is the case of the deliverance of King Hezekiah. In this case three things happened, and as they are intimately connected, I will set them out thus:—

1. Hezekiah "prayed and cried to heaven."
2. The Lord sent an angel who "cut off all the mighty men of valour and the leaders and captains" on the other side.
3. The enemy "returned with shame of face to his own land," and "thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

Presumably the angel may be forthcoming against Hindenberg, even as he was against Sennacherib, king of Assyria, if only the Allies will call upon the Lord for assistance!

This is the twentieth century. And these are the stories to which Englishmen are directed by an advertisement in the *Times* as to how to overcome the enemy. It is possible that if only some readers of that erstwhile solemn journal will look up the passages referred to, they will see the joke—and the pity of it all.

Alan Handsacre.

The Relations of the Sexes.

There is no question that has been more stupidly treated by the Churches than the question of sex. Public opinion about it has for too long been formed by neurotic novelists, howling Christian dervishes, and prurient prudes in broadcloth and bombazine. The War has again brought matters of sex very prominently before us; and it is to be hoped that such matters in the immediate future will be wrested from the hands of inefficient theorisers and sentimentalists, and be dealt with by rational, dispassionate, and competent minds—by the psychologist, the economist, the sociologist, and the medical specialist.

It is true the statement that man is a polygamous animal is too sweeping, just as the statement that woman is a polyandrous animal would be too sweeping. But that there are *some* men who are polygamous animals and *some* women who are polyandrous animals are facts well known to observant sociologists. There are people in whom appetite is stronger than in others of their kind. Undue pandering to appetite is bad; but unnatural suppression is worse. The excitation produced by artificial stimuli in normal persons will usually pass quickly, and, except in the case of very gross and bestial natures, its effects—unless it is repeated frequently—will not remain long. But the denial of appetite, and the suppression of nature and natural functions, is a constant torment, producing physical disorders, and very often mental perversion. Human appetites *must* have gratification—if not natural, then unnatural. If natural gratification be impossible, then the tormented being will find outlets for his passions that utterly revolt all sane and thinking people. And the longer the suppression, the further back will be the swing of the pendulum. The long fast will be succeeded by the riot of an intemperate and devitalizing orgy.

We rejoice to think that there are many happy unions under a monogamous system. But we cannot ignore the evidence of the Divorce Courts, and we are entitled to examine closely the causes which usually produce what is conveniently described as "incompatibility of temper." But no matter how repugnant the spouses may have become to one another after two or three years of wedded life (or even less), Mother Church condemns them to the misery of a future unrelieved by hope till death takes one or the other. Can we be surprised that the spouse with the stronger appetite should surreptitiously seek pastures new?

We must get the Bible out of the marriage ceremony, just as we must get it out of the national schools. The latter operation will doubtless have to precede the former. We must have all marriages placed on the basis of social and civil contract. And it must be a contract that is not necessarily interminable except by death. A proviso or provisoes for making the contract terminable in the lifetime of the parties can have no applicability to or effect upon unions in which there is a continuance of mutual affections. But *desire*, if strong enough, snaps its fingers at all legal restrictions. And this is true of every being, male and female, of every vocation and of every nationality under the sun. When one gets down to the primordial, all distinctions are swept away.

Probably one of the most irritatingly ludicrous spectacles of the present day is to see a Bachelor Bishop with £10,000 a year exhorting working couples with 25s. a week to increase and multiply! The natural rejoinder of the latter is: Who will maintain our offspring if we do? So far as can be seen, the wealthy classes in this country do not increase and multiply so fast as the poor. Could there be a stronger argument for the conscription of wealth? If an increased birth-rate is a national necessity (as so many of the clergy say it is), the nation is justified in finding money to subsidize the biggest families. We know that when marriages take place between members of the aristocratic and wealthy classes, marriage settlements are the rule, under which capital sums are settled on trustees by the parents of the respective spouses, the income being applied for the support of the contracting parties and the children of the marriage. It seems equally appropriate that in the case of the poor the Government should appoint trustees in all marriages, and make suitable provision for the maintenance of the families. There would then be some real incentive to increase and multiply. But how, in the name of all that is sacred and secular, parsons expect people to maintain a family of a dozen on 25s. a week at current prices, is beyond the average mind. It is typical of the processes of the clerical mind. Of course, we have frequently heard clergymen modestly professing that they had no "head for figures." Some of them undoubtedly have an *eye* for them, however.

There is scarcely a saint or patriarch of the Old Testament who was not a polygamist. And some of them were even that and more; that is to say, if they took a fancy to a particular handmaiden of one of their wives, they did not hesitate to make her a concubine; and even if the concubine had a brat, and they tired of her, they turned her and her brat out of doors without so much as a basket of food, and without incurring any public reprobation. The Jewish sultans of "Holy Writ" had but to point the finger, and any man's daughter they chose became a member of the harem. When King David, the sweet singer of Israel, "annexed" the wife of Uriah the Hittite, we suspect (and his subsequent conduct justifies the suspicion) that he was more afraid of the sword of Uriah than he was of God; and it is interesting to observe that when he was reproached by the messenger of God, it was not for his greedy lasciviousness, but for stealing the poor man's one ewe lamb. No word here in condemnation of degrading and licentious commerce in women.

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No wonder that the Churches are of no help in dealing with questions of sex and its cognate problems. Pauline authority (which for long was reverentially observed and respected) having fallen into disrepute with the advance of women, there is no authority to which the Churches can appeal. We must therefore, as we suggested at the outset, pin our faith to the rational, the dispassionate, and the competent—the psychologist, the economist, the sociologist, and the medical specialist. In these are our hope.

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

SOCIALIST SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am instructed by the E. C. of Glasgow and District Union of Socialist Sunday-schools to comment, through your columns, upon your editorial remarks regarding the *Glasgow Herald* article on our Movement, and the discussion in the Scottish Assembly, and later in the Correspondence Column of the said newspaper. I am requested to say that we frankly accept the statement in the *Herald*, that while the Movement "is not anti-Christian, the Christian faith is frankly ignored."

We believe you have been misinformed to the effect that any of our schools or adult members have taken part in the correspondence. To our knowledge, the only parties who have taken part are the Churchman who commented on the *Herald* article at the Assembly, and a brother co-religionist who wrote chiding him for forming an opinion upon a newspaper article, and not upon personal experience.

The latter is a clergyman, and quite unknown to our Movement.

ANDREW FLEMING.

THE DAVENPORT BROTHERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In reply to the friendly criticism of "A. G. B.," I cannot admit that he has proved his point, viz., that Mr. Maskelyne was the exposer of the Davenport Brothers. He quotes Mr. Maskelyne as saying that, at a performance at Cheltenham, "I got a key to the *knotty* problem, which I have ever since used with such effect to reproduce all the tricks of the Brothers....."

But this public reproduction only took place several months later, when the Brothers were already discredited. The first public exposure took place at Liverpool, and Mr. Maskelyne had nothing to do with it.

"A. G. B." does not give the date of the Cheltenham performance—whether it was before or after the Liverpool exposure. But, in any case, Mr. Maskelyne did not expose the trick *then*, although he may have detected it; and it is the people who make the *first* exposure who should have the credit, for after that it is everyone's property.

However, I wish to thank "A. G. B." for his letter. If I have made any errors, I would like to have them pointed out before the articles go into pamphlet form.

W. MANN.

Sunday-school teacher: "What was Adam's punishment for eating the forbidden fruit, Johnnie?"

Johnnie (confidently): "He had to marry Eve."

The park orator raised a menacing arm and screeched out his warnings—"The road to hell," he cried, "is paved with motor cars, with chorus girls, and with drink."

He paused to let the words sink in; but the effect was rather spoilt by a voice from the fringe of the crowd observing audibly: "Oh, death, where is thy sting?"—*Pearson's Magazine.*

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.

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MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Wednesday, July 25, at 7.30.

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Views and Opinions.

The Bishop Explains.

We print in another part of this issue a letter from Bishop Frodsham in reply to a couple of paragraphs written in the *Freethinker* of July 15 on his reported speech before a Trades Union Conference. The Bishop now explains that his real purpose was to prevent the coloured man being exploited, and the white man depressed and oppressed as a consequence of that exploitation. That statement of his position we cheerfully accept, and, indeed, wish him every success in his endeavours. But the ground of our comment was concerned with a different issue from this, and it remains after Bishop Frodsham's explanation has been offered and accepted. The point to which we took exception was the off-hand classification of Chinese and Japanese as representing lower social organisms, and of all white people as belonging to a higher social category. We ventured to describe that classification as an impertinent one, and we believe it to be a dangerous one also, since it provides a moral and religious sanction for much that would not otherwise escape condemnation. The exploitation of the coloured man by the white in England or Australia we agree is bad, but we are not greatly gainers if, in protesting against that, we pave the way for the exploitation of the coloured people as a whole by the white races.

* * *

The Power of Difference.

Many years ago we remember how shocked we were on first seeing, in a certain city, the number of people who were minus shoes and stockings. The weather happened to be "dirty," and so by consequence were the human extremities. But a native of the city who was showing me round suggested that these people washed their feet more frequently than did a similar class in London. They got so dirty that they *had* to wash before going to bed. In London, where boots and stockings of a kind were worn, they might remain unwashed for weeks at a time. I saw the force of the remark. It was not *more* dirt I was observing, but a different kind of uncleanness. It was more objectionable because of its strangeness. And it has crossed my mind since, that I was illustrating in myself a fairly common feature of the British outlook. To the average Briton abroad native food is so much "muck," native manners distasteful, native morals—so far as they are different from ours—lower than our morals. Our standard of excellence is fixed and unalterable, and it is British. We see degrees of moral value where we ought only to detect differences. Because the world takes its time from Greenwich, we assume that it should take its morals from Clapham? The average Briton is assured that British institutions are not only the best in the world for him but for others likewise. And this is not a pose, it is the expression of a sincere conviction. That is why we are convinced we are all over the world for the world's benefit. That is what lies at the back of the doctrine that it is our duty to carry our civilization and our religion to the ends of the earth.

* * *

Contact or Conquest?

The point of what has been said is in nowise affected by substituting the white races for the British people. It is an extension of the same mental attitude, not a justification. Because Chinese, or Japanese, or Hindoo customs and institutions are different from ours we assume that, therefore, they are lower than ours, and from that follows the inference that we are advancing "civilization" by forcing our institutions upon them. And, in doing this, we ignore all the factors, sociological and psychological, that go to make up the life of a people. We fail to realize that the question of the inferiority or superiority of Japanese and Chinese cultures to the culture of Western peoples does not properly arise. Many Japanese and Chinese institutions would not suit us, it is certain that many of our institutions would not suit them. In some things we might fairly count ourselves as beyond them, in other things they might as fairly count themselves beyond us. The contact of different cultures is healthy and helpful. The claim of superiority based upon difference only is essentially unhealthy. It gives a moral justification for the exploitation of these "lower" races, where, as in the case of Japan, they are not strong enough to resist by force. It forces a peaceful people like the Chinese along lines of militaristic development for the purpose of self protection—which can hardly be regarded as a proof that we are a higher social organism. And it is significant that this vicious theory of superiority receives at every turn the sanction, explicit or implicit, of Christianity.

* * *

Religion and Politics.

We here touch one of the roots of a vexed and complicated question. The nearest approach to modern Imperialism was that of the old Roman Empire. But Rome proceeded more by a policy of assimilation; between modern Imperialistic nations and their yellow, black, or brown dependents or subjects there is no assimilation, only the relation of superior and inferior,

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or, thinly disguised, that of conquered and conqueror. One great cause of this distinction is Christianity. The religion of Rome was polytheistic and tolerant. The religion of the modern world is monotheistic and intolerant. With Rome, religion scarcely entered into its politics, and not at all into its dealings with subject peoples. "It was Christianity," says Lord Cromer in his *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, "and its offshoot, Islam, that created nations and introduced the religious element into politics," and while the first part of the sentence may be open to question the last is beyond doubt. It is significant in this connection that the Jews were the only people the Romans failed to assimilate, and that here the cause was the intolerant nature of their religion. The Romans would not, of course, have hesitated in saying that some communities were of a lower order than others, but they would never have drawn a line of demarcation based upon colour and have claimed the control of the world for the white races. Christianity, by becoming the adopted and official religion of the Western world, paved the way for this. Its native intolerance as a religion paved the way for intolerance in politics and sociology. It provided the religious sanction which intolerance and exploitation required for its perpetuation and ethical justification. And it is hardly surprising to find a Christian bishop calmly dividing the world into lower and higher social organisms, and placing in the first-named category peoples who were civilized when his ancestors were running round dressed in nothing but a costume of paint.

* * *

Brotherhood and Bunkum.

No religion has dwelt with greater strength, in theory, on human brotherhood; none has more thoroughly ignored it in practice. The development of the colour bar is a proof of this. All men are brothers, says the Christian. That is the theory. In practice it is the white man who is the divinely ordained master, the coloured man—yellow, black, or brown—the divinely ordained servant. And, as we have suggested, this intolerance in the sociological field is an extension of the intolerance native in Christianity itself. Says Lord Cromer, in the work already cited: "The dominant Roman and the intellectual Greek thought themselves, without doubt, very superior to the savage Gaul or Briton, and to the more civilized Egyptian or Asiatic; but in estimating his sense of superiority, neither appears, so far as I can judge, to have taken much account of whether the skins of the subject or less intellectually advanced races were white, black, or brown." This conviction can be seen developing in European policy as a direct offshoot of Christianity. The Christians were the superior peoples, the non-Christians the inferior ones. And as the Europeans became Christianized, and the overwhelming bulk of the coloured peoples remained outside the pale of Christianity, the road to a division based on colour became easy. There were, says no less a person than Lord Acton, writing of the fifteenth century,—

> eminent divines who thought that the people of hot countries might be enslaved. Henry the Navigator applied to Rome, and Nicholas V. issued Bulls authorizing him and his Portuguese to make war on Moors and Pagans and seize their possessions and reduce them to perpetual slavery, and prohibiting all Christian nations, under eternal penalties, from trespassing on the privilege. He applauded the trade in negroes, and hoped it would end in their conversion.

"End in their conversion"! That has been the great sanction for Christian plundering in all parts of the globe.

Christianity the Enemy.

The intrusion of religion, and particularly the Christian religion, into politics always carries the same evils. It distorts activities, it narrows the outlook, and it covers with a halo of sanctity secular evils that would otherwise stand a better chance of exposure and remedy. The revival of slavery, it has already been noted, was "sanctified" by the desire to bring the "heathen" into the Christian fold. The activities of a class bent on the exploitation of "lower social organisms" are disguised by appeals to national sentiment and religious zeal. Persecution, again, which so long as it is unallied with religion tends to correct itself by the obvious injury it inflicts on a community, is made respectable by its alliance with religion, and raised from the level of a vice to the rank of a duty. In these, as in other directions, religion aggravates, justifies, and perpetuates by disguising the real nature of the process. A lie that is seen to be a lie stands self-condemned; it is the "lie within the soul," the lie which regards itself as the truth, which is the great danger. And of all the throned lies known to the world, none is so great as Christianity. For centuries it has been like a canker in the brain and a cramp in the heart of the Western world. Its domination of the world of political life has been one of the greatest curses of modern Europe. And its removal is an essential condition of a lasting and healthful reformation.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Child's Thoughts on Religion.

SOME children take to religion much more readily and much more intensely than others. This is to be accounted for partly by inherited temperament, and partly by the kind and quantity of education brought into play, while others are prevented by the great law of heredity from taking to it at all. It is often asserted by the divines that man is a being of whom religion is a fundamental characteristic, which proves that it cannot die. Just as hunger is a permanent factor in the upward movement of mankind, so is religion, we are assured, an ineradicable instinct of the human mind. Such is the theological theory; but in practice it entirely breaks down, and is abandoned even by its most resolute champions. That theory is tacitly denied by all the advocates of religious instruction in day-schools, their chief argument being that if children are not religiously trained they will certainly become Atheists. Nevertheless, there are children who almost seem to have an instinct for religion, which is the outcome of many generations of favourable heredity and environment. Even in their case, however, a godly upbringing is an indispensable condition of their adoption of a religious life. We have known exceptionally pious parents who sorrowfully complained of the distinctly anti-religious disposition manifested by their offspring. But in the present article our concern is with a boy between eight and fourteen years of age who was brought up in a characteristically Christian home, and who, being passionately in love with his parents, developed an early passion for their religion. He was spoken of in the community as the youthful divine. The brand of theology which he affected was ultra Calvanism, which he delighted to defend against all and sundry attacks. He could discuss God and his decrees with much greater familiarity than he could his own father and his affairs. The Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and Justification by Faith, were the grandest of all realities to him. In his imagination there lay vivid pictures of the triune God seated on three great thrones, with God the Father in the centre, and Gods the Son and Holy Ghost on either side. Christ had offered himself up as a propitiation to

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Eternal Justice for the elect only, of whose number he verily believed himself to be one. Occasionally, the doctrine of predestination disturbed and puzzled and confounded him not a little, but he invariably found ample satisfaction in the thought that the Sovereign of the Universe had a right to do as he pleased with his own wayward children, the exercise of mercy being purely optional with him.

This was, in truth, a vital point. The Arminians argued that it would have been essentially unjust of God to foreordain eternal life for some and eternal damnation for others; but this boyish theologian averred that predestination was justified on two grounds: God, being supreme, had a perfect right to do what he liked with his own property, and besides, all mankind, in consequence of the Fall, fully deserved eternal perdition. Calvin emphasized "not only the freedom, the unmerited character, of grace, but equally the *sovereignty* of God in the bestowal of it," the idea being "that apart from this sovereignty in the selection of the subjects of it, grace would not be grace." Such was the boy's creed, which in his early teens he treated as absolute truth revealed by God to his chosen vessels.

All the children of men were doomed to eternal death, but God, in his infinite mercy, had elected a certain number to eternal life. For these Christ had died on the Cross, thereby paying in full all their debts to Divine justice; and by accepting Christ as their surety these would certainly be saved. The bulk of the people among whom the boy's lot was cast were orthodox Calvinists; and their constant anxiety was whether they were among the elect or not. This was the point that troubled them by day and by night, and it drove one or two of them to stark madness. The boy himself had hours and days of doubts now and then; but he held on to his creed with all his might and main, his city of refuge being the conviction that whatever God did was right, simply because he did it. It was a laughably absurd position for a sane person, young or old, to occupy; and there are many present-day Christians who vainly imagine that now it only marks a stage in theological evolution; but, as a matter of fact, Calvinism is by no means dead, and is still professed by thousands in the very form in which it flourished among Presbyterians and others sixty and seventy years ago. Moreover, we are firmly of opinion that Calvinism is not one whit less believable than Arminianism, or any other form of supernaturalism. The belief in the invincible sovereignty of God logically lands its possessor in Calvinism. The fact that the whole system is nothing but a horrid dream by no means destroys its logicality.

We have stated that the boy under consideration was sometimes painfully haunted by doubts and fears; but neither the doubts nor the fears cast the slightest suspicion upon the truth of the Christian religion, but rather upon the reality of the popular belief in it. To him, through all his teens, and for a few years beyond them, Christianity appealed as tremendously, even terrifically, true. What he doubted very often was whether professing Christians really believed its cardinal doctrines. According to the doctrine of election, God had determined, from all eternity, "whom he would admit to salvation and whom he would condemn to destruction." Consequently, in every age and country the non-elect have been a host whom none could number, with the inevitable result that hell was inhabited by countless millions of doomed souls in torment. The mere thought of such a fact was unspeakably appalling, and to the boy it was a source of indescribable grief and pain. He knew that from every family in the neighbourhood some were already in "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." Of this heartbreaking fact ministers of the Gospel were specially aware; and yet he found that in practice they totally ignored it. They seemed to enjoy life as if there were no such place or state as hell. He could never forget once listening to an unusually terrifying discourse by a popular preacher on the text, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell"? and immediately after delivering it the man of God partook of a luxurious meal, and spent the whole evening telling tales, cracking jokes, and laughing merrily with a company of friends. Such behaviour convinced the lad, who was only twelve at the time, that the sermon just delivered had not been taken seriously by the minister and his jovial friends, though it had filled his own heart with blood-curdling terror. From that time onwards there gradually grew within him the feeling that, by the majority of its professors, religion was treated with criminal lightheartedness. Neither heaven nor hell had any significance to them except for an hour or two at church or chapel once or twice a week. During that brief period they verily believed and felt that the Gospel message was solemnly true, and should be heeded for the soul's eternal safety; but in their ordinary intercourse with the world they did not appear to retain any recollection whatever of it.

When he was about half way through his teens, our young friend made a startling discovery. He had been brought up to believe that sermons, like marriages, were made in heaven. Preachers were the successors of the Old Testament prophets, and in the pulpit acted simply as God's spokesmen. In the prayer immediately before the sermon he had frequently noticed that they made this petition: "O Lord, speak thyself to these people to-day; use us as thine ambassadors." But in his fourteenth year he had the privilege of a long conversation with a young minister who had just taken over the pastorate of the church of which he was a member, in the course of which the admission was made that a discourse cost a certain number of days' hard work. Then it occurred to him that to pray for a sermon already written out and committed to memory was an act of disgraceful hypocrisy, a gross insult to the Almighty, and a species of fraud played upon the congregation. Subsequently, he had no difficulty in accounting for the fact that some sermons were so much better or so much worse than others. Everything depended upon the preacher's general gifts and special qualifications for his office, but chiefly upon industry or indolence.

Up to his twenty-sixth year our hero continued to be a valiant champion of orthodox Calvinism; but disturbing questions kept forcing themselves upon his mind, such as, Does God really hear and answer prayer? Did he send his only begotten Son to die for the elect in a lost and ruined world? Does the Holy Ghost dwell in the hearts of the redeemed, and lead them along the devious paths of life? At first the mere presence of such queries in his mind frightened him; but by degrees he developed the courage to face them, and the mere act of facing them made him strong. Finally, all questions were reduced to one, namely, Does God exist, and what evidence is there that he does, or does not? For many years this question remained without a definite answer. The head said, "There is no God"; but the heart stubbornly went on giving the head the lie direct. In the end, head and heart came to terms and kissed each other, with the result that storm was followed by a great and songful calm, and that even doubts and fear vanished, and serene confidence began to reign supreme.

Many children have had to pass through similar experiences. Very pleasant are the dreams which the fancy weaves while Monarch Reason sleeps, and some go through life cherishing them as blissful realities; but happy are they at whose doors hard problems knock so

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loudly that the Monarch awakes and drives the dreams away as so many illusions and hallucinations. Whenever that awakening occurs, whether early or late in life, Theism makes room for Atheism, dream-life ends and real-life begins. Usually, persons who pass through such experiences make excellent Freethinkers; and for them there is absolutely no possibility of a return to the old life and its exploded beliefs.

J. T. LLOYD.

Throwing Out the Sandbags.

> The entire early training and life of England's higher ecclesiastics seem to render the majority of them incapable of taking in facts patent to everyone else.
>
> —*The Duke of Argyll.*
>
> The divine stands wrapt up in his cloud of mysteries, and the amused laity must pay tithes and venerations to be kept in obscurity, grounding their hope of future knowledge on a competent stock of present ignorance.—*George Farquhar.*

THE attacks of the Freethinkers on the church balloon are beginning to tell heavily, and the ecclesiastics are getting nervous and are throwing out the sandbags in a frantic endeavour to escape. Recently the House of Convocation of Canterbury decided to abandon Psalm lviii., and to eliminate the worst features of some of the other sacred lyrics attributed to King David. The clerical manœuvre will not save Christianity, but it is hoped that, for a time, the Freethought sharpshooters will be evaded.

The ruse is a smart one, but it will not serve for long. The Psalms are an integral part of the 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 on the Christian position.

The Psalms were written many centuries ago, and have been regarded by many as the inspired utterances of God ever since. For the future Psalm lviii. will not be printed in the Psalter "as appointed to be read." The Convocation of Canterbury has so decreed, by forty-three votes against thirteen, and the ecclesiastics have dismissed King David as though he were so much war-time beer or racing. Now what is wrong with the 58th Psalm? It is a comparatively short one, but Convocation says it is "un-Christian-like in character," which is a polite way of expressing that it is entirely out of harmony with modern humanistic ideas. This is how Psalm lviii. runs:—

> 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 will be seen that the ecclesiastics have not selected the worst utterances in the Bible. Other Psalms are open to the same grave objections, as, for instance, the inspired cursings 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.

Observe the ecclesiastics have themselves started to pull the Bible to pieces, and have begun with the Psalms. King David thus comes in for tardy, but none the less deserved, rebuke. For David is now seen to be a barbarian, and the champions of the Bible are obliged to throw the Oriental savage overboard in order to absolve their Deity from the vices and crimes of his favourite. Let there be no mistake about this. 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's. 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 Sibyl, who never existed. O the divine comedy.

It would be a thankless task to enumerate the false, foolish, and wicked features of the Holy Scriptures, but the sacred volume is full of barbarism from cover to cover. From the first error in Genesis to the final absurdity in Revelation, much of the writing is of pathological interest, although presented in exotic forms of verse. In many places in the Old Testament the writing is filled with the turmoil of battle, the champing of horses, the flashing and bickering of spears. Only on rare occasions does the still, sad voice of humanity make itself heard. As for the New Testament, the highly evolved moral perceptions of to-day are shocked beyond expression at the awful doctrine that countless millions of mankind will suffer eternal punishment. It will be seen that it is not theology which purifies humanity, but humanity which purifies theology. Man civilizes himself first, and then civilizes his gods, and the clergy walks at the tail of the procession and takes the credit and the cash.

This decision to excise a portion of "God's Word" from the Psalter 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 Psalm lviii. and other unseemly passages) into the hands of children at schools; it is used as a fetish for swearing upon in Courts of Law and Houses of Legislation. Men and women have been robbed of their children in its name, and excluded from public positions. And people are still liable, at law, to penalties for bringing it into "disbelief and contempt."

Yet it is as plain as a pikestaff that Freethought is slowly forcing the Church into a dangerous position, and the clergy are in a desperate plight. They are throwing the sandbags away. At present, it is true, the process is confined to the Old Testament; but, before long, the process will have to be extended to the New Testament. When it is completed, the Christian Religion will be a thing of shreds and patches. Then the 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 David is the beginning of the end.

MIMNERMUS.

A claim has been paid by an insurance company to a church damaged in a recent air-raid. This is an ironic comment on the clerical trust in Providence.

The exploitation of the docile public in the name of the War goes on apace. At a popular seaside resort a flag-day has been announced for the Young Women's Christian Association.

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Socialists, Freethought, and Religion.

THE question whether a Christian can accept the conclusions of modern Socialism and still retain his religious beliefs has been the cause of countless arguments and disputes since ever I became acquainted with the opinions of Socialists and Freethinkers.

Looking back over the controversies which have been waged round this supposed problem, I find that the disputants may roughly be divided into two camps—on one side Freethinkers (many of whom are Socialists), who believe that the idea of the intervention of God in the affairs of this life is the greatest delusion of the human mind, and who contend that men must first think rationally about the problems of existence before an economic revolution of any value can be accomplished. On the other side we have the militant Socialists (many of whom are avowed Freethinkers), who believe that wage-slavery is the root of all our social troubles, and that most progress will be made by concentrating the attack on the economic basis of capitalism, the religious difficulty being left to right itself when men are "economically free."

As one who is both an Atheist and a Socialist, and has devoted some twenty years to the diffusion of Socialistic ideas, and comparatively little time to the furtherance of Freethought, I cannot be called a "bourgeois Freethinker" who has been "led astray by the remarks of pseudo-Socialists"; yet if there are "Rationalist superstitions as well as Christian" (Where are they?) there is profound intellectual dishonesty manifested by most Socialists towards religion, which attitude is frequently associated with the repudiation of militant Freethought.

Now, it is conceivable that in the time of Jesus, some Jewish tribes, and later the early Christians, lived a sort of Socialistic-Communistic existence, which was not incompatible with their religious professions. But the simple-minded Essenes had not the advantages of German kultur; so, not having read Karl Marx, the structure of their society was not on a "sound economic basis." To be serious, no parallel whatever can be drawn between the social relations of small groups in primitive times and the complex social system of our day, which is practically universal. "Scientific" Socialism is comparatively modern, and dates from the time of Proudhon, Lassale, and Marx. The works of the last-named form the basis of the leading Socialist parties in the world. In fact, the theories of Marx are generally accepted by Socialists with as little question as Catholics would give to a papal pronouncement; indeed, it would seem that there are Socialist as well as Rationalist superstitions!

My purpose is not to discuss Marxian theories, but to show clearly, however much we may juggle with terms, that to believe in "the materialistic conception of history" is to disbelieve in every conception of God and other-worldliness. Now, there are men of scientific training who profess to accept Darwinism, and yet remain Christians, but we cannot have it both ways; evolution and special creation are diametrically opposed. Similarly, men may believe in a sentimental brotherly love sort of emotional Communism and the world beyond the skies as well; as a matter of fact, God and mawkishness go very well together. But Marx teaches that whatever form of supernatural belief is in existence is simply a reflex of the prevailing material conditions of the epoch; or, in other words, that all religion is made by man, and varies with the changes in the economic basis of society. I have never met a Marxian Socialist who was a professing Christian, yet I have known scores who "hedged" beautifully when reasoning with religious persons, and who have manifested a respect for religion and the "ethical teaching of Jesus" which they certainly did not feel, under the impression that such form of Jesuistry was "good propaganda."

Even the leading exponents of Socialism have been guilty of this form of kow-towing to the Church, and if I had a narrow Protestant outlook I would be suspicious of them as "emissaries of Rome." Take the following, for example, from a pamphlet by the late James Connolly:—

> .....So far from it being true that Socialism and Atheism are synonymous terms, it is a curious and instructive fact that almost all the prominent propagandists of Freethought in our generation have been, and are, most determined enemies of Socialism. The late Charles Bradlaugh, in his time the most aggressive Freethinker in England, was to the last resolute and uncompromising in his hatred of Socialism; G. W. Foote, the present editor of the *Freethinker*, the national organ of English Secularism, is a bitter enemy of Socialism; and the late Colonel Bob Ingersoll, the chief apostle of Freethought doctrine in the United States, was well known as an apologist of capitalism.

Now for an example of evading the point at issue, of mental twisting, and the wilful creation of a prejudice against Freethinkers, this excerpt from the work of a Marxian Socialist would be hard to beat.

"Are Socialism and Atheism synonymous?" As well ask, as Connolly knew, if capitalism and theology are the same thing! The question at issue is, "Does a belief in Socialism imply a disbelief in religion?" and he answers by telling us that most prominent Freethinkers are anti-Socialists! There's a Catholic answer for you. But, for very obvious reasons, Connolly does not tell us, what would be of some consequence, *how many leading Socialists are Christians;* and we are led to infer from the fact that prominent Freethinkers have been opposed to Socialism—that, indeed, Atheism and anti-Socialism were synonymous.

It must here be noted, that while insisting on the importance of presenting their doctrines in their own way, many Socialists are perpetually having a tilt at Freethinkers and their methods, while very few are to be found who dare openly to attack Christianity as a buttress of Capitalism.

This "respect" attitude is nauseating in the extreme, especially as the Socialists invariably get nothing but abuse and misrepresentation from Christians for their pains. To my mind it is unthinkable that an educated Socialist can seriously listen to twaddling lectures and "ethicking" from clergymen, and treat these utterances with more deference than he can accord to the reasoned works of Freethinkers.

In another portion of the same pamphlet which I have been quoting (*The New Evangel*), in dealing with a Father Finlay's views of Socialism as expounded before the students of Maynooth Union, Connolly says:—

> We heartily allow that no man in Ireland outside the ranks of the adherents of Scientific Socialism, can bring to bear upon questions of political economy, and the effect which theories of political economy have had upon the industrial life of the people, such a wealth of knowledge as the reverend gentlemen whose paper we are now discussing.

This would lead us to expect some high-brow goods from the first economist in Ireland (barring the "adherents of Scientific Socialism"), instead of which we get the old drivel about a man's right to do what he likes with his own, Socialism having broken down wherever it has been tried, etc.; which creates in my mind the suspicion that the *savants* of Liberty Hall may, after all, be small potatoes intellectually.

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The historic Encyclical of Leo XIII. on the Labour problem was a very feeble contribution to the literature of political economy; but we are assured that Father Finlay, on another occasion, laid before the Dublin Statistical Society "an exposition of the evolutionary nature of the Socialist doctrine, its historical derivation and material basis, *which is not at all compatible with the crudely false conception* of Socialism....." served up to the young priests at Maynooth. Now, Leo, being the head of the Church, was worth answering, however silly his economics—besides, he may have meant well; Father Finlay certainly didn't mean well, and why an insignificant clergyman convicted of wilful misrepresentation should be treated seriously and politely is beyond me.

I might understand the deferential attitude towards the platitudinous vapourings of professional dealers in superstition if a good percentage of Socialists were believing Christians, but there are scarcely any Christians in "the movement"; or, if the "social teachings" of Jesus had any value to day, but very little study is necessary to discover that the Saviour as a social reformer is decidedly unconvincing. There was an excellent pamphlet on *Jesus as Social Reformer* by Charles Watts—which I hope is still obtainable—dealing with "Christian" Socialism in a masterly manner.

What, then, are the reasons why Socialists, who are nearly all sceptics, are generally so afraid of hurting the feelings of Christians?

Making all due allowances, the chief reason is moral cowardice. To be an Atheist is still in many quarters "synonymous with" being a villain, *and will be so, so long as we are afraid to admit our opinions.* Then there is the mistaken idea of tactics. It may be easier to get a man to change his politics than to discard his religion; but rest assured, comrades, that "converts" from the Christian fold will require a sound "atheistic basis" before the cause can profit. Yes, I agree that before Socialists capture the Church, the Church will capture Socialism.

So long, then, as bodies of organized Socialists protest that the teaching in their Sunday-schools is not anti-Christian (we shall be delighted to prove that if Christian, it must be anti-social), so long as it is a commonplace that "A true Christian must be a Socialist," and that "The Socialist Party of Ireland prohibits the discussion of theological or anti-theological questions at its meetings, public or private. This is in conformity with the practice of the chief Socialist parties of the world....." Well, well so long as Socialists adopt that attitude towards *any* question, they well deserve to be regarded with suspicion by all lovers of freedom of thought.

J. EFFEL.

Correspondence.

REPRISALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I hope I am not more bloodthirsty than the average Freethinker, it distresses me to see any kind of pain or suffering, and I cannot take the life of an animal, however necessary, without feeling pity. Yet I am strongly of opinion that we ought to retaliate on German towns, preferably such as Essen, as a reprisal for their attacks on London and other British towns. This would make it clear to the High Command that such warfare was not a paying proposition, and, moreover, was one in which two could take a part. If this plan was adopted, a large number of German guns and aeroplanes would be kept at home for their own protection, and to this extent be prevented from doing harm to us. Directly they ceased to attack open towns we should let them understand we were willing to do the same. War is a brutal business, but self-preservation is the first law of nature.

S. SODDY.

NEW MANCHESTER BRANCH: AN APPEAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—We must have a considerable increase if the new Branch is to be the success we anticipated when we commenced organizing work last March. We have an active committee, but if serious work is to be inaugurated in the coming winter, it is imperative that we should have more members.

Freethinkers do not need telling of the difficulties confronting new organizations like ours, and I am sure it is only through pen laziness that I have not received more applications. The purport of this letter, therefore, is to appeal to the large audiences at Mr. Cohen's last lecture in Manchester to send me their names without delay, when membership forms will at once be sent them for completion. I am making this appeal through your columns in the confident anticipation that the Freethinkers of Manchester and district will rally round us with the object of founding our new Branch upon a firm and enduring basis.

H. BLACK, *Hon. Sec.*

446 Great Cheetham Street East, Higher Broughton.

COLOURED LABOUR.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The severe strictures you made upon me in your last issue appear to have been based upon a very contracted account of my speech to the Council meeting of the General Federation of Trade Unions in Gloucester upon the advisability of watching carefully the movement towards coloured labour in this country. The most misleading contraction was the omission of the word "social" before the word "organisms." Possibly the illustration from biology may not commend itself to you, but I think you will allow that it is not insulting to the other races who are likely to be exploited for industrial purposes to say that their social conditions are such as to make it possible for them to sell their labour at a figure which would be disastrous to the social aspirations of the industrial classes in this country. This was the essence of my warning, which was based upon intimate knowledge of the effect of coloured labour upon white labour in several parts of the world.

I am sufficiently a believer in free thinking and free speaking that I never resent others differing acutely from me, and saying so without ambiguity or conventionality, but I dislike being condemned for something which I have not said, and never dreamed of saying. Moreover, I consider my warning to be of much importance to the welfare, not only of this country, but of the world; and not only of white men, but of all men. I hope, therefore, that you will publish the accompanying report of that part of my speech which deals with the subject under consideration. The report was made by the representative of the *Gloucester Chronicle*, and I did not see it until it appeared in print.

GEORGE H. FRODSHAM, Bishop.

[The following is the pertinent passage in the report enclosed by Bishop Frodsham:—"It was a biological fact that a lower organism could crush out a higher one; and it was no insult to the Chinese and the Japanese, our Allies, and the less developed races of the world to say that they were lower in organization than the English, the Americans, and other white races were." We regret we have not space for the whole of the report, but we cannot see that it materially effects what we said in "Acid Drops" for July 15. The Chinese and Japanese are *different* from us, but to take difference as an equivalent of inferiority is an example of that religious egotism against which we protested. The egotism may be unconscious, but it is there.—ED.]

The Duke of Argyll has been engaged in the pleasant pastime of bishop baiting. "It has been widely remarked," says the Duke, that since the War began the bishops have hardly made one sensible remark about it." The indignant bishops will wish that they had not discarded the "cursing" Psalm.

"Lord Northcliffe is a creator of modern England," says the Rev. W. E. Bentley. Most parsons profess to believe that the creator of modern England also made old Judee.

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Acid Drops.

Rev. Dr. Fitchett is a Wesleyan clergyman who has made something of a reputation, and we assume, of an income by the writing of frothy religio-patriotic books. From a short article in the *Age* (Melbourne) we see that he has been addressing himself to the question of why God does not put an end to the War. He agrees that God could stop the War by killing the Kaiser, but he asks plaintively, "If God started along those lines where would he stop?" But the question was, Why does he not commence? Perhaps Dr. Fitchett is afraid that if God started clearing out undesirables he might not draw the line at Germany.

Dr. Fitchett says: "The fact was that every alternative to Christianity had broken down, and if anything was calculated to reinforce our faith it was the picture of the downfall of Germany, whose wicked theory of a non-moral State had produced the War. In the face of these facts some of the most eminent freethinkers had declared their conviction that on the logic of this war Christianity alone could save the world." Dr. Fitchett knows that he is on safe ground when telling this sort of story about "eminent freethinkers." For our part, we say deliberately that they do not exist outside Dr. Fitchett's imagination. Lying for the greater glory of God is an old Christian practice, and Dr. Fitchett is in this respect at least quite orthodox.

The *Evening News* has grave doubts "of the great change and regeneration of England that the War was to bring," and adds that "we poison babies with impure milk, London bread makes people ill, and beer is often an affair of noisome chemicals." All of which proves that the only truthful thing about Christianity is that its professors are "miserable sinners."

Newspaper piety is a fearful and a wonderful thing. The *Daily Sketch* says that the British "are shy of invoking the Deity" and "refrain from vociferous insistence" that God is with them. This is a half-truth, for tens of thousands of British parsons and amateur preachers are perpetually invoking the Deity, and their congregations pay them handsomely for so doing.

At the Wesleyan Methodist Conference on July 19, the new President said the Christianity suitable to the soldiers when they return must be "a religion of valour with iron in its blood." This sounds like a paraphrase of Bismarck's "blood and iron," and, in any case, it seems a trifle removed from the Christianity of meekness and love that we used to hear of. But we have no doubt that the old-fashioned variety will be on hand when it is needed—particularly when something is needed to keep the people "in order," should they ask for more than it is thought advisable to give them.

The National Council of the Free Churches of Wales appeals to all the Churches to set apart August 4 and 5 as days of supplication. The Welsh weekly journal, *Y Cymro*, hopes that the message of this appeal will be universally heeded, and that "we shall see an entire nation bent in submission before God." Do the Welsh people imagine that the War is really God's operation, or that the Father in Heaven is responsible for the horrible slaughter of so many millions of his own children? As they sing, "The God of love my Shepherd is," do they verily believe that he is deliberately butchering such countless multitudes of "the sheep of his pasture"? If not, why should they humble themselves under his mighty hand? If they do, why supplicate, why burden his throne with fictions? Either God is the author of the War, or he is not; if he is, is he not much rather a contemptible monster than God of love? If he is not, what is the use of having anything whatever to do with him? In either case, to supplicate him is an act of sheer mockery, while the humbling of ourselves before him would be unforgivable hypocrisy.

It has gone the round of the papers that the following letters have passed between Sir William Robertson Nicoll and Lord Rhondda: Sir William wrote, "Talk less, and work more." Lord Rhondda retorted, "Write less, and work more." We were not aware that the Food Controller was much given to talking, but we do know that the Editor of the *British Weekly* is guilty of writing an infinite amount of trash about God and the War, and of exploiting the War to further the interests of its own fads.

The *Sunday Times* has some very pertinent and outspoken remarks on the Sunday Observance prosecutions at Sheffield. "Time and money, both public and private, were wasted at Sheffield, and, quite possibly, may be again wasted elsewhere, until this archaic law is relegated to the limbo of other worn-out relics of the past."

The Americans are pushful and resourceful people, and the *Detroit Times* has been protesting vigorously against "the old vogue of free notices or advertisements of Sunday services in the newspapers." It adds, "the only perplexity now is to get the church officers to be willing to pay the bills." "Aye, there's the rub." As in effete old Europe, the dear clergy do not give money away.

A house-agent's advertisement in a provincial paper, depicting the glories of a growing neighbourhood, adds the note, "Come out Sundays." If he is not more careful, that house-agent will get a free mention in ministerial prayers, and consigned to a place not on any map.

According to an American newspaper, the Bethlehem Steel Company manufactures armour plant. The title seems singularly appropriate.

A church notice recently announced that a parson would speak on the subject, "Godliness is Profitable." Even the bench of bishops would not dispute this.

That the position, so far as Christianity is concerned, is beginning to be realized, even at Woolwich, is evidenced by the cessation of the "Special Services for Munition Workers," lasting ten minutes, held until recently every Sunday at 1.10 p.m., by the Rector of Holy Trinity, Woolwich, which church is situate just outside the Royal Arsenal gates. These services have, during the past twelve months, been attended by as many as eight and as few as two persons at a time on the three occasions the writer visited them out of curiosity. "Spiritual things" do not appeal to the workers on munitions. They are engaged on material things, both in their own affairs and their occupations, and experience has taught them that success is best achieved by leaving spiritual things to those possessing such an enormous stock of faith and credulity as will enable them to continue praying even when the sugar and bread, presumably prayed for, do not arrive.

The centenary of Henry Thoreau recalls that he was a "conscientious objector," and that he went to prison for his resistence to the authorities. Whilst Thoreau was in prison he was visited by Emerson. "Why are you in there, Henry?" asked Emerson. "Ralph, why are you not in?" was the significant answer.

Christians are beginning to find out that all Germans are not Atheists. Lord Hugh Cecil, speaking at the House of Laymen, said Churchmen "were bound as Christians to love the Germans, and they had no more right to hate German Christians than they had to hate any other Christians." Christian love is as much open to suspicion as Christian truth.

At the Wesleyan Conference one of the speakers, Rev. F. H. Benson, said that many men at the Front had written home to say it was a hell. The *Daily Telegraph* report says that this was greeted with "cries of dissent." If the War on the Western Front doesn't approach near enough to hell to satisfy these parsons, they must be very hard to please. And yet we suppose the clergy really did ask for exemption in order to keep out of heaven.

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At the present time, says Miss Violet Scott James in the *Evening Standard*, "we are allowed for the good of the nation to plough on a Sunday; we are compelled for the safety of the nation to fight on a Sunday; the only thing, then, that is denied us is that we should enjoy ourselves on a Sunday." But enjoyments are of the conditions of mental health, and mental health was never Christianity's concern. And, probably, if we indulged in more rational enjoyment we should both work better and fight less.

The Salvation Army is now quite respectable. In a newspaper paragraph it is stated that Queen Wilhelmina, of Holland, takes a keen interest in the Army's work. The Army might get another testimonial from the King of the Cannibal Islands, stating that he likes the taste of the "Blood and Fire" missionaries.

The Bishop of Chelmsford contends that reprisals would "disgrace he whom we serve." The grammar is as weak as the sentiment.

A writer in the *Star* says "behind the bayonet of to-day stands the Christian of to-morrow." What happens if the man behind the gun gets shot?

A speaker at the House of Laymen said churches to-day often reminded him of the theatre bills, "Early doors threepence extra." This recalls the jest that the difference between a theatre and a place of worship is that you pay to go in one, and pay to get out of the other.

The clergy are beginning to be uneasy concerning the public's attitude towards the exemption of the black army from military service. In order to confuse the issue, some of the religious papers are publishing lists of parsons' relatives who have been killed or wounded at the Front. In one case the record is entitled, "The Toll of the Parsonage."

"Vanoc," of the *Referee*, is wroth with the Bishops for deleting David's (or whoever wrote the fifty-eighth Psalm) Hymn of Hate from the Church Service. He calls the Bishops "piratical blue-pencillers of the Word of God." But the Church Service is not claimed to be the "Word of God," and the Bishops do not propose to eliminate the fifty-eighth Psalm from the Bible. "Vanoc" may rest his soul in peace. With or without the fifty-eighth Psalm, Christians are not likely to be found wanting in the power of hatred. Of that the pious readers of the *Referee* may rest assured.

"Vanoc" says: "I would prefer concurrent endowment of all sects to the impoverishment and destruction of the Church of England." Generous man! Rather than the one should suffer, he would take from the public and give to all the Churches. Such whole-hearted philanthropy is staggering. For our part, we prefer the other course—that of the State leaving all the sects severely alone. They will then have to rely upon themselves alone—themselves and their God.

The number of candidates for ordination last year was 381, as against 670 in 1913. Still, we have heard no complaint from the general public about the shortage of the clergy. Perhaps this was overshadowed by the shortage of potatoes and other things.

Part of a wrecked Zeppelin has been given by the War Office to the Rector of South Hackney, who has placed it in his church. We do not know what prompted the War Office to make the gift, but we presume that the rector wishes to remind worshippers that God protects them during air-raids.

In an inspired puff in the press it is stated that Mr. J. J. Virgo, national field secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, has just returned from a trip to "nearly all the British fronts," and he had collected over £120,000 on his tour. Complimentary allusions to Mr. Virgo's tact followed, together with the naive admission that he was "not engaged on a money-raising campaign." Presumably, a *virgo intacta*.

At Worthing the Provost Marshall of a military camp asked the magistrates to allow cinema shows to be open on Sunday in the interests of soldiers. The request was refused—in the interests of Sabbatarianism. We do not know on what ground magistrates take to themselves the power to grant or deny these Sunday performances. We believe it to be quite outside their power to do either. Sunday entertainments, to which admission is paid by money, are illegal by statute, and it is ridiculous to assume that a magistrate can give permission to a breach of the law. If cinema proprietors care to run the risk of opening, they can do so without the magistrate's permission; and if the magistrate does permit it, they may still be prosecuted if anyone cares to do so.

The Bishop of London says that he places his hope for the future of the world in the progress of the democratic spirit and in substituting democracies for dynasties. The sentiment is all right, but we remember that not long since the Bishop was joining with Mr. Stephen Graham in ignorant eulogies of the late Czar, the then Russian Government, and the Russian Church. All it means is that what the Bishop is pleased to call his mind is at the service of anything that strikes him at the moment.

Rev. F. Lewis Donaldson, who was one of the speakers at the same meeting, said, "We ministers and Churches were held in indifference by the working people before the War; now we are held in contempt." That put the situation in a nutshell. And we doubt if the clergy will reinstate themselves by pointing out to the public how richly the vast majority deserve the treatment they receive.

The *Christian World* raises the question as to what steps a clergyman should take if an air-raid occurs during divine service. One would have thought that the proper course would be to offer up a prayer, and leave the rest with the Lord. Instead of that, it suggests that the centre of a church is not good cover, and advises taking cover by the main walls. That advice would suit a billiard saloon as well as a church. But if people are no better off in church than elsewhere, why not stay at home?

Who will say now that Christianity does not make for brotherhood and good fellowship? The Bishop of London and the Bishop of Chelmsford actually paid a friendly visit to the Methodist Conference to express feelings of friendship and cordial recognition of the Christian character of the Methodist Church. It is very touching, even though to some it may seem a very wee mouse for the mountain of Christian preaching to have produced. The Bishop of London hopes to see the Methodists reconciled to the Church of England. Some of the Methodist leaders hope to see a greater measure of co-operation between the two bodies. Perhaps, after all, it is only the presence of a common danger that is drawing them closer together.

TOLERATION.

Why should anyone wish that others should think exactly as he does? It is like compelling them to wear the same kind of clothes, or to use the same kind of spectacles, and losing our temper if they object to do so. In reference therefore to those convictions which we may think most of all important for the human race, and the significance of which we may perhaps ourselves be long in seeing, it is best "to possess one's soul in patience." Why should we wish to hear an echo of our own beliefs around us, if it be unbecoming to "compass sea and land to make proselytes" to them? It may also be noted that a society of men and women in which belief is uniform is always a dull society. It stagnates from the want of the elements of difference. In all progressive communities, however much the individual may succeed in coming to definite conclusions on great subjects, what is growing up around him in society, as the result of the contemporary forces that sway it, is necessarily different from that which he has himself reached, or from which he originally started. This consideration alone should be sufficient to make men tolerant and sympathetic as to the evolution of belief.—*Prof. W. Knight.*

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To Correspondents.

WILL Advertiser please call or send for replies to the advertisement of "Young Married Couple"?

S. SODDY.—Pleased to receive the congratulations of so old a supporter of the N. S. S. as yourself. Shall be very glad to see you once more a member of the old Society.

G. AYRES.—We should also like to see an index prepared for each volume of the *Freethinker*, but that would mean a deal of work if done properly, and at present we have as much as we can handle.

H. L.—Ask your local newsagent to display a copy. That is an excellent form of advertising.

L. CHEETHAM.—Your letters, with others received, proves that we were not in error in thinking that Freethinkers generally would endorse our action. We felt that a plain statement was all required.

WE have to thank some anonymous friend for a present of twenty-five cigars. We know they came from a friend because we have smoked a couple of them.

C. F. BENNETT.—We do not know of any current book dealing particularly with the subject. You will have to dig out the information from such writers as Lecky, Gibbon, Draper, and others. Mr. Cohen wrote at some length in these columns on the question of Christianity and the Slave Trade about 1900, but the articles have never been reprinted. We are acquainted with Locker-Lampson's book on Ireland, and show our appreciation of it. Will attend to your suggestion when possible. Thanks for second letter, just to hand.

G. O. WARREN.—Thanks. We hope to publish soon.

ALAN HANDSACRE.—MSS. to hand. Thanks.

C. W. PEACHEY.—We are obliged for suggestion and offer, but the present is not a good time for innovations of the kind suggested. And the want of capital is a very serious obstacle.

J. EFFEL.—We wrote several articles on the subject some years ago, under the title of "Freethought and Social Reform," but may return to it and elaborate on some future occasion. Thanks for MSS.

C. HARPUR.—We are obliged for quotations, which may prove useful.

E. B.—We greatly value your warm appreciation of our "Special" in last week's issue. We quite believe it will have the effect you indicate.

J. J. O.—Next week.

T. WILMOT.—There is only one form of disestablishment that will be really effective, that is to disestablish religion in the minds of the people.

R. STUBBS.—We quite appreciate your position. Still, a line has to be drawn somewhere, and there are considerations which made it imperative to draw the line as suggested.

E. M.—We are proud of the support on this question of so old a Freethinker as yourself. The decision was not reached without much consideration, and we are gratified to find it so generally endorsed.

A. JOHNSON.—Leaflets and paper sent. Hope you will be able to induce the Nuneaton Freethinkers to organize and set to work. The time is ripe for the effort.

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.

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

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.

The fight with the L.C.C. has advanced a further stage, as will be seen from the following report from the *Star* of July 23:—

> In the King's Bench Divisional Court, before the Lord Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Ridley, and Mr. Justice Atkin, Mr. Macmorran, K.C., was granted, on behalf of Mrs. Linda Corrie, a rule nisi for a mandamus to be directed to the L.C.C., calling upon them to hear and determine an application for consent to sell a pamphlet in their parks on behalf of the National League of the Blind.
>
> Counsel said that Mrs. Corrie (who was London Secretary for the West London Branch of the League) had applied for permission to sell the pamphlet, but she had been informed that no more permits for the sale of literature would be granted.
>
> He was not raising any question as to the validity of the by-law, but he contended that the Council, having discretion to grant the consent, must exercise it in particular cases, and not fetter it by general rules.
>
> The Lord Chief Justice said as it was a matter of public interest the rule would be granted, in order that the question might be argued.

We do not think the L.C.C. will find the destruction of a public privilege quite so easy a thing as it anticipated.

There is a fairly brisk demand for the new propagandist leaflet by Mr. Cohen on *The Massacre of the Innocents*, and we have no doubt it is doing all the good anticipated. While the air-raids are in all minds the leaflet is certain to arouse interest, and it is by such means that the attention of many may be directed to the whole question of Freethought. Six Shillings, with sixpence to cover cost of carriage, will bring a thousand copies to anyone's door, and a deal of effective propaganda may thus be done in a quiet way at small cost.

The letter from the Secretary of the Manchester Branch, which appears in another column, reminds us it is time that all N. S. S. Branches were considering their programme for the coming autumn and winter. It is no use leaving arrangements until the autumn is here, and within the next month matters should be well advanced. We may repeat what we have said many times before, namely, that the present is the best time for our work that has presented itself for many years. The War has given the Churches a severe shaking, and it will be our own fault if we fail to take advantage of our opportunities. We offer the above advice specifically to Branches of the N. S. S., but there are many towns in which no Branch exists, where a few Freethinkers could set the work going. And in all cases whatever assistance is possible will be given from headquarters.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Percy Wild's lectures at Sheffield on July 15 and 22 met with a gratifying success. The audiences were attentive, and there was a good demand for N. S. S. membership forms, which will, we hope, result in a strengthening of the local Branch. The secretary is Mr. T. Dennis, 38 Gifford Road, Heeley, and he will be pleased to answer all inquiries that may be addressed to him. The lecturer to-day is Mr. J. Grimes, and next week Mr. Wallis, of Birmingham, will speak. All these meetings are being held under the auspices of the N. S. S.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd is spending a brief holiday in North Wales, not very far from the place of his birth, and all our readers will be glad to learn that he is reaping much benefit from the rest and change. He will return quite prepared to plunge into the autumn lecturing with all his old vigour, and we hope that Freethinkers all over the country will see that his energies are fully employed. To leave any of his dates unfilled is as wasteful as a manufacturer keeping a valuable plant idle.

Is Religion Growing or Decaying? is the question asked by Mr. F. J. Gould in a just published pamphlet (Watts & Co., price 2d.). By making "the idea of society the soul of religion," and the service of humanity its end, Mr. Gould is able to answer the question in the affirmative. And in that sense, much as we dislike the use of the word, we agree with him. The sense of human kinship expands and strengthens in spite of the War, and as Mr. Gould points out, the efforts being made to forsee our social requirements and provide for a better social condition when the War is over are hopeful signs. Mr. Gould's pamphlet is, in the main, an appeal to all who can to help in the great work of organizing society on a basis of fellowship and service. And in that we wish him every success.

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Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

II.

(*Continued from p. 454.*)

As to the natural tendency to believe in telepathy, it may be regarded as part of the anthropocentric and egocentric view of the universe and its happenings, and as an exemplification of the mystical view of mundane events, both of which are dominant in primitive philosophy, remain conspicuous wherever superstition still has a hold, flourish in pseudo-science and in esoteric cults, and will probably never become wholly obsolete.—*Professor J. Jastrow, "Fact and Fable in Psychology,"* p. 104.

The whole of what is called "modern occultism," including (so-called telepathy), crystal gazing, astrology, and such mysteries, can only be treated reasonably in the way I have mentioned. We ask for a demonstration of the occurrence of the mysterious communications or prophecies, or "raps" or "levitations" or whatever it may be. Lovers of science have never been unwilling to investigate such marvels fairly and squarely brought before them. In the very few cases which have been submitted in this way to scientific examination, the marvel has been shown to be either childish fraud or a mere conjurer's trick, or else the facts adduced in evidence have proved to be entirely insufficient to support the conclusion that there is anything unusual at work, or beyond the experience of scientific investigators.—*Sir Ray Lankester, "Diversions of a Naturalist,"* p. 363.

MR. MASKELYNE wrote to the *Daily Chronicle* suggesting that, if there was anything in the nature of thought-transference in the Zancigs' performance, "the whole matter can be settled in five minutes." But this opportunity of establishing their claims was ignored. They would allow Mr. Stead to test their claims anywhere and at any time, but by Mr. Maskelyne or Mr. Stuart Cumberland, never. When the *Chronicle* published part of their code, and members of the audience began to give correct answers before Madame Zancig could reply, Mr. Zancig publicly admitted from the stage of the Alhambra that "If it were our misfortune to lose our sight and hearing, we should not be able to work,"[1] the bubble of their reputation was pricked. Even Mr. Stead began to hedge, and explained that the Zancigs used Telepathy *and a code;* the code only being used to relieve the strain on their minds! Which reminds us of Voltaire's observation that incantations and arsenic had been known to destroy flocks of sheep; the arsenic and the code being the only efficacious agents in the respective cases. One of their most mystifying tricks was the ability of Mrs. Zancig to read any passage from any book of which Mr. Zancig had been provided with a similar copy, and upon which passage he had concentrated his mind. At Cambridge they utterly failed at repeating this trick because they were provided with two books which, unlike ordinary books, had unnumbered pages; therefore Mr. Zancig could not convey by code of word or sign the number of the page and passage which he wished Mrs. Zancig to read. The Zancigs were the last public exponents of Telepathy, or thought-transference, pretending to possess supernatural powers.

In 1882 the Society for Psychical Research was founded, with the object of investigating the phenomena of Spiritualism, Hypnotism, and the occult in general. Mr. Frederick Myers, in founding the Society, says that "its primary aim" was "the establishment of thought-transference."[2] The Society has been in existence for thirty-five years, and has conducted an enormous amount of investigation into occult phenomena, the record of which is contained in the twenty-eight yearly volumes published by the Society, each containing, on an average, between 500 and 600 pages—two of them contain 700 pages—to say nothing of a monthly journal published for private circulation among members only. It is to this enormous record that Sir Oliver Lodge is always referring the public for proofs of Telepathy! as if the public possesses access to these volumes; or, if they had, as if they were able to read, analyse, and give a verdict upon such a mass of printed matter! for it is to the average man that Sir Oliver appeals in his lectures, books, and magazine articles. He admits, and deplores, the scepticism and indifference of the scientific world to the reality of Telepathy.

Moreover, if the evidence obtained is so convincing, why is it that the mass of the scientific intellect is not convinced of the possibility of thought-transference? Sir Oliver Lodge attributes this attitude of the scientific world to pure prejudice, and regards himself as a modern Galileo, fighting for the truth against a scientific world blinded by prejudice and dogma.

As we have remarked, there are very few who possess the leisure, capacity, or inclination to sift this mass of material, to say nothing of other records. The late Mr. Frank Podmore, a member of the Society—whose honesty and capacity is recognized by both sides in the dispute—who published many works dealing with the subject, and may be said to have spent his life in seeking for evidence of a continued existence after death, in the end could not decide for or against, and gave a Scotch verdict of "not proven." He committed suicide, but whether through disappointment or for other reasons, is not publicly known. Dr. Ivor Tuckett, another member of the Society, categorically denies the existence of Telepathy, or communication with the dead; as do Sir Ray Lankester and Sir Bryan Donkin, who have not only studied the records, but have taken part in the actual investigations. Either of these gentlemen are the equal of Sir Oliver Lodge in honesty, sincerity, intellectual power, and knowledge of the subject. What is the use, then, of Sir Oliver pretending that the opposition to Telepathy and Survival proceeds from irrational and blind prejudice? As Dr. Ivor Tuckett observes in reply to Professor Barrett: "The fact remains that several of the more critical researchers who have thoroughly examined the evidence have ultimately come to the conclusion that the case for telepathy is completely unproven. Thus Professor Simon Newcombe, first president of the American S.P.R.—Society for Psychical Research—(founded in 1884) expressed his mature opinion twenty-five years later (1909), just before his death, that there was no convincing evidence for Telepathy, and that 'Nothing has been brought out by the researches of the Psychical Society and its able collaborators except what we should expect to find in the ordinary course of nature.'"[3]

Let us examine, in company with Dr. Ivor Tuckett, some of the evidence for Telepathy. The first report on thought-reading submitted to the Society appeared in the first volume of the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research. They deal almost entirely with the thought-reading power of the children of the Rev. A. M. Creery. An account by Messrs. Barrett, Gurney, and Myers also appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* for June, 1882, and was severely criticized in the July number by Sir Bryan Donkin, "who pointed out that no real precautions against collusion were taken, that the experiments were of the sloppiest description, and that it was a most suspicious circumstance that the Rev. A. M. Creery's servant girl possessed the same power of thought-reading as the Creery children. Instances of the probable use of a code were also given."[2] Professor

[1] *Daily Chronicle*, January 3, 1907.
[2] Cited by Dr. J. L. Tuckett, *Bedrock*, July, 1912.
[3] Dr. I. L. Tuckett, *Bedrock*, July, 1912. Cites Newcombe from *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1909.
[2] *Bedrock*, July, 1912; p. 195.

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Sidgwick, the first President of the S.P.R., was so impressed by the record of these experiments that he considered them conclusive; but after two or three more reports on the Creery children had been published, the children were actually detected using a code, and further experiments abandoned. The next case of thought-reading investigated also occurred in 1882. This was the case of Mr. Blackburh, of Brighton, who claimed to have obtained some remarkable results in Telepathy with a Mr. G. A. Smith, a young mesmerist living at Brighton. The experiments were first carried out at Brighton, and then at a house in Dean's Yard, London. But thirty years later Mr. Blackburn, writing to the *Daily News* (September 1 and 5, 1911), stated most explicitly that all their successes in thought-transference were worked by means of a code. He was equally candid in stating "that Messrs. Gurney and Myers were too anxious to get corroboration of their theories to hold the balance impartially. Again and again they gave the benefit of the doubt to experiments that were failures. They allowed us to impose our own conditions, accepted without demur our explanations of failure, and, in short, exhibited a complaisance which, however complimentary to us, was scarcely consonant with a strict investigation on behalf of the public." Mr. Blackburn gave as a reason for his "confession" the belated desire to promote the cause of truth, believing himself to be "the sole survivor of that group of experimentalists." But as a matter of fact, Mr. Smith was not dead, and he replied with a categorical denial in the *Daily News* for September 4, 1911. As Dr. Ivor Tuckett remarks: "It is not possible to decide which of these two statements is the less trustworthy. But Mr. Smith acted as secretary to Messrs. Gurney and Myers for some years subsequent to the Brighton experiments, and took part in several other series of experiments, so that he had a powerful motive against admitting dishonesty in these experiments."[1] On the other hand, what possible motive could induce Mr. Blackburn to declare their success was due to trickery and fraud if the performance was really genuine? He had nothing to gain by such a confession, with the additional ignominy of branding himself as a common impostor.

W. Mann.

(To be continued.)

Some Definitions.

To lay down an exact logical definition is generally admitted to be by no means easy, especially in the case of abstract terms. And this difficulty is not diminished, but rather increased, in the case of those familiar ones in every day use—such as Religion, Morality, Justice, and the like—the meanings of which are supposed to be so well understood.

Yet, even though in such cases, strict logical accuracy may be difficult or impossible of attainment, an attempt at definition may sometimes be of use in helping towards a fuller comprehension of the thing defined; just as, even in the usually exact relations of mathematics, a method of "approximation" is sometimes of the greatest value. Hence I venture to put forward the following definitions:—

(1). Superstition is a belief in supernatural agency operating in the physical world.

(2). Religion is a belief in supernatural agency operating in the moral world.

Here the elements common to the two things defined, and the elements in which they stand in contrast are clearly distinguishable. What Superstition and Religion possess in common is a belief in supernatural agency, while the contrast between them relates to the scope and nature of the function assigned to that agency. And this relationship between Superstition and Religion is quite in accord with the results of actual investigation into their origin and growth.

The earliest forms of Superstition, viz., Nature-Worship, Animism, and Magic, contained no moral elements. They were and are merely the beliefs of primitive and savage man in supernatural agencies—usually malevolent agencies—exercised in the physical world around him. Indeed, the terms Nature-"Worship," Fetish-"Worship" are not quite correct as applied to these forms of superstitious belief, for it is strongly presumable that no feeling really akin to what we understand as "worship" ever existed among primitive men in connection with the mysterious forces or powers in which they believed. Primitive man probably did—as contemporary savages now do—fear these mysterious powers with a very real dread. They probably propitiated them with gifts, cajoled them with promises, and even threatened them with forfeiture of their allegiance as present day savages do: but there is no evidence of those feelings of veneration, worship, or devotion which form the moral element in religion. These powers and forces are merely regarded as more or less potent, more or less amenable to control, more or less fearsome, malignant, or favourable; but they are not regarded as "good" or "bad," or credited with any propensity towards approving or disapproving of human actions according as such actions are "right" or "wrong." And this is only natural, for at this early stage of human culture definite notions of right and wrong are themselves non-existent.

But while these moral ideas are being evolved, as man gradually becomes a consciously moral being, his supernatural beliefs take on a moral quality, and superstition passes into religion. This change is broadly contemporaneous with the transition from Animism to Ghost-Worship, and it is easy to see why this should be so. The spirits of the dead are *human* spirits, and as such they naturally share in the moral sentiments of the human community to which they belonged in life, and their morality develops with the development of the social sentiments of the community. The spirit of a father or mother would be treated with the same degree of deference or affection that was accorded to the living parent. The deified ghost of the great chief who had, during his lifetime, done much for the welfare of the tribe—had rewarded the deserving and punished the evil-doer, would still be credited with these moral qualities together with that superior power of reward and punishment which ghosts always possess over that of living men.

Thus, while Nature Worship and Animism may be regarded as the basis of superstition, Ancestor-Worship or Ghost-Worship may be regarded as the basis of religion. Of course, it is not claimed that there is a sharp line of demarcation between the two, or that superstition and religion have developed in strictly serial order, for they are often found existing side by side in the same system of supernatural beliefs. There have been many contemporary developments, many intermixtures between the two, many overlaps of one by the other. It is only in the latest developments of belief that religion becomes differentiated from superstition as above defined, and concerns itself essentially with the moral aspect of the supernatural; though even here we see relics of ancient superstitious notions akin to primitive magic in those prayers for rain, fine weather, or good harvests which survive in the liturgies of modern

[1] *Bedrock*, July, 1912: pp. 196-7.

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churches. These do not differ essentially from the incantations of the medicine man of a primitive tribe directed against the terrors of a solar eclipse or the baleful influences of a comet.

To complete and further illustrate the line of thought here indicated the two following propositions, which are in close logical relationship with the foregoing definitions, may be laid down :—

(3). Modern Physical Science is based on a recognition of natural causation as operating in the material world.

(4). Modern Ethics is based on a recognition of natural causation as operating in the moral world.

Here, as in the case of the former definitions, the elements common to the subjects of the two propositions are at once distinguishable. Modern science and modern rational ethics both take cognizance of natural causation, and admit no supernatural explanations in the one case or supernatural sanctions in the other. That is why we call our rational ethics scientific. And the points of contrast are equally clear, for while physical science concerns itself soley with material phenomena, ethics concerns itself solely with moral phenomena. The business of science is to distinguish between the true and the false. The business of ethics is to distinguish between the right and the wrong.

Comparisons between the propositions last stated and those previously stated reveal some interesting relationships. For instance, comparing Proposition (3) with Proposition (1), we find that even superstition and science have some common ground, for they both deal with phenomena of the physical world, the difference being that superstition attributes these phenomena to myterious supernatural agencies, while science attributes them to that natural agency—equally mysterious in an ultimate analysis—which we call causation. It may seem a startling assertion that science and superstition can have anything in common, but that this notion is not a merely fanciful one is clearly shown by the investigations of sociologists. The savage's belief in magic is really very much akin to, and quite as strong as, our belief in physical science. Magical rites have to be performed with scrupulous exactness if the desired result is to be achieved. The incantations must be correctly pronounced, the mystic formulæ carefully adhered to. The potent herbs must be gathered at the exact specified phase of the moon, and they must be compounded in the exact specified proportions in a vessel of a particular kind, and so on. If the expected result does not follow, the failure throws no doubt whatever on the reality of the mysterious powers invoked, but is attributed to some error or disability on the part of the magician; as with us, a failure to obtain the expected result in a chemical experiment is put down to some vitiating error in its performance, and not to a failure of the law of causation. In short, magic is the "science" of the savage, albeit a pseudo-science based on false and futile premises.

Again, comparing (2) with (4), we come upon the fundamental distinction between religion and ethics, which is that the first depends on a supernatural and the second on a natural basis for morality—a distinction which can never be got rid of, however "refined" or "spiritual" religion may become. And this consideration naturally brings us to the "Christian morality" fallacy. Christianity can surely claim little credit for having incorporated into its own supernatural system of doctrine certain moral precepts which formed part of the common heritage of civilized humanity before Christianity existed, and for having given them the crudest and most primitive sort of supernatural authority. In the estimation of modern scientific ethics, moral precepts, when based on supernatural sanctions, forfeit their moral value. A true ethic must take account not only of moral precepts but of the grounds on which they are based, and tried by this test "Christian morality" can claim no superiority over that of any other supernatural belief. Rationalists have long been listening to the arrogant assertion that there can be no morality apart from religious belief. They might more justly retort that there can be no true morality with it.

A. E. MADDOCK.

New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

II.—THE SALVATION CHILD.

KETTLE-DRUMS rattled in heaven, and flowers fell from the sky to the earth, and divine spirits sang hymns, and earth was gay with blossoms, and the hills sparkled with gems, and the rivers ran sweet nectar, on the day when the Indian queen Kausalya, bore a son. The day of his birth was so glorious that it was as long as a month; the sun went not down for four weeks. As the child grew its mother saw wonders. One day she saw her son become great and giant-like, and his body was made up of worlds, mountains, rivers, oceans, forests, and she knew he was a God. Then he became a boy again, and ate sweetmeats, and played. The name of the boy was Rama, and all Hindu children love the Gospel (God's spell; God's story) of Rama.[1]

Another Indian queen in those olden days—those olden dreamland days—was Maia. When her time arrived to be a mother, she went into a forest with her ladies, and a curtain was drawn around her, and in this pavilion her child was born. The angels, or "Nats," flew from a thousand worlds to salute the child with flowers and perfumes. Thirty-two wonders happened; and some of the thirty-two were these: a light lit up ten thousand worlds at once; blind people saw; deaf folk heard; lame men walked; prisoners leaped from prison; men and animals felt peace and joy; heavenly music sounded; rain fell on deserts; salt water turned fresh; flowers suddenly bloomed. An old hermit told Maia that in thirty-five years' time her son would become a Teacher of the Law and the Noble Path; and the hermit rejoiced to think of it.

The child was Buddha.

* * * *

A woman walked slowly, leaning on her husband's arm, for she was tired. Evening had fallen, and stars began to gleam.

The wayfarers looked anxiously into a shelter by the roadside. It was more like a cave than an inn, and they could see a crowd of travellers, standing or sitting, eating, drinking, chatting.

There was no room for them in the inn. They turned into the rude and evil-smelling chamber where cattle and asses fed and slept; and Joseph led Mary into the stable, and she lay upon a bench which was littered with hay and other cattle food.

It was now night. The crowd in the inn had become silent in sleep; but Joseph and Mary were awake.

Out in the valley a group of men, rough-clad in skins, watched over flocks of sheep. At times, when the sheep were quietly feeding, the shepherds could draw near together, for a neighbourly gossip.

[1] It is told in F. J. Gould's *Divine Archer* (published by Dent & Sons).

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A blaze of light shone round about them, and a shining man stood before them; and the country fellows were in terror.

"Fear not," said the shining angel, "I bring good news for you and all folk. This very night, in Bethlehem yonder, is born a Saviour—a Christ—the Lord. Run and find him. He lies in a manger."

A great army of shining men suddenly appeared, and they shouted:

"Glory to God in high heaven! Peace to earth! Love to men!"

Then all vanished, and there was naught to be seen in the dim starlight but the dark vale, and the hundreds of sheep.

"Let's go to Bethlehem, mates," the shepherds said.

In mighty haste, they left the meadow. While hurrying past the stable, they saw the glow of a lamp, stopped, entered; and they saw Mary lying on the bench and her babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, nestled in a hay-box; and Joseph wondered at the coming of the shepherds. Soon they told their tale, and a little mob—some were men from the inn, some were passers-by—gathered in the stable, or at the door, and asked questions, and were much amazed, and looked towards the valley, as if hoping to see the angels. At length the shepherds went back to their flocks thanking God that to them, poor and plain men as they were, the marvellous thing had been told.

Some time later Joseph and Mary took the baby (who was named "Saviour," that is, Jesus), to the city of Jerusalem. They bought a pair of doves from a hawker near the Temple, and took the birds into the sacred House, where they presented the child before the priest, and offered the doves as a fee, or gift. It was the Jewish way of enrolling the little citizen as a member of the Chosen Nation of God.

Joseph and Mary were about to leave the Temple, when a voice exclaimed:

"Master, now your slave may die! I have seen the Salvation! I have seen!"

A very old Jew tottered in, and in his trembling arms lifted the babe and caressed it. So aged was he that the day of death seemed as if it ought to have come long ago. But no! the Master in heaven had held the old man back from the grave until he should see the Salvation Child.

"Master," he cried, "now let your slave die in peace![1] Mine eyes have seen your Salvation. A light for all folk! A light for the Jews! A light to lighten the Gentiles"!

While the old man, whose name was Simeon, was blessing Joseph and Mary, to whom he had handed back the child, a white-haired dame, very, very old—a widow—entered the holy Place, and called aloud her thanks to God, for she also knew this to be the Salvation Child. Her name was Anna.

Twelve quiet years passed after that. Joseph and Mary lived in a small country town, called Nazareth, among the limestone hills of Galilee county or province. Often they talked of the strange scenes of the past—of the shepherds, and old Simeon, and the aged widow Anna. They had other children besides the Salvation Child; and on the seventh day, or Sabbath, of each week the family would go to pray in the wayside chapel, or synagogue, and listen to the stories and hymns which the reader recited from the Hebrew parchment-roll, or Scripture.

At spring-time every year the country-folk tramped, or rode on asses, from their hamlets and villages to Jerusalem city. The town was crowded with the pilgrims. Thousands of bleating lambs were slaughtered, and their blood poured over the Temple altar as a gift to God. The carcases were carried away and cooked, and laid on tables for the Passover Feast. The meat was eaten along with bread and bitter herbs, and cups of red wine were drunk, and old Hebrew songs were sung, such as:

"Oh, give thanks unto Yahweh, for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever."

The Nazareth family paid their usual visit to the Holy City when Jesus was twelve years old, and, after the feast, they trudged with the noisy crowd along the valley road towards home, not noticing that the Salvation Child was not in the company. At evening, when a halt was called for the night, he was missed, and the troubled parents hurried back to the City. All next day they searched for him in vain—from street to street. On the third day they went to the Temple and were much astonished to hear the boy's voice in the midst of a group of elderly men.

A conversation was going on between the grey-bearded Rabbis, or Teachers, and the country boy from Galilee county. He asked questions—the Rabbis answered, lifting their hands, shrugging their shoulders. They asked him questions, and he, bright faced and quick of tongue, answered. And the folk that stood around said in wonder: "What an intelligent lad!"—"Marvellous!"—"Extraordinary!"

Mary rushed forward and clasped the boy and cried:

"My son! Why have you done this? Your father and I have been looking everywhere for you in sorrow and fear."

"You should not have worried," said the strange boy, "for didn't you know I had to do business for my father?"

Business . . . .

The business of some men is carpentering; of others, sea faring; of others, ploughing; of some, dying for a Cause . . . .

* * * *

Four small books, or Gospels, at the beginning of the New Testament are known as *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*. The legends I have told you of Jesus come from *Luke*. But in *Matthew* you can read of the "Three Wise Men from the East," whom we may see painted in many famous pictures. They offer gold and sweet spices to the Holy Child as they kneel before him, and they tell his parents how they have followed a Star all the way from their Eastern home till it paused over the house where "he that is born King of the Jews" is cradled. Such a scene is called by the painters "The Adoration of the Magi," that is, "The Worship of the Wise Men." The *Matthew* Gospel goes on to say that Herod, King of the Jews, who had heard from the Magi about the wonderful Star and the Royal Child, killed all the babes in Bethlehem so as to be sure of killing the little King. The little King, however, had been carried off by Mary and Joseph into the land of Egypt. The slaying of the babes is known as "The Massacre of the Innocents."

The Romans told a tale that the Council or Senate of the Republic heard say that, in the next year, a child should be born King of the Romans. The Senators were so anxious not to have a King that they resolved to cause the death of all boys born in that year. Nevertheless, one boy was preserved, and he was afterwards Augustus, Emperor of Rome.[1]

F. J. GOULD.

[1] So the Greek words run. "Despot"—master.

[1] The historian Suetonius narrates the legend in his life of Augustus.

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National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 29.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the Chair. Also present: Messrs. Brandes, Leat, Palmer, Roger, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes read and confirmed.

The chief business before the meeting was the further discussion of the prosecution of J. W. Gott at Birmingham.

Mr. Cohen gave a detailed account of his visit to that town, where he had interviewed Mr. Gott and the solicitor who had been engaged to appear for him at the Police Court hearing, and whose suggested line of defence Mr. Gott had accepted. The result of the hearing was that the case had been committed for trial at the Assizes opening on July 10, the charge being one of blasphemy.

A long and exhaustive discussion took place on blasphemy prosecutions, and in what circumstances a defence could be made.

The points both for and against a defence in the present instance were carefully weighed, and the following resolution was moved and carried unanimously:—

> That this Executive having carefully considered the question of the Birmingham Blasphemy Prosecution, regrets that it cannot see its way to further action without prejudice to the cause of Freethought and to the ultimate repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

It was further resolved that Mr. Cohen, as President of the N. S. S., be asked to draw up a statement for insertion in the *Freethinker* as to the Executive's attitude on this matter at a later date.

The Secretary reported the result of the adjourned summons against Mr. Jas. Neate at the instance of the London County Council. This case had been defended by the Protest Committee, who paid the fine, amounting to £3 without costs, and were now taking legal advice as to future action.

Mr. Cohen, at the Executive's request, gave permission for the reprinting of his article on "The Massacre of the Innocents" as a propagandist tract, and it was resolved that this be issued as soon as possible.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

The Psalm of Life.

(New Version.)

TELL me not in mournful numbers,
Hell is but an empty dream;
Though the congregation slumbers,
Things are better than they seem.

Hell is real, hell is earnest,
Hell is never short of coals,
Hell's delights are of the sternest,
Cursing God and frying souls.

In the world's great field of prattle
Bogey tales are always rife,
Sounding like a baby's rattle
From the nursery of life.

Tales mayhap some pious mother
Heard from granny, who again,
Heard them from her dotty brother
(Shall these tales be told in vain)?

Pious sinners all remind us
We may yet be doing time,
With the wrath of God behind us,
Nosing out our secret crime.

Let us then be up and doing,
E'en to-night may fix our fate,
And to-morrow find us stewing
Over hell's infernal grate.

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.

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Aug 2, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Miss Kough, "He Can't Do Anything."

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, G. Rule, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, Mr. Burke, "What are the Churches Doing?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 6.30, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, G. Rule, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3, P. S. Wilde, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, F. Shaller, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Yeates; 6.30, Messrs. Hyatt, Saphin, and Kells.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (Poole Square): 7, J. Grimes, "Does God Exist?"

GOD AND THE AIR-RAID.

The Massacre of the Innocents.

A Propagandist Leaflet.

By C. COHEN.

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Views and Opinions.

Three Years of War.

The War that was to end all wars, but which shows a tragic incapacity to end even itself, the War which the Bishop of London hailed as inaugurating a "Day of God," and others as initiating a great moral regeneration, reaches this week its third anniversary. The occasion is to be commemorated—one paper said "celebrated"—by special services in the Churches, and a form of prayer has been "issued by authority" for use. The order sets forth that every minister "shall speak to his people in these or like words," so that there will be at least unity in the message. The document is exactly what one would expect, and I have no doubt that German Christians will "celebrate" the anniversary in much the same way by saying the same things. The form of prayer recounts that we are fighting in defence of our country, for self-preservation, and against aggression. We are fighting for truth, for justice, for decency. We thank God for the unity that prevails, we dedicate ourselves anew to the task, we salute the dead, and we resolve "in his Name" their sacrifice shall not be in vain. In Germany, Christians will be saying the same thing to the same God, and if he does not keep their prayers labelled and separate, there will be some danger of getting his response, if he gives one, wrongly directed. The Christian Churches could do nothing to mitigate its barbarities once war had commenced, they can do nothing to bring it to a close. All they can do in all countries is to encourage the War in its continuance, and to provide a religious sanction for all that occurs. These are things worth bearing in mind while we are "celebrating" this third anniversary.

* * *

The Record of the Churches.

Nothing has been more remarkable than the conduct of the Churches during these three years of War. And what they have done has been hardly less remarkable than the things they have left undone. During the War bread has doubled in price, and human life has grown cheaper and cheaper. The Churches have been silent about the cost of bread, and vocal in reconciling the nation to the loss of life. Profiteers have made their millions, wrung out of the necessities of the nation, and the Churches have talked about the spirit of sacrifice and the nobility of our ideals, but have said never a word against this systematic exploitation. The Government has closed our mouths and opened our letters. The Churches have said nothing. We have had a muzzled press and a strangulated platform. The Churches have been eloquent on our fight for liberty abroad, but have said nothing about our loss of liberty at home. When the War opened and they might have stood as the representatives of those ideals of justice and brotherhood which are so easily obscured when men's passions are roused, the clergy became so many recruiting officers. When the Conscription Bill was before the country the clergy were its ardent advocates, while claiming exemption for their own order. In justice to them it should be said that their objection to military service did not mean a refusal to serve as chaplains, with a military rank, a military uniform, and a good salary. And now, after four years of War, they are commemorating, or "celebrating" the anniversary which, in itself, constitutes an unanswerable indictment of the value of the whole Christian Church. For the clergy to say now that they kneel before God with a clear conscience would be amusing if the comedy was not overshadowed by the tragedy. It was reported in the papers some months ago that a letter found on the dead body of a German soldier suggested the closing of all the Churches until after the War. That letter showed a greater sense of decency than has been displayed by any of the clergy in this country.

* * *

Dispelling Illusions.

Three years of war may be said to have at least dispelled some of the illusions bred by it and by previous wars. We hear little now of the claim that this is a War to end war. War settles nothing—not even itself. The Briton who sprays the advancing Germans with a stream of boiling oil is not of necessity a better man than those he destroys; the German who lets free a cloud of poison-gas is not of necessity a better man than the British soldier who suffers from its effects. The consequence of war, we said three years ago, is progressive brutalization; and every month since has enforced the truth of that statement. Jets of flame, boiling oil, gas clouds, poisonous shells, air-raids on women and children, stories on the German side that the English kill all prisoners, stories on the English side that the Germans boil down their dead and use the product for making margarine, this War between Christian nations has equalled in ferocity anything the world has ever seen, and on all sides it has received whatever sanctification the Churches could bestow. So, also, one hears less of the talk that Germany must be "crushed" and kept in perpetual subjection afterwards. A nation of seventy millions cannot be kept in subjection, even supposing that there was anything to guarantee perpetual agreement amongst the Allies themselves. If the peace of the world is to be attained, and

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preserved, it can only be done by an agreement between the *peoples* of the world. Not an agreement, be it noted, between one group of nations to keep another group of nations down, but an agreement to which *all* nations shall be consenting parties, with a further relinquishing of those conditions that make friction almost a certainty.

* * *

War and the Prize Ring.

It was Mr. Lloyd George—who, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, said the War would be won by the "silver bullet"; an opinion changed to that of the War being won by mnnitions when he was Minister of Munitions; to be further changed to that of the War being won by men when he was Minister for War—who said that the War must be fought to a "knock-out." No one quite knew what he meant, but some complained that he was degrading war to the level of the prize ring. It seems to us that he was degrading the prize ring to the level of war. For the prize ring does aim at a fight under equal conditions. The men are matched with a view to something like equality in weight and knowledge. They do not lie about each other before the fight, or during the fight, or after the fight. You do not, in the prize ring, set two men to fight one, or a man with one arm to meet a man with two. You do not get a man down and jump on him till he cries "Enough." In war you do all these things—if you can. If you can bring ten guns to one you do it. If you can bring a hundred men to one you do it. If you can surprise your enemy and kill him before he is aware of your presence, you do it. The prize-fighter is not in the ring to prove that he is the better *man*—only that he is the better fighter. Victory in war does not even prove that. It may only prove that you have more money, or more men, or more machines, or more deadly chemicals. In Westminster Abbey the Archbishop of Canterbury is to preach before the King, to bring home more fully to the people that we are at war. We wish the people of the world realized more fully that we were at war, and all that war means. If, instead of the spectacular side which is so carefully kept before the people, we could bring home to them the dirt, the disease, the men driven insane or made nervous wrecks by the conditions of modern war, then, indeed, we should have taken a long step towards ending war. For war is always a question of psychology; other things are subordinate. It lives on illusion, and the quickest way to end it is to kill the illusion from which it draws its being.

* * *

An Evil Record.

Three years of slaughter, and all that the Churches have to contribute towards its cessation is a commemoration, which will give the platitudes and ambiguities of politicians the covering of sonorous religious verbiage. Or, as an addendum, the Churches ask for a "A Day of Humiliation." Day of humiliation, forsooth! And for the nation! Truly if anyone should adopt an attitude of humiliation it is the Churches themselves. It is they who have been in a position, had they possessed the wisdom or the inclination, to have made this War an impossibility. No other single organization has been in so commanding a position during the centuries to have achieved this. And the measure of their sin is the measure of their opportunity. In not a single country now at War can Christianity be said to have acted as a restraining force in preserving peace. In not a single country are the Churches acting as a force that makes for the recovery of peace. They can do nothing, they will do nothing, but play to the passions of the moment, careless what may be their nature, so long as it promises an immediate gain.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christianity and the Miraculous.

CHRISTIANITY is pre-eminently a religion founded upon miracles; and in the Christian sense miracles signify supernatural interventions in the order of nature. The Gospel Jesus is himself a unique being brought into existence by a stupendous miracle. Some divines who reject the miracles which Jesus is reported to have performed during his earthly life still retain the belief in his own miraculous personality, ignoring the absurdity of the notion that a supernatural being could go through life without giving any exhibition of his supernatural qualities. Even "Ignotus," in his interesting article on miracles in the *Manchester City News* for July 14, says that "a man who disbelieved in the miracles ascribed to Jesus Christ, and called them by another name, would not thereby in the slightest degree impugne his Divine character"; but that liberal-minded writer, surely, forgets that to believe in the "Divine character" necessitates belief in the greatest of all miracles, namely, the Incarnation. It is wholly inconceivable to us how a man of the superior intelligence undoubtedly displayed by "Ignotus," could bring himself to write the following passage:—

> He would not be Divine simply because he did supernatural deeds, nor does he forfeit his Divinity if he did not perform them. Divinity was manifested in perfection of life, good works, holy teaching, supreme example. If not a single miracle had been recorded these proofs would remain. As it is, the miracles are only attributed to him during the last three years of his life (between the ages of thirty and thirty-three); yet he was Divine from the first—it was not the miracles at the end of his career that made him so.

Here "Ignotus" goes astray on a plain matter-of-fact. It is perfectly true that the miracles recorded in the Four Canonical Gospels are only attributed to Jesus during the last three years of his life, but he must know, as well as we do, that there were numerous Gospels written which did not find their way into the Canon, and that in these he is said to have done supernatural deeds even from earliest childhood. Now, the performance of such deeds would prove that the doer possessed supernatural gifts, if not that he is a supernatural being. Ordinary human beings cannot accomplish miraculous work; and if Jesus did accomplish such work, it shows either that he was a super-human being, or had been entrusted with super-human endowments. We completely fail to see, therefore, what "Ignotus" gains by giving up the miraculous deeds while holding on to the miraculous person. There is certainly the closest connection possible between the miracles and the Divinity of Jesus Christ; and it is difficult to realize what advantage there is in dismissing the former while retaining the latter.

Matthew Arnold was much more consistent than "Ignotus" appears to be. The former, while entirely discarding the proof from miracles, was logical and honest enough to include the Incarnation among such miracles. "The *Guardian*," he says, in the preface to the popular edition of *Literature and Dogma*, "proclaims 'the miracle of the Incarnation' to be 'the fundamental truth' for Christians," but, "insisting on 'the miracle of the Incarnation,' the *Guardian* insists on just that side of Christianity which is perishing." But "Ignotus" denies the miracles which Jesus *did*, and reaffirms his faith in the miracle which Jesus *is*. If we could believe the latter we would experience no difficulty whatever in accepting the former. "Ignotus" states that, so far as he can judge, "the whole case for or against miracles must be decided on one consummate act—the raising of Lazarus from the dead."

> If this deed were done it was incontestably a miracle, and the case is proved.

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For various reasons our critic does not believe that Lazarus was raised from the dead. Now, on the assumption that Jesus was Divine, we can discover no valid justification for rejecting this consummate miracle. To a Divine Being nothing could be easier than to abolish death and bring life and immortality to light. And yet "Ignotus" is convinced that this deed of restoration to life is a legend, because it is recorded only in the Fourth Gospel, while the others contain no allusion to it at all; because Jesus asserted that Lazarus was not dead but simply asleep; and because such a deed would not have been "quite fair to the rest of the world, who also mourned for their departed," but had no hope of their being "restored to them no matter how deep their love or how fervent their prayer." Then he exclaims:—

> No—our sick and suffering can be saved, but the dead never come back. It would be unjust that favour should be shown to one, and that the millions and millions should be deprived of hope.

We heartily congratulate the *Manchester City News* on its courage in opening its columns to a free discussion of debatable questions, and "Ignotus" upon his highly rational treatment of many theological dogmas. We are in full agreement with him in his bold rejection of miracles, though regretting his retention of the miraculous. It affords us keen pleasure to make the following quotation:—

> If every event recorded as a miracle were really a miracle in the fullest sense of the word, how much the better should we be for it? In what way would the welfare of the world be aided or the progress of men be ensured by the fact that Aaron's rod budded, or that five thousand persons were fed with two loaves and five small fishes? Are we guided in our conduct, is our moral outlook illumined, are our aspirations strengthened by any such circumstances? Is it not better for us to behold universal law everywhere—order, goodness, beneficence, beauty—than to base our faith on temporary and dubious wonders performed in opposition to those recognized laws which govern the created world and all that therein is?

"Ignotus" assures us that he is "as much obliged to those who oppose and criticize as to those who concur." We have the honour to belong to both classes at one and the same time. Completely endorsing his rejection of the doctrine of supernatural infractions of the natural order, we venture to criticize his defence of the reality of a supernatural world, or of the government of the world by a Supernatural Being. If we are living under inexorable laws which apply everywhere, what room or need is there for an Omniscient Ruler? Nay, more, what evidence can be adduced that the Almighty described in the Bible exists at all? Is there at the present moment any sign of the activity of an infinitely just and holy One who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth"? We are at one with Archbishop Trench's saying that it "would be better to abandon the Christian religion altogether than not to believe in the miracle as a supernatural event." We have acted on that principle; we have abandoned Christianity because its claim to possess and exercise supernatural power has been totally falsified by the events of history. "Ignotus" pertinently asks how much better would the world be if all recorded miracles actually happened; and we beg to suggest that had the world been under the superintendence of supernatural wisdom and goodness, it ought to have been immeasurably juster, holier, and happier than it is to-day. As a matter of fact, Christendom is in no essential sense superior to Heathendom; and there are those among us who sorrowfully admit that the best Mohammedans or Buddhists compare most favourably with the very best Christians. This is a terribly humiliating fact for those who proudly declare that the world's only hope of redemption lies in the triumph of the Christian religion. Do they forget that Christianity once held the Western world in the hollow of its hand, and that those Ages of Faith are known in history as Dark Ages? What, then, has the belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ done for the uplifting and ennoblement of mankind? What has it done for the peace of the world? What has it done for the enfranchisement of woman? What has it done for the abolition of false divisions and classification, for the establishment of just and fair relations between employers and employees, and for the development of brotherhood and fellowship among all alike?

Supernaturalism, in all its forms, has proved a tragic failure. There are those who pretend to find the cause of the War in the fact that Germany has repudiated Christianity and adopted Paganism. On October 10, 1914, the editor of the *Daily News* published an article, entitled "The Return of Odin and the Religion of Valour," in which he falsely proclaimed the triumph of Nietzsche and the re-birth of Paganism in Germany; and now Chancellor P. V. Smith "points to the example of Germany as a warning of the danger of not putting religious instruction in a prominent place in any national system of education." Both Mr. Gardiner and Chancellor Smith entirely misrepresent the attitude of Germany to Christianity. Nothing can be more thoroughly attested than the facts that Germany is a distinctively Christian country, and that "religious instruction is a compulsory subject in all German schools," the object being "to bring up young people in the knowledge of God's Word, to instruct them in Holy Scripture, and to train them so that they may set a good example,' may share in the religious work of the community to which they belong, and in general may fulfil every pious duty which falls to their lot in life." The Church of England is dishonest if it points to the example of Germany as a warning against the perils of secular education. The truth is that in Germany, as well as in Great Britain, supernatural religion is a source of weakness, and not of strength, and has been absolutely powerless either to prevent or to put an end to the War.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Clerical Caste.

> The services of the clergy are imaginary, and their payment should be of the same description.—*G. W. Foote.*
>
> Stuffing the ears of men with false reports.—*Shakespeare.*

There are about fifty thousand men, each bearing the title of "reverend," who are exempted from military service, and who form a caste apart from their fellows. Who are they? What do they do to entitle them to be revered? In what way are they superior to other men who are simple "misters"? These are questions which, in this crisis in the world's affairs, are worth the consideration of democratic minds.

It may be contended that this reverence is paid to these men because they have chosen as their business the supervision and direction of the religious habits of the English people. In reality they are medicine-men engaged in similar work to their coloured prototypes in savage nations. They tell us of gods who get angry with us; of a Devil who must be guarded against; of angels who fly from heaven to earth; of saints who can assist if supplicated. Nearly fifty thousand gentlemen are engaged in this business, to say nothing of their assistants and satellites. And this in England alone. If we include Continental countries and America, there are hundreds of thousands of them, maintained at the cost of hundreds of millions a year. And their profession is

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as honest as fortune-telling. Many a poor old woman has been sent to prison for taking money from a servant-girl, after promising her a handsome husband and six fine children; but these ministers are allowed to take large sums of money for promises of good fortune in the "beautiful land above."

Everyone knows that the average "reverend" enjoys a comfortable livelihood, and lives in a nice house. He has just as much, or as little, work as he likes to do, and if he likes to spend three-fourths of each day reading or visiting, there is no one to say him nay. He can count on invitations to dinner and other hospitality all the year round, which is no small saving in the household expenses. And the higher ecclesiastics do better still. Thirty-nine archbishops and bishops share £180,700 yearly, and the bachelor Bishop of London enjoys a salary of £300 weekly, a sum sufficient to keep fifty ordinary families in comfort.

Seeing that little merit attaches to the clerical profession, are we to assume that reverence is due to the exemplary lives led by those belonging to this favoured class of the community? Divorce Court proceedings and Police Court records show that the clerical character in no wise differs from any other class. They may retort that there are black sheep in every fold. True, but people who are not professional religionists do not pretend to being a class apart. They do not ask to be known as "reverend," or by any other title implying special respect. It is because the ministers of Church and Dissent expect us to look up to them that we are compelled to compare their behaviour with their boastings. When they decide to come down from their sacred pedestals we will make the same allowance for them that we make for tinkers and tailors.

It appears, also, that these clergy, who are too proud to fight for their country, are many of them perjurers. They subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion. These articles include the belief that Christ went down 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 condemned to eternal punishment; that Roman Catholic doctrine 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 minister subscribes. And we know that numbers of them do not believe in them, or observe them; and that their main reasons for remaining in the Church are "purple, palaces, patronage, profit, and power," as a former canon of St. Paul's Cathedral expresses it. And the right to appoint clergymen to benefices is sold for money in the open market, as if it were so much coal or a quack remedy.

We are told from countless pulpits that, when the world-war is over, the national religion is to be different from what we have known before. There is room for more drastic alteration than the discarding of barbaric Biblical passages from the Prayer Book. The votes of the bishops in the House of Lords is sufficient to rouse the lasting hostility of all right-thinking persons, and their shameful opposition to all progress shows how hopelessly the Church of Christ is out of touch with democratic aspirations. The bishops voted against admitting Nonconformists to University degrees, and against removing the civil disabilities of Roman Catholics, Jews, and Rationalists. 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 public, beating women in prison, and the use of the lash in the Army and Navy. Scores of measures for the bettering of the conditions of the working classes have been opposed by these ecclesiastics, and their record carries its own condemnation.

Few worse misfortunes can befall a people than this of possessing a powerful caste in its midst that saps the very springs of morality, that permits mental confusion, and that hinders the wheels of progress. The word "reverend" is pure humbug. To apply it to the common parson, or to the purse-proud prelate, is as absurd as to apply the terms "All Highest" or "Imperial Majesty" to the pious decadent who controls the destinies of the German people.

Mimnermus.

The Rise and Progress of Mental Power.

In ancient, mediæval, and modern times the more reflective members of the several civilized communities have manifested considerable interest in the subtle problem of human psychology. But it is only in quite recent generations that this subject has been approached from the comparative point of view. With the advances of biological investigation, and, above all, in those departments of physiology which study the functions of the brain and nervous system, distinct progress has been made. The bright light thrown on mental processes as displayed alike by man and the lower animals through the revolutionary researches of Darwin and Spencer, has transformed the concepts of modern naturalists.

The doctrine of evolution not merely embraces the bodily development but also the mental progress of all animal existence. It is now recognized that in order to comprehend the complex workings of human mentality it is essential to study the simpler psychical processes of the lowlier modes of life. It is likewise realized that as man has inherited his anatomical and physiological characteristics from inferior forms of life, so has he derived the foundations of his highest mental capacities from less evolved ancestors.

To-day, in strictly scientific circles, the comparative method reigns supreme in all inquiry pursued for the purpose of elucidating the difficulties which surround the psychological domain. And logically so. For if we were to imagine some intelligent creature steeped in complete ignorance of all the complex causes which condition the motion of a modern Atlantic liner, and were this creature divorced from all knowledge of the multitudinous phenomena which have contributed to the evolution of this huge vessel, and then witnessed the passage of the steamer over the sea, an element in which, during all his previous experience, heavy bodies speedily sank; when we picture this creature's utter inability to proffer any rational explanation of the liner, we may form some conception of the impenetrable mystery which the intellect of a Shakespeare presented to the metaphysicians and pre-evolutionary philosophers, who were denied all understanding of the principles of mental development.

We may fairly claim that the emergence of mind may be traced, step by step, from the simplest beginnings. Herbert Spencer laid the firm foundations of a scientific psychology in a monumental work, his world-celebrated *Principles*. Taine, Ribot, Maudsley, Romanes, and other thinkers erected on these foundations a structure which has been materially strengthened by subsequent study, and which all later criticism has failed to shake.

At the outset of our inquiry we must guard ourselves against the danger of projecting our own involved subjective states into our reading of the simpler nerve

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processes of lowly creatures. Buechner and sundry other students and observers of animal psychology were, without question, much too anthropomorphic in their outlook. Other investigators, biased by the earlier tradition of animal automatism have rushed to the opposite extreme. Our knowledge of surrounding bodies may be regarded as objective, and this knowledge can be subjected to the most rigid tests. But in the case of mental phenomena as displayed by inferior or even superior creatures we are compelled to project our own psychical states upon the nervous activities of organisms placed under observation. Professor Clifford coined the useful term "eject" to designate this circumstance. The observer, therefore, becomes the subject, the animal observed the object, while the mental manifestations of the organism observed become the eject.

Outside the realm of living things there exists not the faintest evidence of the presence of mind. That a dim form of feeling occurs in the plant kingdom appears probable, but the clearest and most unmistakable evidences of sensation are encountered in the animal domain. And in tracing the advance of intelligence from its rudest beginnings no other method, save the comparative, is available. As Romanes contends in his *Mental Evolution in Animals*:—

> Common sense.....universally feels that analogy is here a safer guide to truth than the sceptical demand for impossible evidence; so that if the objective existence of other organisms and their activities is granted —without which postulate comparative psychology, like all the other sciences, would be an unsubstantial dream —common sense will always and without question conclude that the activities of organisms other than our own, when analogous to those activities of our own which we know to be accompanied by certain mental states, are in them accompanied by analogous mental states.

Possibly the protoplasm of plants forms the seat of a faint perception of differences in light, shade, and temperature. And in the animal world nerve tissue—a substance that chiefly consists of a variety of protoplasm—is invariably associated with mental processes. This wonderful nerve substance serves as a channel of communication between the organism endowed with it and the external world. From the jelly fish up to man this nerve material is found, and whether it occur in man or dog, medusa or snail, bird or bee, its fundamental structure is the same. When examined under high microscopical powers it is seen to be constituted of fibres and vesicles.

From the nerve vesicles or cells nerve fibres proceed, and these fibres link up the cells with one another, and this arrangement extends to the furthest limits of the animal body. The fibres possess the property of conveying stimuli to and from the nerve cells, while the cells themselves are instrumental in generating those impressions which are transmitted along the fibres outwards. Those stimuli that are conducted by the fibres inwards to the cells are set in motion by impressions influencing the nerve fibre at any part of its length, whether these take the form of mechanical pressure, thermal stimuli, impressions produced by irritants, electrical stimuli, or the passing of molecular disturbances from one nerve-fibre to another along their lines of communication.

Nerve cells are commonly arranged in bundles which are termed ganglia, to and from which numerous nerve-fibres arrive and depart. These cord-like clusters of nerve strings are the white filaments known as nerves in the dissecting room. Reflex acts depend upon this relation of the groups of fibres to the bunches of cells or ganglia. These automatic movements have been studied with great care in jelly fish, probably the lowest animals endowed with a nervous system. In these organisms the neural system is, as we should expect, extremely rudimentary, and when the nerves are stimulated the animal automatically responds to the stimulus. For we learn from an original investigator that with these creatures—

> "the simple ganglia are distributed all round the margin of the animal, and respond by reflex action to the stimuli which are applied at any other part of the surface. This has the effect of increasing the rate and the strength of the swimming movements, and so of enabling the animal to escape from the source of danger.

In this phenomenon there appears no element of choice, for the arrangement of a jelly fish's ganglia and nerves is such that when irritated by any outside influence the animal has no alternative but to move away.

> For the anatomical plan of a jelly fish is so simple, that all the muscular tissue in the body is spread out in the form of one continuous sheet; so that the only function which the marginal ganglia have to perform when they are stimulated into reflex action, is that of throwing into contraction one continuous sheet of muscular tissue.

We are thus entitled to assume that the genesis of mind arises from an automatic discharge of nervous energy from nerve-cells when these are disturbed by a stimulus conveyed to them through their nerve fibres. As organisms ascend to a higher stage of organization, separate muscles are gradually evolved for the performance of different actions, and nerve-centres likewise become more and more specialized to govern these different activities. Hence such specialized nervous centres are capable of responding only to those stimuli that are carried along their own peculiar communicating structures or nerves. In animals, like the star fish, organisms slightly above the jelly fish in structure and function, there appears a more elaborately evolved system of muscles and nerves. And as we climb the zoological ladder, we discover that the principle of the division of neuro-muscular labour slowly increases in structural and functional complexity.

Herbert Spencer's theory of the genesis of nerves still remains the best. The physical basis of life is protoplasm, and when this substance first assumed the living state, some parts of its single-celled forms became more exposed to external impressions than others. Some surface areas were liable to be habitually stimulated by different forces to those experienced by others. Now, those surface areas most frequently influenced by given impacts tended to respond more and more readily to the influences thus conditioned. In this way were initiated and developed those channels of communication in the unstable and sensitive protoplasm which offered the smallest resistance to the influences of external forces. Spencer vividly illustrates his doctrine somewhat as follows:—

> Much as a river constantly broadens and deepens its channel, so molecular waves always flowing in the same tissue tracts are perpetually engaged in excavating more and more definite paths for their passage. When completed, such a line of communication becomes a nerve-fibre, a structure that has been evolved out of a "line of discharge."

And it is certainly noteworthy in this connection that embryological research has established the fact that the sense organs of the higher animals all arise from the skin.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

A film-play bears the title "The Treasure of Heaven." Does this include a golden harp?

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The Way of Peace.

THIS is the name of a most remarkable book by the late Mr. H. Fielding-Hall, the author of that famous book, *The Soul of a People*, published some years ago, and in this new work he diagnoses with unerring instinct the present deplorable condition of English society, and points out the true remedies for its restoration to health and happiness.

In chapter ii., aptly entitled "Mother Earth," he describes in plain and simple language the natural connection between the soil and its inhabitants, any disturbance of which must destroy the community, as thus :—

> Not only is a community an outcome of the land, but its health, its efficiency, its freedom, its laws and conventions, its whole organism, in fact, is based on the land.

He shows how our present disastrous system of land tenure originated with Magna Charta which, he says, "was not the beginning of the liberties of the English people, but the end of them."

In chapter iii. the condition of society, in the spacious days of good Queen Bess, is vividly depicted; then we come to the sad story of the decadence consequent on the fencing in of the communal land, and the fastening of the grip of the lord of the soil which has destroyed all the natural sense of community among the people.

The numbing effect of religious superstition does not escape the scathing criticism of this keen student of human nature, as thus :—

> The base idea of every religion, Christian or other, is that nature and humanity are evil and that life is not worth living. Religions differ only in method, and never in their fundamental conceptions. However they may try to hide it by professing that God made the world, their real certainty is that "the world, the flesh and the devil" are one; however they may profess to be animated by hope, their attitude to life here and now is one of despair. Nothing can be made of life on earth because its very essence is evil and "everyone is conceived and born in sin."
>
> Consequently, no religion has any ethics founded on a knowledge of life, its realities and needs, and designed to secure further and freer and happier life here. We hear a good deal about Christian ethics, but in fact they have never existed in theory.....
>
> Is the New Testament any better? There are a great many delicate and beautiful sayings; are they a true guide to life? They touch the emotions; do they touch the intelligence? Is it good to forgive your enemies as long as they are your enemies and try to hurt you? Is it good to give a robber your cloak as well as the coat he stole, and so encourage crime?
>
> Every virtue is only a virtue in the right place, and in the wrong place it is a vice. The Christian virtues are no exception. To be loyal and obedient to bad rulers and teachers, to be meek instead of redressing wrongs, to love where you ought to hate, to believe what is not true, are not virtues.
>
> Is not the whole spirit of the New Testament one of despair towards this life and a hope to escape from it? You cannot make a true morality and devise true institutions to benefit life if you despair of it. And none such have ever been made by religions.
>
> If you turn from theory to practice, things are no better. Have priests been good guides? They finished the destruction of Roman society which the Empire had begun. They nearly depopulated Europe in the eleventh century. They again ruined the free cities that sprung up later. They nearly strangled England till Thomas Cromwell did away with them for awhile. They talk of love, but their history is one of persecution and massacre, of servility to the rich and those in power, and of hatred to the poor, thinly disguised beneath fine phrases and a demoralizing "charity."

To ensure the full cultivation of the soil, and to revive the sense of community among the people, Mr. Fielding-Hall proposes that every village should have full control, through the village council, of all the land in its near neigbourhood, each villager being allotted as much land as he can productively use, without any fear of disturbance or rent to pay.

Each village, too, must have its own bank, to be managed by the villagers themselves, and thus ensure a cheap and plentiful supply of money to be loaned at a very low rate of interest.

Other chapters are devoted to a discussion of marriage, and a scathing criticism of our judicial system as being better calculated to foster crime than to cure it.

The book fittingly concludes with a chapter entitled "When War will End," which is the best dissection of the real causes of the present world catastrophe that I have yet seen. The sound lesson it conveys is that if the people were freed from the grip of the landlord and the usurer they would enjoy such prosperity in their own country that they would have no desire for annexation of territory; and, therefore, no cause for aggression on other nations.

In chapter xiii., entitled "A Vernal Wood," a delightful picture is given of the village of Sleepy Hollow, in which the author conveys to us his own idea of religion :—

> And so these children, grown into men and women, will make for themselves a new religion, founded not on the nightmares of fanatics or the inventions of priests, but on what they read out of the Book of Life. Their God will be a real God, known as only we can know anyone, by His acts, and no one will need any interpreter for Him.
>
> One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good
> Than all the sages can.

Nothing could be more true than that.

Altogether a splendid book inspired by a keen insight into human nature and its springs of action, which ought to be translated into every language and sent broadcast throughout the world as a wholesome antidote to economic and religious superstitions that now render general prosperity and happiness impossible.

G. O. WARREN.

The Shrine.

WHAT shall we give to the gallant dead
Who have stemmed the crimson tide?
We'll build a shrine in a dreary slum,
And our hearts shall burn with pride.

What shall we give to those who return
From hell—to their native shore?
We'll bid them sail for a foreign clime—
The workhouse will hold no more.

What shall we give to those who have fought
From Ypres to Sulva Bay?
We'll give them a nation's grateful *thanks*,
For that is the *Christian* way.

What shall we give to those who are left
To struggle for bread in vain?
We'll give them a shrine that they may *pray*,
For *God* can console their pain.

And God, perchance, in heaven will hear,
If a God, indeed, there be;
And feed the starving with *heavenly* bread,
In this land of liberty.

P. A.

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Acid Drops.

It is a condition of entrance to the Commercial Traveller's Schools that all children shall be taught the Church Catechism, and shall attend the service of the Church of England. The condition is, of course, an indefensible one, but it is strange to find the *Christian World* claiming that other forms of worship shall be permitted, and asserting that "much harm may be done if the mind of the child is perverted from the faith of its parents." We fail to see where the harm will occur. The child of Nonconformist parents is not likely to receive more injury from being taught Church of England doctrines than it will by being taught any other form of religion. In our opinion every child is harmed who is taught a speculative religious doctrine as demonstrated truth. That point of view does not, of course, appeal to the *Christian World*. If it did it would claim the freedom of the child from *all* religious doctrines, its own included. A religion that cannot wait for acceptance is not worth the having.

Some things seem almost too good to be true. For instance, the *Kidderminster Shuttle* of July 21 has the following, under the heading of "Chaddesley Notes," in the course of a description of proceedings in the Parish Church:—

> The church dedication services were continued on Sunday. Special sermons were preached by the Rev. D'Arcy. He is a very impressive preacher, with a considerable amount of action and a most pleasing intonation of voice. From the many gems in the sermon I heard, I cull the following: "Education, unless subservient to and subjugated to religion, is disastrous to a nation; a curse rather than a blessing. *It can be proved up to the hilt by statistics that the only nations that are really religious are those nations that are absolutely ignorant.*"

The italics are ours.

The *Liverpool Echo* reports that St. Bede's Church, Sefton Park, was struck by lightning, but, "thanks to the conductor," only some electric globes were damaged. Thanks to the conductor! And that might have been put up by an Atheist!

A man named Saint, an absentee charged at Bradford, said: "I defy the world." Other saints have said the same thing with unhappy results.

After three years of canteen-running and providing entertainments for the troops, the Y.M.C.A. intends to try some evangelical work, and has engaged Billy Sunday for the purpose. According to a daily paper, Billy "is under orders for France, not to battle with Fritz, but to keep his old enemy with the horns and tail" out of the soldiers' way.

Mr. Ethan Dodds, of Pittsburgh, U.S.A., has invented a process for bottling light, which, according to Mr. Marconi, the wireless expert, will revolutionize the lighting systems of the world. Can he come over to England and show us how to bottle our Bishop of London and other pious lights?

Prince Henry is a private in the Eton College Training Corps. He will be fortified in his lowly position by remembering that the "King of Kings" was a carpenter—and a poor one.

Christ and his religion have been at work in the world for nine long centuries, and they have conspicuously failed to teach mankind the fundamental principle of individual, national, and international life. So we are informed by the Rev. Dr. Velimirovic, of Belgrade, in a sermon recently delivered at St. Paul's Cathedral. According to this reverend gentlemen, the fundamental principle of life is sacrifice, but throughout the Christian centuries it has never been carried into practice. Now, however, "is not sacrifice the most obvious thing in this War? Moreover, has not this War even come to make sacrifice the obvious principle of a new society, a new Europe, a new World?"

Let us pause for a moment over that curious statement so naively made by the distinguished Serbian divine. Three ideas are involved in it, namely, that Christianity has failed to translate sacrifice into a ruling principle in human conduct; that this War has already accomplished the task which Christianity has left undone; and that, consequently, God is the author of the War. One would naturally infer that this War is God's last and only successful method for setting the world right. Dr. Velimirovic forgets one most essential fact, however, which is that this same method has been tried innumerable times before, *with the very opposite result to success each time*. Those who are unselfish now were unselfish before the struggle began, while those who were selfish before are more selfish still. Is it not true that thousands of people are amassing colossal fortunes by means of the War? Is not "profiteering" the curse of the British nation at this very hour?

In spite of the tacit admission and positive assertion to which we have just alluded, Dr. Velimirovic still remains a Christian preacher, declaring that "through all the roaring voices and crying agonies of the present War, Christ is claiming his rights," a thing, it would seem, he never did before. Hitherto, he has had no rights, but only duties; but the War has taught him that he has his rights, upon which he is resolved to insist when peace is re-established.

> Now he claims to come into the Government and Parliament of every nation, to sit upon every kingly throne, and to preside in every Foreign Office, in order to rule the nations and to lead the world in his own spirit.

Does his reverence of Belgrade not know, has he not learned from many sources easily at his disposal, that during the famous Ages of Faith, Christ did exercise all those rights, through his chosen ambassadors, and that through the whole of that time Europe lay "in gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," wallowing in filthiest vices and the darkest crimes? Very gradually has the State succeeded in stripping him of those awful rights; and the world would vigorously protest if any attempt were made to restore him to the thrones with which it has with such difficulty evicted him. Of course, in reality, Christ only means the Church and its ministers, the Christ being merely an ideal or imaginative projection of dominant ecclesiastical personalities, whose day of dominance is happily gone for ever.

Speaking at a Wesleyan Conference at London, the Bishop of Chelmsford said, "I believe that the Bishop of London and myself are the two biggest Methodists in London. Exactly! "Everything by turns, and nothing long."

Dr. Horton has expressed his gratitude to Lord Hugh Cecil in his "brave crusade" of loving the German Christians. All we hope is that, after the War, they will also love one another. When the Lord Bishops have forgiven the Kaiser, they may even pardon the Nonconformists. That will indeed be the millennium.

It is curious to read that someone has presented to the United Free Church of Scotland the house in which Sir J. Y. Simpson made his earliest experiments in the use of chloroform. When Simpson first introduced the anæsthetic many clergymen contended that its use was impious because God intended human beings to bear pain.

The daughter of a New York clergyman was sentenced at the Old Bailey to three months' hard labour for throwing vitriol on a married man. Another testimonial to the value of religious education.

"Viator," of the *Church Times*, is perplexed because "our synodical leaders tell us that some of them (the Psalms) are not suitable for use in Christian worship, and it seems probable that we shall be forbidden to recite them." He is startled by the thought that it has taken the men of God nigh two thousand years to make such a discovery. Speaking for himself, he can see no objection to the use of the Imprecatory Psalms in public worship, his fear being, not that it is wrong to express such sentiments, but that, from a peculiarity of temperament, he may not share them with adequate

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intensity. He is convinced that they are not at all inconsistent with the Christian Gospel.

"Viator" is entirely right. To imprecate the vengeance of Heaven on the enemies of God and his kingdom is not at all incompatible with the teaching of the New Testament, or with the temper of the Christian Church in any age. The real meaning of the proposed omission of the Imprecatory Psalms from use in public worship is, that it is symptomatic of the fact that the Church is, perhaps unconsciously, outgrowing itself, under the pressure of that noble spirit of Humanism, which, for several generations, has been manifesting itself in the world outside. In other words, it is a sign of the inevitable disintegration of the Christian religion which is already taking place within the Church itself. As we have more than once observed, it is the beginning of the end of the Great Superstition which has darkened and poisoned human life for so long.

The Dean of Gurnsey is resigning at the age of ninety-six. That the duties of a dean do not make great demands on the holder is shown by the fact that so many of them live to great ages. Here are the ages of some living deans: Exeter, 90; Canterbury, 80; Chester, 85; Gloucester, 81; Salisbury, 82; Hereford, 79.

The figures of Wesleyan Methodism, as given at the Conference, are enough to make John Wesley turn in his grave. Since 1906 there has been a decline of 140,717 scholars in the Sunday-schools. And these figures relate to the most flourishing of the Free Churches.

"A book, by the nephew of Ernest Renan," in support of the Christian superstition is advertised in the publishers' summer lists. Christians have to be thankful for small mercies in these strenuous times.

When Joanna Southcote died, she left a sealed box containing "revelations regarding the second coming of Christ." The box was only to be opened by the bishops at a time of national danger. Now, Mr. J. W. Sharpe, of Bournemouth, claims to have had a vision and a communication from the spirit of W. T. Stead ordering the box to be opened. Several bishops have been asked to open the box, but they have not yet consented to do so. We can't say that the War has led to softening of the brain with some, because there was never a lack of that with many. But it is quite clear that the War has not given to these persons a mental stability of which they appear to be sadly in need.

Rev. F. C. Young, Vicar of Sherburn-in-Elmet, near Leeds, announces in the Parish Magazine that he is leaving the Church because he feels that "the views he now holds are not those which are required of a minister of the Church of England." He says: "There is nothing the matter with Christianity, but there is a great deal the matter with the Church." We cannot say what this means exactly, but, all the same, we congratulate Mr. Young on his straightforwardness. If *all* the clergymen who do not believe in the teachings of the Church left, what an exodus there would be!

The bubble of German "Atheism" has burst, although the dear clergy found it very useful for a time. The *Sunday Herald* states that the Junker party is Lutheran, and "has always been detested by the German Catholic peoples." The latter statement has the ring of truth in it.

A Westminster magistrate says that a lady who sings, even in the early morning, does not come within the category of "a noisy animal." What would he say to a street evangelist with a harmonium and a dozen lady friends?

A sidelight on the former power of the Church is shown in *The Town Labourer*, a book on English industrial life. It is a letter written to the Home Office after the Peterloo massacre to explain that a woman who had been killed "was a dangerous character, for she had been heard to curse the curate."

A correspondent points out that the recent orders by which hard-working police officers are made to carry air-raid warnings might be varied, and suggests that this work should be undertaken by the clergy, who only work one day a week, and who are accustomed to tell people to flee from the wrath to come.

We referred last week to the fanatical story of the Rev. Dr. Fitchett concerning some "eminent Freethinkers" who had inferred that the War had shown the world that Christianity was the one thing to save it. In *Life*, a Melbourne magazine, the same gentleman grows tearfully sentimental over the presence in Jerusalem of "the unspeakable Turk." He says:—

> A Turkish soldier is on guard night and day in the crypt of the great Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem.....A squad of Turkish soldiers, with sullen faces and loaded rifles, stand on guard all Easter Sunday in front of the Church of the Resurrection. It will surely be a relief to the Christian imagination when the cruel and bloody feet of the Turk no longer trample on spots sacred to the Christian faith.

An important fact Dr. Fitchett conveniently overlooks. The Turkish Government provided soldiers (naturally with "sullen faces," for are they not Mohammedans?) in order to keep the representatives of the various Christian sects from fighting over the birth-place of their Saviour.

Dr. Fitchett cites from a correspondent who appears to be as heartbroken as himself over the base uses to which the "Holy City" is being put. Thus:—

> Jerusalem is at present simply overrun by Turks and arrogant German officers. The heights of Calvary have been transformed into a battery. The marble and jade columns and statuary, which have for centuries ornamented the place where our Saviour suffered, have been removed to give way to two Krupp cannons, which are being used for target practice, the targets having been mounted on the slopes of Mount Olivet. The place where Christ taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer has been fenced in with a wattle and barbed-wire fence. Mount Olivet, whence our Lord ascended, is the favourite centre of manœuvres. Shouts, shots, bugle-calls, abuse, hatred, and blood—that is the atmosphere now surrounding the locality which for two thousand years has been the greatest sanctuary of the world.

All needed to complete the picture is to bear in mind the fact that it is not now, primarily, a war between Mohammedans and Christians, but a war initiated and carried on by Christians, which for sheer barbarity carries us back to some of the most frightful of the religious wars of the past.

America, says one of the daily papers, will cheerfully bear a part of the burden of Great Britain. We suggest sending along the Bench of Bishops.

CIVILIZATION AND THE ESKIMOS,

Professor Sollas, speaking of the Eskimo, observes: "The intrusion of the white man has brought with it its usual blight—poverty, sickness, selfishness, and loss of self-respect. It would be beyond our province to give instances, but one case where a different result might have been expected may be cited from Rink. He writes: 'On approaching these places (Ny-Herrnhut and Lichtenfels) the visitor, on being told that each of them contains 100 natives and two or three missionary families, will be at a loss to make out where the former have their abodes. The mission lodges are pretty, spacious, and, for Greenland, even stately in appearance. The stranger will probably be surprised on being informed that these buildings are only inhabited by missionaries because he discovers nothing like human dwellings anywhere else. Then his attention will be drawn to something resembling dunghills scattered over low rocks, and partly overgrown with grass, and he will be surprised to learn that the native population live in these dens.'"—*H. Rink "Danish Greenland."*

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To Correspondents.

"A CHRISTIAN STILL" writes that he has read the *Freethinker* for some weeks without learning anything from it. We hope "A Christian Still" will not be discouraged. Some people learn slowly and others quickly, but understanding will come to the dullest if one persists. Perhaps if "A Christian Still" will get the local clergyman to read it aloud to him he might grasp its meaning better.

F. DE LISLE.—Thanks for magazine. Dr. Fitchett is quite up to his usual level. Presumably he knows his audience.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Afraid it would initiate a too lengthy discussion, and we have to keep a wary eye on the space at our disposal.

S. ELMES cannot understand why the *Freethinker* has not a very much larger circulation than at present. Suppose we say inability of the public to appreciate a good thing, or ignorance of the fact of its existence? If the explanation is accepted, the remedy is obvious.

MR. A. RENTON suggests, in reply to Mr. Soddy's letter in our last issue, that the discussion of reprisals is futile, since all war is in the nature of a reprisal. Britain's declaration of war was thus a reprisal for the invasion of Belgium, German attack on our commerce a reprisal for our blockade of Germany, etc.

B. SUNDER (Woolwich).—Should be pleased to do something at Woolwich, but it is for the local Freethinkers to move first. We shall then be pleased to assist. We have no leaflet on "Money," and do not know the other to which you refer. We agree that the pious tracts you enclose are an insult to Woolwich folk, but religious tracts are usually of that kind.

E. PURCHAS.—It is indefensible, as you say. We do not see, though, why the question named does not admit of an answer.

M. NEWMAN.—We do not see anything in the cutting you send which specially calls for a reply. Thanks, all the same, for note.

DR. B. DUNLOP writes:—"I agree with your championship of coloured people, but are we prepared to marry them? If not, this difficulty must be added to the cheap labour one referred to by Bishop Frodsham. Perhaps the white peoples should unite in refusing coloured immigrants, and also directly encourage the two-child system."

R. MILES.—We regret to hear of the death of your uncle, Mr. J. C. Goodfellow. We have some recollection of him as a correspondent, and can quite believe all you say of his worthiness as a man, and the sturdiness of his Freethinking opinions. Please convey our sympathy to the members of his family.

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Sugar Plums.

We feel that the nation is to be congratulated on the proposal—provided it properly materializes—to place the whole of the recruiting system under civil control. It is a vindication of the power of public opinion, muzzled as that opinion has been and is. But nothing can be worse than to place the civil population at the mercy of a military class which, as all experience proves, is totally unfitted for the exercise of such authority. Germany was damned and doomed when it allowed the military caste to gain ascendancy, and the same fate awaits any other nation that follows in its footsteps. A War Office should attend to war, and even in that it is usually the better for civilian surveillance.

Quite an illuminating article—illuminating in a way unseen by the writer—appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* the other day. The writer, who veils himself under the pen-name of "Index," charges the Catholic Church in Ireland with having "temporized with forces that are frankly anti-religious." He suggests as a means of relieving the pressure of the moment, that Conscription should be at once applied to Ireland, and that the Church should advocate its being done. In the writer's opinion, this would get rid of the young men who are at the root of the present unrest. We have seldom come across a plainer statement of the more sinister aspect of militarism, and of the way in which the Church is expected to play the game of reaction.

We are glad to learn that the course of open-air lectures arranged at Sheffield pursues a successful course. Mr. Grimes had a good meeting last Sunday, and this week the speaker will be Mr. F. E. Willis, of Birmingham. We feel quite safe in promising a good lecture for all who attend.

We are asked to call the special attention of South London Freethinkers to the Brockwell Park meetings. We hope our doing so will have all the consequences desired.

Mr. H. J. Stenning writes that he finds Mr. Effel's article in last week's issue very "unsatisfactory." He says that the number of Socialists who accept the theory of Marx is very small, the number who reject it is much larger, and the number indifferent to theories of any sort largest of all. Mr. Stenning says that Socialism is not concerned with "the objective validity of any religion." Mr. Effel is, therefore, wrong in attributing "moral cowardice" to those Socialists who wish to steer clear of all discussions on religion. This, however, was not the point of Mr. Effel's article. His article was a protest against the "deferential attitude" of so many Socialist writers and speakers towards the clergy and the Churches with the nauseating attempt of some to prove that Socialism is "true Christianity." And we believe there is need for the protest. To keep Socialism and religion distinct is a policy we appreciate. But in practice this usually means boycotting all criticisms unfavourable to Christianity, and permitting all attempts to prove that "true Christianity" and Socialism are identical. It was against this attitude our contributor wrote.

It has been for some years the custom of all Branches of the N.S.S., where lectures are given, to devote the nearest Sunday to the birthday of Charles Bradlaugh to a lecture on his life and work. Charles Bradlaugh was born on September 26, 1833, therefore the last Sunday in September is usually chosen, which will, this year, fall on the 30th. Will speakers and Branch secretaries please note?

The younger generation of speakers would be well-advised to furnish themselves with a copy of *Charles Bradlaugh: a Record of His Life and Work*, by his daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, which can be obtained through the Pioneer Press, price 2s. 6d.

Sovereigns, it is true, call themselves the representatives of God, his vicegerents upon earth. But does the fear of a master more powerful than they incline them seriously to study the welfare of the nations whom Providence has entrusted to their care? Does the pretended terror which ought to be inspired in them by the idea of an invisible judge, to whom alone they acknowledge themselves accountable for their actions, render them more equitable, more compassionate, more sparing of the blood and treasure of their subjects, more temperate in their pleasures, more attentive to their duties? In fine, does this God, by whose authority kings reign, deter them from inflicting a thousand evils upon the people to whom they ought to act as guides, protectors, and fathers? Alas! If we survey the whole earth, we shall see men almost everywhere governed by tyrants, who use religion merely as an instrument to render more stupid the slaves whom they overwhelm under the weight of their vices, or whom they sacrifice without mercy to their extravagances.—*D'Holbach.*

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The Apologist in Blinkers.

IN the *Nineteenth Century and After* for July, 1917, the Very Rev. Canon William Barry, D.D., writes on the much-boomed, if rather unsubstantial, subject of "The Return of Religion." His article serves to show that, while possessed of a good deal more learning and ability than many lights of the Church (the Bishop of London, for example!) he shares with others the common ecclesiastical defect of being totally ignorant of the real foes which religion has to face to-day.

It is, of course, to be expected that an orthodox divine, writing *apropos* of the War, should make full use of the silly claptrap about "German Atheism." This is as much an article of faith with the clergy as is the equally illusory "revival of Christianity" here and in France. Canon Barry is sure that the God of the Bible is not the same as Odin the War-God, whom some cracked professor in Germany referred to as "the ancient, mighty deity of all the Teutonic kindred." We may concede to the Canon that they are not the same. Nevertheless, they are much of a muchness. We have on authority that Canon Barry will not repudiate, that God, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," authorized the Israelites of old to smite their enemies, "man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass," and was very angry when such orders were not carried out to the letter. It is doubtful if poor, much-maligned Father Odin ever beat that record. The Canon is entitled to plead, if he will, that Yahweh, God of Hosts, has grown milder with advancing years, and is by now quite a reformed character. For all we know to the contrary, so may Odin have done. Anyhow, if the choice is between Yahweh and Odin, it is between one hoary assassin and another, and there is no visible reason why Canon Barry, the Bishop of London, Mr. R. J. Campbell, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, and the other partizans of Yahweh should expect us to get so very excited about the difference between them.

However, it appears that Odin or Yahweh, or whoever is responsible for this War, has done us a very good turn, and that by his good offices we have "escaped" —Canon Barry uses the word advisedly—from the veritable "Valley of the Shadow of Death," as he calls the period of scientific criticism beginning with the discoveries of Darwin. Darwin, we are told, appeared to have "banished mind from the world's development," with the result that science showed us that "its Everlasting Father was nescience," Theism was "reckoned among the mythologies," and Tyndall, in the Belfast Address, "read decorously the Burial Service over it, where no hope of resurrection was held out to God or man." "Materialism was the ready money or the cash kept for its customers' use at the Bank of Nescience. Among its chief cashiers, T. H. Huxley played a famous part." In such phrases as this Canon Barry not unwittily conveys the impression made on the pious mind by the Agnostic writings of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

We must, however, demur to the idea that the writings of Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall, great as they were, contained a final and sufficient statement of the case against religion, or that you can dispose of that case by exposing superficial weaknesses in their exposition of it. The case against Theism was conclusively stated by Epicurus 2,200 years before Huxley, and rests on the eternal problem of evil. "Either God is willing, but unable, to abolish evil; or able, but unwilling; or neither able nor willing; or both able and willing. If he is willing, but unable, he is not almighty. If he is able, but unwilling, he is not good. If he is neither able nor willing, he is neither good nor almighty. If he is able and willing, why is evil not abolished?" That argument has never been bettered. Canon Barry would have done well to have turned his attention to it.

Instead of that, he fastens on what we may call the "trimmings" of the nineteenth-century Agnostic case, and becomingly cuts them into ribbons. "It needs no ghost, come from the dead," to tell us that Huxley, Spencer, Romanes, and their contemporaries, great men as they were, were but men; that Huxley laboured under the disadvantage of having adopted Hume's essentially vulnerable system of philosophy; that Spencer wrote a good deal of plain nonsense about "the unknowable"; and that other Agnostics failed even to face the questions which these two so unsatisfactorily answered. Clearly, if you deny that you can have knowledge of anything but successive impressions and ideas in your own mind, it follows that everything beyond them is hypothesis; that necessity, causation, and law cease to be legitimate matter for inquiry; and that the ground of all action and the validity of all reasoning rests as much on "faith" as Christianity itself. Huxley did great harm to his case by adopting this position. It compelled him, for instance, to admit that miracles were a question of evidence, and to imply that he would readily have accepted the "Gadarene affair" itself if only the Synoptic Gospels had been demonstrably written by eye-witnesses of the events they described!

It is, again, undeniable that the Agnostics of the nineteenth century suffered from a sentimental weakness for the very superstitions which reason forced them to attack, which often gives their criticisms an appearance of half-heartedness. Renan's *Vie de Jesus* is full of instances of this sort of mawkishness, which his orthodox opponents call his "reverent spirit," and applaud accordingly. A passage from Romanes, quoted by Canon Barry, is another example, though this does not justify the Canon in repeating once again the orthodox falsehood that Romanes was "rescued in time out of the dungeon of Giant Despair, and found the Divine Master who had never been far from him," or that he "lived to understand that his reasoning to the perfect Unreason of all things was a pure sophism." Again, Canon Barry is entitled to criticize Huxley's Oxford speech about "the ethical process" being opposed to "the cosmic process," which is obviously impossible if, as we hold, the ethical process is itself part and parcel of the cosmic process.

But when all that is vulnerable in the nineteenth-century Agnostics—their Humean philosophy, their sentimental respect for Christianity, their failure to hold fast to monistic fundamentals—is thrown aside, we are very far indeed from returning to the "other-worldliness" which Canon Barry avowedly wishes to see emerge from the experience of the War. He himself puts the real issue very plainly:—

> The question cannot be stated simply as if it concerned our mortal span, whether we shall seek to light it up with an ideal, or to shape its course on the principle of Aristippus and get as much variety or pleasure into it as we find possible. It is a different problem from either of these. We must try to ascertain if our individual life, as we know it, under the conditions of time and space is or is not the prelude to another stage of existence when those conditions have fallen away from us. If it is, then our aspirations and duties ought to conform to "other-worldliness."

Just so; and we may add that to state the question in this form is to answer it. How can there be a "stage of existence" when time and space "have fallen away from us"? The very word "stage" implies time. Take away time and space, and you take away change,

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action, personality, existence itself. Canon Barry's question is more specious, but not more possessed of meaning, than the time-honoured problem of how many angels can dance on the point of a needle?

To make a case for religion—which means, as Canon Barry admits, a case for "other-worldliness"—you must prove the existence of your "other world"; a world, that is, independent of the world of time and space, cause and effect, number and form, with which common sense and reason acquaint us. That is just exactly what no alleged "revelation," Jewish, Christian, Mohammedan, or "Spiritualist," has ever done. These precious religions, whether they tell us of three Gods or one, ascended Christs or levitated mediums, celestial harps or ethereal cigars, do not reveal "another" world; they allege certain unexplored facts in this world, which must stand for examination at the bar of common sense and reason, like any facts of science or mathematics.

Let our divines, then, be content to plead at this bar; or, if they will not, let them boom sonorously about the virtue of faith and the perils of doubt, thereby frightening or hypnotizing weak minds to whom that sort of thing appeals. But do not let them think that, by gibes at "the mud-god matter," witticisms about the "ready money at the Bank of Nescience," and rhetoric about "soul and flesh," they can prove their thesis. Above all, let them abstain from the crowning dishonesty, by which Canon Barry's article is disfigured, of misusing the fact of human heroism as shown in the War for the purposes of their dogmatic creed. Canon Barry admits that soldiers do their duty independently of "conscious philosophy." Very well, then; do not let him pretend that his philosophy is a necessary consequence when it is not.

Finally, let us have a truce to the fiction that the War has revealed religion to people who, being "born in the Darwinian Era," knew little or nothing about it. I was born in what Canon Barry calls "the Darwinian Era." So far from knowing nothing about religion, I was educated in the strictest beliefs of the Church of England. The Bible and the Liturgy were, and are, as familiar to me as the *Daily Mail*. I thought my way out of all that, not because of living in the "Darwinian Era," but because religion appeared to me part and parcel of a social and political system, supported by Darwinians and non-Darwinians alike, which chloroformed every human impulse towards greater and more equal freedom. The so-called Darwinian Era saw the disgraceful attempt to keep Bradlaugh out of the House of Commons, the persecution of Foote and Ramsey under the Blasphemy Acts, the renewed establishment of clericalism by the Education Act of 1902, and the recrudescence of blasphemy prosecutions in recent years. It is ridiculous for Canon Barry, therefore, to pretend that his Church has been the "under dog," and Secularism insolently triumphant, all this time. I hope and believe that after the War men and women will be more, and not less, impatient of the established system and all that pertains to it. The "Darwinian Era" will then seem an era of compromise and stagnation compared with the period of iconoclasm and upheaval in front of us. Our revival mongers are destined to a rude awakening.

Robert Arch.

The Crowd.

Mute in the throng, I saw a stranger stand,
Alone was he, and bitterly he smiled
At those who passed, nor held a friendly hand,
But flowed, unconscious, selfishly beguiled,
Scanning each face this stranger silent stood,
Musing how well Almighty God had foiled
Man's dreams of love, and hopes of brotherhood.

Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

III.

(Continued from p. 475.)

It is unfortunately true that most persons are quite unprepared to admit the deficiencies of their own powers of observation and of memory, and are also unaware of their own ignorance of perfectly natural occurrences, which continually lead to self-deception and illusion. Moreover, the capacity for logical inference and argument is not common. The whole past and present history of what is called "the occult" is enveloped in an atmosphere of self-deception and of readiness to be deceived by others, to which misplaced confidence in their own cleverness and power of detecting trickery renders many—one may almost say most—people victims. The physician who has given his life to the study of mental aberration and diseases of the mind is the only really qualified investigator of these "marvels," and no one who has closely studied what is known in the domain of mental physiology and pathology has any difficulty in understanding, and bringing into relation with large classes of established facts as to illusions and mental aberration, the "beliefs" in magic and second-sight which are here and there found flourishing at the present day, as well as the, at first sight startling, evidence of highly accomplished men who have suffered from such delusions.—*Sir Ray Lankester, "Diversions of a Naturalist"* (1915), pp. 363-4.

That the thought-reading performance of Blackburn and Smith was the result of trickery is confirmed by an article contributed by Sir James Crichton-Browne to the *Westminster Gazette* for January, 29, 1901, in which he describes some experiments undertaken with Blackburn and Smith at Dean's Yard, London, in the presence of himself, Dr. Francis Galton, Professor Romanes, and Mr. Myers. In this experiment Smith was blindfolded, and succeeded in reproducing a few regular or simple figures upon which Blackburn had concentrated his mind, but completely failed in reproducing an irregular figure which Professor Romanes and Sir James Crichton-Browne subsequently insisted on as a test when they began to suspect the use of a code. The next diagram was the shield on Dr. Galton's signet ring. This had an oval shape, but the reproduction was of a triangular shield. Sir James Crichton-Browne continues:—

> By this time I was quite satisfied that Mr. S. was not effectually blindfolded, and that it was practicable for Mr. B. to communicate with him both by sight and hearing; so Romanes and I asked permission, which was granted, to blindfold him anew. We proceeded to do so *secundem artem*. Cotton-wool was procured, the sockets were packed, the ears were plugged, and a large handkerchief made all secure. After that several experiments were tried as before, but there never was the smallest response on the part of Mr. S. to Mr. B.'s volitional endeavours. There was no more flashing of images into his mind. His pencil was idle. Thought-transference was somehow interrupted.

Sir James Crichton-Browne concludes the account as follows: "I was invited to be critical and sceptical, and I was so. I daresay more credulously inclined people will think that my suspicions were unjust and that no trick was practised—that was clearly the feeling of some of the psychical researchers present. The last scene of all, or passage of arms, I vividly recollect. Mr. Myers, standing in front of the fireplace, said, 'It must be allowed that this demonstration has been a total failure, and I attribute that to the offensive incredulity of Dr. Crichton-Browne.' To which I rejoined, 'I hope I always will show offensive incredulity when I find myself in the presence of patent imposture.'"[1]

As Professor Tyndall long ago remarked, the believers in Spiritualism "like to believe, and they do not like to be undeceived. Science is perfectly powerless in the

[1] *Bedrock*, July, 1912; pp. 197-198.

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presence of this frame of mind. It is, moreover, a state perfectly compatible with extreme intellectual subtlety and a capacity for devising hypothesis which only require the hardihood engendered by strong conviction, or by callous mendacity, to render them impregnable."[1]

A correspondent writes, asking for an explanation of the thought-reading performance of "Zomah" at the London Coliseum lately. This lady, sitting on the stage with her eyes bandaged, describes any article given to her manager by any member of the audience, and yet her manager addresses no question to her. My correspondent wishes to know whether he is right in believing there is some hypnotic understanding between Madame Zomah and her manager, by means of which she is able to define objects known and seen by him?

I do not know how the trick is worked, but my correspondent may rest absolutely assured that hypnotism has nothing to do with it. When I come to deal with hypnotism, he will see that quite plainly for himself. Madame Zomah's performance is not new, as my correspondent seems to think. At the very time the Zancigs were giving their performance in London (in 1906-7), Dr. Andrew Wilson pointed out, in a letter to the *Daily Chronicle*, that a much more wonderful entertainment was being given at the St. George's Hall by Mr. Devant and his sister. Miss Devant was blindfolded with a thick piece of cloth, previously handed round the audience for examination. Mr. Devant then, says Dr. Wilson, "comes among the audience, receives instructions regarding what his sister is expected to do, and she in turn carries out the instructions to the letter. This is really wonderful, because there is an utter absence—apparent absence, at least—of all communication between the two. There is nothing of the 'This please' or 'Now please' about the entertainment; all is accomplished in silence." Dr. Wilson further remarked: "Comparing the Alhambra and St. George's Hall performances, I wonder to find that people are puzzled over the former feats."[2]

Why, then, did not Mr. Devant and his sister create a sensation and get boomed by the London press like the Zancigs? Because they did not pretend to the possession of mystical powers, or to be more highly gifted than ordinary people. They honestly declared that all their wonderful performance was accomplished without the aid of spirits, Telepathy, Hypnotism, or any supernormal means. Therefore they did not appeal to the bump of wonder of the gaping multitude.

Sir Oliver Lodge has for years past, by means of lectures, articles in magazines, and books, been conducting a propaganda in favour of Telepathy and Spiritualism, lamenting all the while the scepticism and indifference of the scientific world to the fads he adduces in support of his opinions. Dr. Ivor Tuckett, Sir Ray Lankester, and Sir Bryan Donkin, among others, have criticized Sir Oliver's theories, and shown that his so-called facts will not bear critical investigation;[3] and now another scientist takes up Sir Oliver's challenge, namely, Dr. Charles Mercier, the well-known author of several standard works—among others *A New Logic; Psychology: Normal and Morbid; a Text-Book of Insanity; Criminal Responsibility; Crime and Insanity*, etc. Dr. Mercier has also been Examiner in Psychology to the University of London, and Lecturer on Insanity at the Medical Schools of the Westminster, Charing Cross, and Royal Free Hospitals.

As has been pointed out, the only really qualified investigators of Spiritualism are the psychologist, the conjurer, and the detective. Dr. Mercier is an eminent psychologist, and therefore well qualified to point out the weak spots in Sir Oliver Lodge's spiritual armour, which he has done in his book, *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*. In the preface, Dr. Mercier tells us that a copy of Sir Oliver Lodge's book, *Raymond*, was sent to him, with a request that he would examine and review it. He proceeds:—

> I found it impossible to do so. The sorrow of a bereaved mother is no fit matter for discussion by strangers in the public press. But the book revealed to me such an astounding mental attitude on the part of its author, that I sent for a previous work of his, *The Survival of Man*, to discover on what ground he, a professor of a certain branch of physical science, and the Principal of a University, speaking with the authority conferred by his occupancy of these positions, could make the assumptions that he does, and promulgate *urbi et orbi* such extraordinary doctrines. I have been engaged for some forty years in the study of the vagaries of the human mind in health and in disease, and am not easily surprised by witnessing new vagaries; but I must confess that *The Survival of Man* did surprise me. Upon inquiry I found that the doctrines and practices therein advocated have attained a very wide vogue. It may also be said that they are become the rage.....The subject has never engaged my attention before. I came to it as a new-comer, and with an open mind. When I saw the consequences to which the doctrines and practices lead; when I read of a table laughing and executing caressing movements; when I read the drivel that is put into the mouths of dead men who when alive were of normal intelligence; I began to suspect that the foundation on which this structure was built was insecure.....For a considerable time my mind misgave me. Again and again I put the task aside as not worthy to engage the time that might be occupied in serious studies, and it seemed that such a structure raised on such foundations might well be left to fall to pieces of its own inherent rottenness; but on consideration of the following arguments advanced by my friends I determined to undertake the task.[1]

The main reason that impelled Dr. Mercier to this task was, to use his own words: "I know from my own medical experience, that the pursuit of the occult, and especially of that form of it that used to go by the name of Spiritualism, but is now called telepathy, telergy, and other high-sounding names, leads to a morbid frame of mind, and tends to render those who are at all predisposed to insanity an easy prey to the disease. I am not alone in that opinion." In proof of which Dr. Mercier quotes from the Annual Report, lately issued, by Dr. G. M. Robertson, Superintendent of the Royal Asylum of Morningside, Edinburgh, the premier institution for the insane in Scotland, who issues a grave warning to those who inherit a latent tendency to nervous disorders: "to have nothing to do with practical inquiries of a spiritualistic nature, lest they should awaken this dormant proclivity to hallucinations within their brains. I have known such a person who had lost her son following the procedure in vogue at present, under advice, first hearing of him through mediums, then getting into touch with him herself, and receiving messages from him, some as impressions and others as audible words, then increasing her circle of spiritual acquaintances, and living more for her spiritual world than for this, to the neglect of her husband and household, till finally God conversed with her in a low musical voice at all times, and confided His plans for the future to her. I would ask spiritualists where, in this case, does spiritualism end and mental disorder begin?"[2] That is the testimony of Dr. Robert-

[1] Professor Tyndall, "Science and the Spirits," *Fragments of Science* (1876), p. 321.

[2] *Daily Chronicle*, January 3, 1907.

[3] See *Bedrock*, January, 1913.

[1] Dr. Mercier, *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*, pp. v.-vi. The book is published by The Mental Culture Enterprise, 329 High Holborn, W.C. 1, at 4s. 6d.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. vii-viii.

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son, head of the leading asylum for the insane in Scotland, and no doubt it could be paralleled in every other asylum in the country. We shall follow Dr. Mercier in his examination of Sir Oliver Lodge's facts and opinions in our next article. It will be worth while.

(To be continued.) W. Mann.

Correspondence.

TELEPATHY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—From Mr. Mann's article I gather that he denies the existence of controlled telepathy, but I myself can testify to the existence of involuntary telepathy outside my control. I have frequently, while asleep, received messages from relatives, colleagues, friends, and even from my employers. I have made use of the knowledge thus gained.

The Friday night before the recent raid both my wife and I went through, in dreams, almost precisely our experiences of the following Saturday morning. The night that my remaining son at the Front was badly hurt, I dreamt that he told me of his wound and showed me the place.

Having been in a church choir most of my life, I have a wholesome contempt for the supernatural and its paid professors, and would rather be amused by your journal than be bored by the sermon.

I therefore simply record the above experiences as proof that there are more things in the universe than we have yet got the measure of. I discarded the *Church Times* for the *Freethinker* many years ago, but my attitude on supernatural matters, based upon personal experiences in connection with my son who has gone under in this accursed War, leads me now towards *Light*, whilst remaining, anchored, like a captive balloon, to the firm ground of the *Freethinker*.

J. J. O.

SOCIALISTS, FREETHOUGHT, AND RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I beg leave to protest against J. Effel on two grounds (1) He does nothing to advance the discussion from the point at which it is left by your brief rejoinder to N. Streimer—but runs in with a "red herring." (2) He gives a totally false impression of the attitude and character of James Connolly.

As one who has seen "active service" both as Militant Atheist and Marxian Socialist, I wish to urge: (1) Streimer claims that "ideas play a secondary part in social development." Our Editor replies: "Man is always under the dominion of his ideas, and it is these which are the chief determinants of social conditions," and "no human society exists or ever has existed on an economic basis. The social bond is essentially a psychologic one." The importance of this clear antagonism of opinion is too great to be over-stated. Nothing could be more advantageous than its discussion. Freethought is nothing if it has not a social application. Socialism is either in line with scientifically verified facts or it is worthless, and surely at a time when Marxian ideas have in Russia drawn the attention of the world, there is every practical advantage in an elucidation of the root principles of sociology.

Personally, I am sorry to see this promising controversy side-tracked by a criticism of the detail policy of the Socialist societies. (2) J. Effel sets out to prove the Socialist parties guilty of "Jesuitry" and "kow-towing" to the Church. It is a pity, with so many glaring instances alive and to hand, that he should disturb the dead and quote not matters of general knowledge but a twenty-year old pamphlet written by a self-taught working man struggling almost single-handed to recruit a Socialist Party in the teeth of the best organized Church in the world—the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Such a man in such a place can be forgiven a little "hedging." But did Connolly "hedge"? His essay, "Socialism and Religion," included in the "New Evangel" (originally published in the *Workers' Republic* in 1898 reprinted 1917 by the Socialist Party of Ireland) dealt with the question as one of party policy. He first points out the many leading Freethinkers were and are non-Socialists, and goes on to add so also is the Pope, whose "ill-reasoned and inconclusive encyclicals lately issued against Socialism make of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church belated camp-followers in the armies marching under the banner raised by the Agnostic exponents of the individualist philosophy."

As to whether the philosophy of Socialism can be reconciled with theology, Connolly says (same essay):—

> They (the leading exponents of modern Socialism), as a party, do not base their Socialism upon any interpretation of the language or meaning of Scripture, nor upon the real or supposed intentions of a beneficent Diety. They, as a party, neither affirm nor deny these things.....they wisely prefer to take their stand upon the actual phenomena of social life as they can be observed in operation amongst us to-day, or as they can be traced in the recorded facts of history. If any special interpretation of the meanings of Scripture tends to influence human thought in the direction of Socialism or is found to be on a plane with Socialist doctrine. Then he considers that the said interpretation is stronger because of its identity with the teachings of Socialism, but *he does not necessarily believe that Socialism is stronger or its position more impregnable because of its theological ally*" (italics mine).....
>
> We feel that Socialism is based upon a series of facts requiring only unassisted human reason to grasp and master all their details, whereas Religion of every kind is admittedly based upon "faith" in the occurrence in past ages of a series of phenomena inexplicable by any process of mere human reasoning.

I admit that to "be suspicious" of the author of these words as an "emissary of Rome" would be reckless bigotry in any case. In the case of James Connolly, and him dead—words fail me!

Thos. A. Jackson.

National Secular Society.

Report of Executive Meeting held on July 26.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Bowman, Brandes, Leat, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Wood, Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Monthly cash statement presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Manchester Branch and the Parent Society.

An application to form a Regent's Park Branch was received and, the conditions being complied with, granted.

The following reports were received and adopted:—

1. Report from Sheffield of Mr. Wilde's successful meetings and of forthcoming arrangements in that town.
2. Report of result of recent Blasphemy case in Birmingham.
3. Report on action to date of the Protest Committee against the prohibition of sale of literature by the L.C.C.

It being found that the holiday season had interfered with full attendances, some minor matters of business were dealt with, and others adjourned until the next meeting.

E. M. Vance, *General Secretary.*

The New "War" God.

It would have been absurd to think that the most colossal war in the history of the universe should have brought about so many changes without bringing about one in God. The intellectual world was, therefore, more or less prepared when Mr. Wells' book, *God the Invisible King*, appeared. It had long been felt that the old ramshackle God, with which we were all so familiar in the past, was played out, and from a revolutionary writer like Mr. Wells it was cheerfully anticipated that something good would be put up. It is unpleasant, however, to find from the newspaper criticisms that the general effect of the book is unsatisfactory, and that the intelligent citizens of Britain have not yet got the thing they wanted.

There is no need, however, to despair, as doubtless many other leading novelists will make a point of "having a shot at the God question"; for the sooner we settle the great puzzle, Who is the King of Glory, who? the better for the

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British Empire and, at the same time, the world and the universe. God must be properly located, and his intentions, hopes, fears, loves, hates, completely understood, before we can make any real progress. This glorious uncertainty is becoming intolerable. Under the cold, merciless logic of modern religious thought, God has assumed a somewhat bewildering number of forms. Sometimes "within" us, sometimes "without" us, sometimes we without him; capable of being found without being lost; or of "coming into our hearts" without our knowing it; a Being, a Power, a Manifestation, a One-ness, a Two-ness, a Three-ness; these are a few of his forms, but the average man of to-day is no longer content with a God who cannot work his own universe the way he likes, but who finds his best hopes thwarted by man's obstinacy and brutality, and that is why Mr. Wells' great effort is not likely to last so long as usual. It should never be doubted that God is working for the general good of the human race, but it must be remembered that he does not want the world to be happy too soon. The Invisible King of Mr. Wells seems to possess this latter faculty, and would, perhaps, have become more popular in time of peace. Any other writers who are entering the competition should, so far as possible, go for a "visible" King, that will be at once an effective war-stopping and stomach-filling God, as these are the only lines upon which the up-to-date, God-finding writers are likely to succeed.

Y. C.

The National Church.

How It Opposes Progress.

A few examples of the votes of the Bishops in the House of Lords which show Christian ethics in practice:—

Women and Borough Councils—
Eight voted against admitting women as members of London Borough Councils.

Deserted Wives—
Seventeen voted against allowing deserted wives to marry again without penalty if deserted five years.

Free Education—
Thirteen voted against free education of the people.

Flogging of Women—
None voted for the abolition of flogging women in public, flogging women in prison, or flogging in the Army and Navy.

Capital Punishment—
Five voted for still inflicting the death penalty for thefts over £10.

Child Labour—
One only supported the first Bill for limiting the hours of child labour.

Vivisection Bill—
One voted for, two against, the cruelty to animals in Vivisection Bill.

Slave Trade—
Two only voted for the suppression of the slave trade.

Reform Bills—
Twenty-one voted against the Reform Bill of 1831, and fifteen voted against the Reform Bill of 1832.

Burial of Nonconformists—
Sixteen first, and then ten, voted against permitting burial without Church of England rites.

Jewish Disabilities—
Seventeen voted against removing civil disabilities of the Jews.

Nonconformists and Universities—
Twenty-two voted against admitting Nonconformists to University degrees.

Catholic Emancipation—
Nineteen voted against Catholic emancipation.

Dr. Fort Newton, minister of the City Temple, is going to the Front as the guest of the British Government. We wonder if he will wear khaki, like so many of the clergy.

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.

Mr. A. D. Howell Smith's Discussion Class (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Aug 9, at 7.30.

Outdoor.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Percy S. Wild, a Lecture.

Finsbury Park N. S. S.: 11.15, H. V. Storey, a Lecture.

Kingsland Branch N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, Mr. Shaller, "Do Christians Believe?"

North London Branch N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 6 30, a Lecture.

Regent's Park Branch N. S. S.: 3.15, Miss Kough, "He Can't Do Anything."

South London Branch N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

West Ham Branch N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station) 7, Mr. Burke, a Lecture.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales; 6.30, Messrs. Yeates, Beale, and Saphin.

COUNTRY.

Outdoor.

Sheffield Branch N. S. S. (Poole Square): 7, F. E. Willis, Vice-President N. S. S., "What is the Use of Prayer?"

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Views and Opinions.

Religion and Psychology.

We have always been greatly interested in the psychology of the religious mind. It has had a special attraction for us, because we were never, so to speak, inside it. Never having possessed any religious beliefs worth bothering about, it has been no easy task to get at the religious persons point of view, and to look at the world as he sees it. And although this may have had its drawbacks, it has had the compensating advantage of making it more of an objective study, giving one the same detachment of mind that one brings to bear in studying the psychology of a different species—although this, again, opened one to a danger from the other side. Some aspects of the religious mind are easy enough to appreciate. It is easy to understand the stories of visions and paroxyms of ecstatic emotion. A little knowledge of the physiology of the nervous system, under both normal and abnormal conditions, puts one on safe ground. It is easy enough to deal with the expression of social and domestic feelings in terms of religion. That is a mere environmental accident. But there are other aspects of religious psychology of a more puzzling character.

* * *

Pious Lies.

There is, for example, the religious liar. Pulpit talks, and religious papers, particularly those of the poorer kind—for where all are poor there are still degrees of poverty—swarm with stories of a kind that are certainly not true. There is not a street corner preacher, no matter how youthful, and no matter how scanty be his mental equipment, who is not ready with a number of stories, obviously false, concerning the Lord's dealings with him, or his dealings with the Lord. These people will tell you of the cases they have met of people, drunken, miserable, poverty-stricken, etc., who have become shining lights through their interposition. Instead of the Catholic doctrine of the intercession of the saints, we have the Protestant doctrine of the intercession of the street corner preacher, or of the Evangelistic Bible-banger. Now it is easy to dismiss all these stories as lies; and they *are* lies, inasmuch as they are not true. But they are not lies in the sense that they have been consciously invented by people who appreciate the fact that they are lies. Were this the case, there would be nothing to explain. These stories are usually told as though the speaker *believes* them to be true. I have, myself, been faced in a public meeting by a man who told the audience of a conversation he had with me *while I was in the Salvation Army*. And I believe the man actually was convinced he was speaking the truth. And, after all, the average mind is not built for elaborate, constructive lying. It would be a stronger, even a better mind, if it were. It is more a carelessness of the truth that is in evidence, added to an intense power of self-deception, which, in turn, rests upon the foundation of an ill-trained intellect and a badly balanced emotional nature.

* * *

A Catalogue of Mendacity.

It would fill a very large volume were one to give a detailed description of all the lies that have been perpetuated in the name of religion. There is the lie historical, which is illustrated in the gross distortion of historic truth in the interest of Christianity. There is the lie documentary, illustrated in the deliberate fabrication of documents to support one branch or another of the Christian Church, or of Christianity in general. There is the lie sectarian, which consists in the lies manufactured and circulated by one Christian sect of other Christian sects, or the lies told by Christians as a whole of non-Christians. There is the ethical lie of the moral benefits flowing from Christianity, or of the moral evil resulting from its absence. All these, and others, are plain to the most casual investigation, and they may perhaps be summed up in the cultural lie, the lie that the world's progress and welfare have ever been to any extent dependent on belief in the Christian religion. Taken altogether, one might challenge the world to show another religion that has been so buttressed by lies as Christianity has been.

* * *

The Lie of Death.

But the two most persistent and most popular of all pious lies are what one may call the lie of death and the lie of conversion. The lie of death has two phases. It used to be mainly concerned with the deaths of unbelievers, who passed away shrieking in an agony of remorse for God to forgive them. Nearly every great Freethinker, and thousands of small ones, have died in this way. But of late years, as Freethinkers have become more numerous and better known, this lie has lost its force, and it has been largely replaced by the death of the Christian who sent for a particular parson and died "a beautiful death." This, for some time, was a favourite with the Bishop of London. Over and over again he explained how he had been sent for and had just left the death-bed of "one of my dear boys"; and this happened so frequently that it looked as though Providence had deliberately killed some poor devil in order to provide the Bishop with a pathetic passage for

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his sermon. But the curious part of the whole matter is this: Death-beds are not uncommon; most people have stood by them; and everyone knows that people do not die in this way. In nearly every case, when death comes, brain and body are so worn that death is quite peaceful. It comes as a sleep, bringing relief, not terror. Yet this death-bed lie is a fairly constant one. Why do people believe it? Those who hear it know that their own experience gives it the lie. And yet the testimony of daily life does not seem proof against this pulpit legend, nor do clergymen seem to feel that they are acting wrongly in manufacturing these death-bed scenes.

* * *

The Lie of Conversion.

The stories of Christian conversion are equally mendacious. When we read of how the character of A or B was miraculously changed by this tract or that prayer, we do not need detailed examination to pronounce the story false, we *know* it is a lie. Character is not changed in this way. Miracles are as foreign to the moral world as to the world of physical being. And, as with death-beds, so with conversions. What strikes the critical observer is their monotony. The convert at a revival meeting nearly always tells the same tale. He has always led a desperately wicked life, and he usually seems sorry it was not worse. And the younger ones, waiting their turn for conversion, watch the convert with admiration, wondering how they can pile up a similar record of repudiated rascality. But age matters little in these matters. Quite young people can be found accusing themselves of desperate villainy, and exulting in their depravity—before they accepted Jesus. The similarity of these stories is proof of their falsity, and one hardly knows at which to marvel most—the untruthfulness of the speakers or the credulity of the listeners.

* * *

An Evil Environment.

The psychology of religious lying remains an unsolved problem unless we bear in mind the important consideration that in a religious atmosphere ethical values change their nature. A parson will say in the pulpit things he would not say elsewhere, because the pulpit has its own ethic, and its own canons of intellectual righteousness. These stories of conversion, of death-beds, and the like, are part and parcel of the furniture of the pulpit; they are repeated generation after generation, and every young preacher who comes along annexes them as his own. One may get them all in volumes specially prepared for the use of preachers. The whole atmosphere of the pulpit is so unreal that the preacher may with impunity indulge in behaviour that in the social or business world would cause him to be marked as a man whose word was not to be trusted. Every preacher is following a profession in which the great question is not What is true? but What is useful? The end justifies the means, and here the sole end is the advancement of religious belief. Neither carefulness of thought nor accuracy of speech are looked for or desired. Preacher and hearer move for the time being in an environment thick with mental falsities and insincerities, and not the least of the evils of religion are illustrated in the lives of those who—

> Keep on till their own lies deceive 'em,
> And oft repeating, at length believe 'em.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

> How blest the sage! whose soul can pierce each cause
> Of changeful Nature, and her wondrous laws;
> Who tramples Fear beneath his foot, and braves
> Fate, and stern Death, and hell's resounding waves. —*Sotheby, "Georgics of Virgil."*

The Pulpit Discrediting Itself.

AT this year's meeting of the Wesleyan Conference, recently held in London, special attention was directed to the mournful fact that for a considerable period Methodism has been steadily losing ground in this country. The Rev. Samuel Chadwick said "there was reason for distress in Methodism, for they could not lose twenty to thirty thousand people in a decade, and still be complacent." The ex-President, Dr. Tasker, however, while admitting the numerical decrease, declined to regard it as being in the highest sense a real loss, for he had found that, "judging from personal observation made during his year of office, the spiritual advance in Methodism was intensive rather than extensive." What exactly Dr. Tasker meant by that statement does not appear, for although there is everywhere a deepening concern for the spiritual welfare of the young, the fact remains, and must be faced, "that in the Church, as in the nation, they lost a potential army every year." To be of any real value, the advance must be extensive as well as intensive. What is true of Methodism is equally, if not more, true of almost every other denomination. For at least two decades the influence of the Churches has been perceptibly on the wane. Despite the numerous conferences for the strengthening of the spiritual life that take place in different parts of the land, despite all the committees and schemes and programmes for the revival of religion, the Churches are becoming more and more ethically impotent. This is an incontrovertible fact; and yet Christian workers must act as if they were ignorant of it. Dr. Tasker quoted the following rule in the Royal Navy: "No officer shall speak discouragingly to his mate either on the watch or at the mess concerning the business in which he is or may be engaged," and then he added that "they must not go up and down the Church manifesting the spirit of discouragement and uttering words of pessimism." With all due deference to the ex-President, we are bound to pronounce his policy essentially misleading and disastrous. It is the policy resorted to by the ostrich when danger threatens, and it has been pursued by the Church in all perlods of its history. It is the policy of crying, "Peace, peace," when even the possibility of peace is absent.

Is it any wonder that people of intelligence are renouncing the Churches? Can anything be more damaging to the cause of religion than the report of the discussion on the state of the Church at the Wesleyan Conference, which is contained in the *Christian World* for August 2? Dr. Watkinson, for example, deprecated pessimism, saying that a red flag was better than a wet blanket. A great writer had said: "When any system becomes inoperative, manure it with pessimism"; but he warned the brethren against adopting a needlessly pessimistic attitude towards religion. Nevertheless, there is no possible escape from the fact that the culture of the age is alienating itself from the Christian faith, and that the emptying of churches and chapels is a natural result. Natural knowledge is gradually undermining supernatural belief. Reason is slowly exposing the irrational character of most pulpit utterances. A few Sunday evenings ago we attended a well-known church in the West of London, whose first minister recently retired after a long pastorate of exceptional brilliance. The present occupier of the pulpit is a fair specimen of the Nonconformist teacher of the day, tolerably liberal in theology, but clearly dominated by what is usually called the Nonconformist conscience. He has an excellent command of language, and his sermons are evidently prepared with consummate care and committed to memory. Like his predecessor, he

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has the courage of his convictions, though the convictions themselves are not intellectually courageous. In his prayer, for example, he dwelt upon our limitations as human beings, but thanked God that by grace we are enabled to transcend them. Of course, if the Christian religion were true, our limitations could easily be transcended. Our supernatural second birth would endow us with supernatural gifts which would naturally give rise to supernatural deeds. As a matter of fact, however, no human being has ever risen above his limitations. Christians are in no respects whatever superior to non-Christians. The very claim that they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them, is laughed to scorn by the facts of their lives. To thoughtful people such a prayer, as the one to which we allude, is a proof that the man who makes it either does not think at all, but is lost in a sea of superstition, or else is intellectually dishonest, for he cannot be ignorant of the fact that both he and his congregation are utterly incapable of demonstrating its truth in daily life.

The sermon was based upon Isaiah xxii. 1: "The burden of the valley of vision." The theme of the discourse was the burdensomeness of clear vision. They who see clearly and feel keenly the evils by which they are surrounded are necessarily burden bearers, and happiness is impossible to them unless they are doing their utmost to remove those evils. That is an entirely reasonable sentiment, with which no sane person can disagree; and for a time the preacher's treatment of it was perfectly justifiable. It is a natural truth, which is the common property of mankind, and the preacher had the hearty support of all his hearers as long as he so treated it. Unfortunately, he soon drifted into theological quagmires, in which he hopelessly floundered for the rest of the time. Behind all movements was God, and woe was to all who failed to recognize his presence. The War was his "visitation," and in it there was a special message to us Britishers. Well, now, those who saw clearly and felt deeply the evil of our conduct during this War, bore a burden which crushed them to the ground. The newspapers stated that, in spite of many hostile air-raids, Londoners were calm; but it was an appalling lie. Londoners were not, and had no right to be, calm. And yet, after all, Londoners were calm—indecently, wickedly calm. Even the Government did not realize the seriousness of the situation, but acted as if God did not exist at all. Instead of rending their clothes and covering themselves with sackcloth, and ordering the people to do the same, they forgot God, made pleasure and luxury cheap, and provided more beer. The preacher was now in a sarcastic mood, and, from his own idealistic heights, looked down upon the Government and the majority of the British people with withering contempt. They laughed when they ought to weep; they drank beer when they should be filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit; they flocked to places of amusement when even their half-suppressed sense of duty called upon them to be on their knees, in penitential tears, before God in his temple.

Of course, to the preacher it could not but be galling to be aware that, whilst his chapel was far from being half full, a picture palace not many yards off was crowded to the doors for five hours. Of course, too, the people who frequented the latter place were culpably frivolous, whose love of pleasure proved their ruin. On a Sunday evening all serious-minded and honest-hearted folk were to be found in the house of God. We repeat that to the preacher such estimates of character were professionally natural, and had he but spoken in his own name we could not have found any grievous fault with them, but would have attributed them to his professional vanity and jealousy. But he spoke in the name of God, whom he held responsible for his own ignorant prejudice and bigotry. All the way through, he acted as Heaven's spokesman.

Now, is it surprising that men and women, who think for themselves, refuse to take the preacher at his own valuation, and, therefore, pay no heed whatever to his various utterances? Were he to speak in his own name, even those who now believe in him would turn away from him in disgust, and very soon nearly all our pulpits would be unoccupied.

J. T. Lloyd.

Edward Fitzgerald.

That same gentle spirit from whose pen
Large streams of honey and sweet nectar flow.
—*Spenser.*

The appearance in a threepenny edition of Edward Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* makes one regret the days when mischievous books were publicly burned by the common hangman.—*Daily Mail.*

Edward Fitzgerald, a great English writer, died in 1883, almost unknown. Only a few people had even heard his name. The public had very little chance of hearing it, for he was so shy and retiring that he took more pains to avoid fame than others do to seek it. He wrote about remote subjects, which appealed only to extremely cultured people. When his friend, Alfred Tennyson, dedicated *Tiresias* to Fitzgerald, the tribute seemed merely the outcome of friendship. The ordinary reader discounted the praise of that—

Golden Eastern lay,
Than which I know no version done
In English more divinely well.

To-day Fitzgerald's version of *Omar Khayyam* is probably read as much as any verse except that of Shakespeare. It is quoted in leading articles, and few modern novels are complete without one or more quotations from its quatrains; and its haunting verses have been set to music.

If a man is known by his friends, the world has small need of a formal introduction to Edward Fitzgerald. He was a man of many and notable friendships. At school he made acquaintance with James Spedding, the Baconian critic, and at Cambridge University with Thackeray. The years which followed united him to the brothers Alfred and Frederick Tennyson, Thomas Carlyle, Bernard Barton, the quaker poet, Lawrence, the painter, and others.

Fitzgerald's biographer, like the immortal knife-grinder, has no story to tell. He was born at Bredfield, near Woodbridge, in 1809; the same year as Tennyson and Darwin. He was educated at Bury St. Edmunds, and afterwards at Cambridge. He followed no profession after taking his degree. Till 1853, though he often shifted his quarters, he lived mainly in a thatched cottage at Boulge, near Woodbridge, close to his brother's residence, Boulge Hall. He was in lodgings in Woodbridge from 1860 to 1874, when he settled in a small house of his own outside the town, named, at the wish of a lady friend, "Little Grange." And "Laird of Little Grange," as he humorously signed himself, he remained till he died, aged seventy-four, in June, 1883. He is buried in Boulge Churchyard, and a rose, transplanted from the tomb of old Omar Khayyam, has been planted over his grave.

Fitzgerald lived the life of a recluse in Suffolk on the North Sea coast. His friend Carlyle saw in it all "a peaceable, affectionate, ultra-modest man," and an innocent, *far niente* life. Like Shelley, he had a great fondness for the sea, and a deep affection for fishermen and sailors. One old Viking, the hero-fisherman of Lowestoft, whom we know as "Posh," he numbered among his personal

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friends. Fitzgerald characteristically considered "Posh" a greater man than either Tennyson or Thackeray, because he was not self-conscious. The Viking succumbed to an undue devotion to Bacchus, but that did not trouble Fitzgerald, for he was no harsh judge of human frailties. Curiously, the man who gave us Omar's *Rubaiyat*, that immortal rhapsody of wine, woman, and song, was very abstemious. He was a vegetarian, and he nearly killed his friend Tennyson by persuading him, too, to turn vegetarian for six weeks.

Fitzgerald's books were all published without his name on the title-page, except his version of Calderon's dramas. He wrote a memoir to an edition of the poems of his friend, Bernard Barton. Later he printed his remarkable dialogue, *Euphranor*. *Polonius*, and a rendering of the *Agamemnon*, and four editions of his masterpiece, the *Omar Khayyam*, came out before his death; the first appearing in the year of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, without gaining any immediate recognition.

Owing to his living in the country, Fitzgerald devoted much time to his correspondence, and he was a most delightful letter-writer. His friends, be it remembered, were men of outstanding ability, and the companion of such giants must have been no ordinary character. When a man is loved by other men of his own intellectual stature, and of a wholly different type, we may be certain there is something genuine about him. Men do not like another man simply because he is a genius, least of all when they happen to be geniuses themselves. It would not have been possible for Fitzgerald to keep on writing uninteresting letters to such men for nearly half a century. Indeed, Fitzgerald's letters are among the best in the language. There is hardly a dull line in them, and they are most charming and piquant reading on account of their literary heresies and heterodoxy. His taste was all for ancient books, old friends, familiar jests, and well-known places. His special literary favourites were really great writers, and he loved Cervantes and Scott, Montaigne and Madame de Sevigne, she herself a lover of Montaigne, and with a spice of his Freethought and speech in her. Of course, he loved that old Persian infidel, Omar Khayyam, with whom his own fame is so intimately associated; and that other old-world Freethinker, Lucretius. London had no attractions for him, chiefly because it hid Nature. Like Thoreau, Fitzgerald knew by instinct the life that suited him, and had the wisdom to refuse to be turned aside from it.

If any justification were needed, his version of Omar's wonderful "Rose of the hundred-and-one petals" would be enough. The perennial charm of that immortal poem is that it voices with no uncertain sound the scepticism at the back of all thoughtful men's minds, and makes magnificent music of it. What a translation of Omar was Fitzgerald's! "A plant larger than the sun which cast it," said his friend Tennyson. In truth, the translation is finer than the original, and in this resembles the Authorized Version of the New Testament, which, as Swinburne reminds us, is translated from "canine Greek" to "divine English."

In his version of the *Rubaiyat*, Fitzgerald showed himself a consummate artist. The magnificent opening is pure, unadulterated Fitzgerald; and again and again throughout the poem the master hand is revealed. In one of the later verses, by the addition of two words, Fitzgerald has turned a commonplace into the most fearful indictment ever uttered by man against Deity:—

> O Thou, who man of baser earth didst make,
> And even with paradise devise the Snake,
> For all the sin wherewith the face of man
> Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—*and take*.

In particular, Fitzgerald voices Materialism:—

> Oh threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise!
> One thing, at least, is certain—This life flies.
> One thing is certain, and the rest is lies;
> The flower that once has blown for ever dies.

Lamentation, just as in Æschylus, or Marcus Aurelius, or even the Book of Job, is apparent in the poem, and it is allied to "linked sweetness, long drawn out":—

> Yet ah! that spring should vanish with the rose,
> That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close;
> The nightingale that in the branches sang,
> Ah, whence and whither flown again—who knows?

Fitzgerald derides prayer in verse of passionate bitterness:—

> And that inverted bowl they call the sky,
> Whereunder crawling, cooped, we live and die,
> Lift not your hands to It for help, for it
> As impotently rolls as you and I.

Like Lucretius, the old-world Freethinker, Fitzgerald introduces argument into his poetry, and with the same deadly effect. Noting how self-contradictory is theology, he says:—

> What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
> A conscious Something to resent the yoke
> Of unpermitted pleasure, under pain
> Of everlasting penalties if broke!
> What! from his helpless creature be repaid
> Pure gold for what he lent him, dross alloyed—
> Sue for a debt he never did contract,
> And cannot answer—oh, the sorry trade!

"A sense of tears in human things" breaks out in the following:—

> Ah, 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
> Remould it nearer to the heart's desire?

In his adaptation of *Omar*, Edward Fitzgerald, the shy English poet, dreamed one dream more lasting than we ourselves, or he, or the very Suffolk coast he lived on. He gives all who care to read the freedom of that ancient Eastern city of dreams, while far transcends in mystery and splendour the Orient men go out in the ships to see.

Oh! immortals of literature! The old Persian poet sees his vision and writes it; and eight centuries after, the tired merchant, forgetting for a space his counting-house and ledgers, lives a freer life in the wonderland of the poet's genius. Here are nymphs and roses, grotesque imaginings, and human memories. This is immortality indeed! Under the spell of the poet's genius he dreams the self-same dream for one little hour, and is refreshed.

MIMNERMUS.

Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

IV.

(Continued from p. 493.)

It is with the psychical phenomena that Spiritualists are now mainly concerned, and when we examine the materials for belief in, and knowledge of the conditions under which the departed exist in, another life, which these supply, one is staggered that minds of lofty conceptions and ideals can build on them the superstructure of personal immortality. From the enormous mass of communications purporting to come from discarnate spirits, not an ennobling nor high-toned message can be extracted; all, all is nauseating, frivolous, mischievous, spurious drivel. Through his control (the spirit of) a little Indian girl Feda (The spirit of) Raymond Lodge tells his father that the houses in the Beyond are made "from sort of emanations from the earth"; that his white robe is "made from decayed worsted on your side"; that he has his "little doggie" with him; that cigars made "out of essences and ethers and gases" are provided for smokers, and "whisky-sodas" for drinkers! Faugh!—*Edward Clodd, "Strand Magazine"* (July, 1917), p. 54.

It is extremely unsafe to assume that because Sir Oliver Lodge is a high authority upon electricity, therefore his conclusions about ghosts must be well founded and worthy of adoption. Probably few people would maintain that they adopt his conclusions about ghosts on the ground that he

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> is an authority upon electricity, but there is no doubt whatever that this is in fact the ground on which a very great many people do adopt his conclusions.—*Dr. Charles A. Mercier, "Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge"* (1917), p. 68.

Sir Oliver Lodge approaches Spiritualism in the same spirit in which he approaches religion, and between the scientific spirit and the religious spirit there is open war, which will only come to an end by the utter defeat of one side or the other. Sir Oliver himself has pointed out this opposition. In his *Man and the Universe* (1908; p. 11), he observes:—

> In disposition, also, Religion and Science are opposite. Science cultivates a vigorous, adult, intelligent, serpent-like wisdom, and active interference with the course of nature; religion fosters a meek, receptive, child-hearted attitude of dove-like resignation to the Divine will.

And it is the child-hearted attitude he adopts in spiritualistic investigations. Mr. Edward Clodd says that an intimate friend of Sir Oliver described him as "longing to believe something." And Mr. Clodd further quotes him as arguing that "in dealing with psychical phenomena, a hazy, muzzy state of mind is better than a mind 'keenly awake' and 'on the spot.'"[1] Probably Dr. Mercier was not aware of these facts, or he would not have expressed such amazement at the simplicity and credulity exhibited by Sir Oliver Lodge in the presence of fraud and humbug.

For instance, Sir Oliver devotes nearly the whole of chapter iv. of his *Survival of Man* to recording his experiments with the two daughters of Herr von Lyro during the summer of 1892, while staying for a fortnight at their house at Portschach am See, Carinthia. In this case, one of the young ladies, while holding the hand of the other, was able to name the number of pips on the cards that were invisible to the speaker, but visible to the sister who held her hand; but when their hands were parted they could do nothing. Sir Oliver tells us "very slight contact was sufficient, for instance, through the backs of the knuckles; but directly the hands were separated, even though but a quarter of an inch, the phenomena ceased—reappearing again directly contact was established."[2]

As Dr. Mercier points out, in an analysis of Sir Oliver's account of this experiment, everything points to the use of the Morse code, and remarks:—

> Out of sixteen attempts, ten were successful. Really, the ladies must have been very clumsy if they could produce no better result than this, after years of practice. I have had no practice at all, but I would undertake to get fifteen out of sixteen right at the first attempt, and to name the suit after five minutes' trial with a confederate. But note what follows: Sir Oliver Lodge enters into an elaborate mathematical calculation to show that this amazing result could not possibly be the result of chance guessing. He shows that the probabilities are 8008 to 1310 that it is not the result of chance. Less than one in a million, that is![3]

But, as Dr. Mercier observes, "Who on earth supposes that it was the result of chance?" And he compares Sir Oliver's mathematical calculation to the patter of the conjurer who wishes to distract the attention from what he does not wish to be seen. "What should be proved is that it could not have been due to collusion, and no mathematical calculation can prove this. The mathematics are a red herring—a red herring? They are 8008 red herrings, they are 1310 red herrings drawn across the scent."[4]

Sir Oliver Lodge admits that this case is not strong enough to convince sceptics, although he has no doubt of its genuineness himself. As Dr. Mercier remarks, seeing that these experiments are, "on Sir Oliver Lodge's own showing, utterly worthless, it is a pity that for the sake of his own reputation he did not suppress them." As to Sir Oliver's testimony as to the "absolutely genuine and artless manner" in which the young ladies operated, and the "transparent honesty of purpose of all concerned," Dr. Mercier caustically remarks: "What did he expect? Is it the custom for tricksters to behave so as to put their dupes on their guard? Did he watch to see whether Miss R. and Miss E. winked at one another? And as he did not detect them in winking, did he conclude that they must be genuine? Is not every dupe of the confidence trick, or the gold brick swindle, or the Spanish prisoner swindle, perfectly convinced of the transparent honesty of purpose of all concerned? Did he expect that if they were not genuine they would come in masks and cloaks, and whisper together in corners? Apparently he did, and since they behaved in the genuine and artless manner in which ordinary conjurers always do behave, he was convinced that they could not be conjurers Of what value is his assurance that he believes these performances were genuine?"[5]

It is all of a piece with Sir Oliver's belief in Eusapia Paladino, even after her exposure at Cambridge, when he declared that some of her phenomena might be due to trickery, but not all!

Again, Dr. Mercier joins issue with Sir Oliver upon a plain matter of fact. The Doctor quotes Sir Oliver Lodge as stating, with regard to the famous medium Mrs. Piper, that when she wakes from the trance, during which she communicates with the spirits of the dean, "The look of ecstasy on Mrs. Piper's face at a certain stage in the working process is manifestly similar to that seen in the faces of some dying people; and both describe the subjective visions as of something more beautiful and attractive than those of earth."

This belief in the ecstatic look on the faces of the dying, and their description of beautiful visions seen during their last moments, has been made familiar by means of countless Christian tracts. In fact, nearly all Christian heroes are made to die uttering beautiful sentiments and seeing glorious visions; while unbelievers and sceptics are made to see horrid sights and die in hopeless despair, to the sound of mocking laughter.

The falsity of these fancy pictures has been exposed many times in these columns; but we are glad to give the additional testimony of so eminent a practitioner as Dr. Mercier, who declares:—

> As a medical man of many years' residence in medical institutions, I am sure I have seen very many more dying people than Sir Oliver Lodge has, and I have never yet witnessed a look of ecstasy on the face of the dying person. I have asked old and experienced nurses who have seen many more people die than I have, and none of them will say that she has seen a look of ecstasy on the face of a dying person. Dying people often murmur unintelligibly, but neither I nor any I have been able to consult has ever heard a dying person describe subjective visions of something more beautiful and attractive than those of earth. People who die slowly of disease almost always lose much of their consciousness a considerable time before death, and when they are so near death that they can be said to be certainly dying, they have, so far as appearance goes, either no consciousness at all, or so little that it compares with full consciousness as the light of the moon in its last quarter to the glare of the sun at noon. People in such a condition are speechless, and unable to describe any visions, even if they experienced any visions, which is in the last degree unlikely. This is not

[1] Edward Clodd, *Pioneers of Evolution* (1897), p. 136. Citing from an "Address" to the S. P. R. *Proceedings* of the S. P. R., part xxvi., pp. 14, 15.

[2] Sir Oliver Lodge, *The Survival of Man* (1909), pp. 59, 60.

[3] Dr. Mercier, *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*, p. 96.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

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> a criticism on a trivial point of detail. Mrs. Piper's look of ecstasy is adduced by Sir Oliver Lodge to assimilate her trance condition to the condition of the dying, and so to render more likely her communications with the dead. This is one of rare instances in which we are able to test the accuracy of Sir Oliver Lodge's testimony, and it does not encourage us to place reliance on his testimony when we cannot test it.[1]

But to return to Telepathy, as Dr. Ivor Tuckett has remarked, "the curious fact about the evidence for psychic force, psychometry, spirit-control and telepathy is that conclusive test cases are always attended by failure, and that in other cases the supposed successful observations can seldom or never be repeated."[2] In this matter they resemble miracles, people believe that the dead came to life again two thousand years ago, they also believe that at some distant day everybody will come to life again, but they cannot produce a case to-day.

Sir Ray Lankester tells us that when Sir Oliver Lodge, some years ago, declared that telepathy had been proved:—

> At the time, I challenged (in a letter to the press) Sir Oliver Lodge's statement that telepathy had been "discovered." I asked for the demonstration necessary to justify the assertion that telepathy had been "discovered." I professed my willingness to investigate this phenomenon stated to occur in our midst and its asserted discovery. No opportunity of investigating it has ever been offered to me by those who declare that it exists. I was definitely refused the opportunity of examining the asserted phenomenon for which I applied to the Society for Psychical Research.[3]

Time and again, money has been offered for a single test proof of telepathy, without result. A gentleman writes to the *Literary Guide* (August, 1910), saying "my offer of paying £50 for a single case of telepathy has been made so often during the last four or five years that I begin to doubt it if there is any evidence-worthy of the name—though I have read all the *ex parte* statements published to date."

A friend of Dr. Ivor Tuckett offered £1,000 to three of the leading English authorities on telepathy for satisfactory proof of one single case with the following result:—

> The first replied at once, expressing surprise at my imagining "that incontrovertible evidence could be obtained at all in an inductive problem"! The second at first very kindly expressed his willingness to help, and appeared very keen to meet me and talk the matter over; but, after seeing No. 1, he wrote, "Whilst anxious to help you, I could not undertake to prove the results of a long and difficult investigation to order or for a pecuniary offer," and the third replied, "You may offer £1,000,000 with perfect safety. No sane person will back any mortal to do telepathy to order."[4]

This offer of a thousand pounds has been publicly advertised in the *Times* without result. The only reply Sir Oliver Lodge makes to the offer is an outrageous insult. He says: "The business man takes another line and offers a thousand pounds for proofs which will convince him. *He has, of course, no intention of parting with the money*, and is quite satisfied that he can resist any temptation to be convinced.....To all wagers of this kind I trust that those connected with the S.P.R. will always turn a deaf and contemptuous ear."[5]

The telepathists offer you tons of evidence on paper, but when you ask for a morsel of evidence now, as a test, they turn "a deaf and contemptuous ear." To say the least of it, it looks suspicious.

Perhaps the writer of the letter signed "J. J. O.", in last week's *Freethinker*, will accept the above as an answer. What is wanted is not *testimony*—certainly not the testimony of dreams which "J. J. O." offers—but a scientific *test*. If we went on testimony alone, we should have to believe in miracles, witchcraft, sorcery, and a host of other ridiculous and impossible things.

"J. J. O." says that having been in a church choir most of his life, he has "a wholesome contempt for the supernatural." I cannot see the connection. Choristers are not usually regarded as being more rational, or sceptical, than other people.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

[1] Dr. Mercier, *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*, pp. 60-61.
[2] *Bedrock*, January, 1913, p. 483.
[3] Sir Ray Lankester, *Bedrock*, January, 1913, p. 489.
[4] Dr. Ivor Tuckett, *The Evidence for the Supernatural*, p. 306.
[5] *Bedrock*, April, 1913, pp. 60-61. The italics are ours.

A Jesuit Question-Box.

THE correspondence columns of newspapers are an interesting and amusing study, especially those appearing in religious newspapers. There is the clerical enquire-within-upon-everything type of person who makes much literary to do about nothing, and generally leaves his correspondent to take religion as he likes it. This type may be met with in the *Christian Commonwealth* and other "advanced" religious journals. At present, however, I have before me a pious journal of a very different order—the *Sodality Magazine*—issued in connection with the Jesuit sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In this issue (July, 1917) there are three pages of what is called Sodality Correspondence, albeit it is quite clear that some of it does not come from members of the sodality, but is supposed to originate from what Catholics sympathetically call (in England) "our separated brethren." Elsewhere they are damned heretics. But that's another story. These answers to correspondents are written (presumably) by a Jesuit priest, and probably he is also the inventor of the questions he answers. His reverence is by way of being a wit of sorts, and his advice and directions are eloquent of the mentality of his readers for whom, of course, they are provided.

A good Catholic boy wants to know if there is anything wrong in boxing? and is told to "go in for these things." Another youth who signs himself (quite unnecessarily) "Scrupulous," wants to know "at what age should a fellow give up kissing girl friends?" He is told that "this is a puzzle," but "we asked a lady friend, and she said: 'Silly boy, tell him not to give it up at all.'" The scrupulous one is told not to "make any drastic change."

These answers are comprehensible. The Church wants fighters, and she doesn't want "mixed" marriages!

The writer seems to try to compensate his clients for his theological intolerance by his practical liberality. He has a kindly eye for all the weaknesses of men and women—except when they are theological weaknesses. Some one wants to know: "Is it wrong for a devout lady to smoke a cigarette?" Answer: "We prefer it to a pipe, which is *not* elegant. It all depends upon custom." And so on.

Another set of these questions purport to come from non-Catholics, and these enquiries are answered so as to make those who are supposed to have asked them appear ridiculous in the eyes of the pious readers of the *Sodality Magazine*. Thus some one ("M.S.J.")—I cannot help wondering if this is a cryptic joke, and these initials mean member of the Society of Jesus—is supposed to

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have written saying: "I don't believe in the Devil." Answer:—

> Dear Sir, glad to hear it. That was Eve's little mistake.....Fact is, dear Sir, you *do* believe in the Devil when he says he doesn't exist. Some day you will find he *does*. He's got his tail coiled right round what you gracefully call your intellect.

Similar is the reply to "H.W.," who asks: "Have any Popes gone to Hell?" Answer:—

> In a few years you may be able to find out. Its pretty certain an Apostle did. Yes, about three Popes were nothing to boast of, but they were better than the "spiritual head" of the Anglican Church, the Tudor Blue Beard.

Again, "Mrs. H.W." writes to say: "My dear husband, dead now five years, speaks to me every night. How can you say Spiritualism isn't true?" Answer:—

> Poor man, we expect its the first opportunity he's had of getting a word in. We don't say Spiritualism isn't true, but its dangerous playing with the Devil (we are not referring to the dear departed). You may ring his majesty up but you may not be able to ring him off.

If the readers of this stuff think these are replies to genuine correspondents, one wonders what sort of taste and intelligence they have if they can chuckle, as doubtless they are intended to, over them.

Finally, there are here some few serious answers to what look more like serious questions from Catholics. Thus, "J.N.A." enquires why the Church forbids marriages of cousins. Answer:—

> The reason why the Church forbids marriages between very near relatives is because experience proves that the children of such marriages are frequently weak, unhealthy and queer, and we have quite enough of these. *Still it is possible to obtain a dispensation* (italics mine).

The health and sanity of the next generation is not a doctrine of the Church, and so, even when she knows you are going to put these in jeopardy, you may have a dispensation to do so—for a consideration, of course.

My only reason for making this trash the subject of an article is to point out that in these little pious magazines, in their sodalities, confraternities, and Sunday-schools, the Churches are as crude as ever. In this particular case those who know Catholicism from the inside will recognize the spirit and method of this writer as characteristic. The Church's aim is to prevent people thinking, and among her flock she does it very often by setting up the pleasing delusion that they are thinking and debating, and getting the best of it. As so often happens, the outsider sees most of the game.

The writer of these highly courteous replies invites his "non-Catholic (small n and cap C, Mr. Printer, please) brethren" to inquire of him privately as to their religious difficulties. It is to be hoped his private correspondence is as revelatory of Catholicism as are his public answers.

Alan Handsacre.

Acid Drops.

The Chaplain-General to the Forces writes to the papers asking for mid-day prayers on behalf of soldiers. He says he knows "how much it is valued and counted upon by them." We are surprised the soldiers do not make their needs in this direction better known through their private correspondence instead of leaving it to Bishop Taylor Smith. If anyone should ask, "Have we not prayed for three years?" Bishop Taylor Smith replies that the "Lord of Hosts" has been with us. All we can say to that is, we wish his help had been more obviously effective.

The clergy sometimes let the cat out of the bag. The Rev. Dr. Selbie, President of the National Free Church Council, says, "if soldiers do not hate the Church, it is mainly because they despise it."

Canon Green, speaking at a meeting at Manchester, took up the attitude that God called the people to war in 1914, and now calls on them to stop fighting. The way these parsons receive trunk calls from the Almighty must excite the wonder of the ordinary man.

A sensational story of an airman singing to a leopard to scare it away was told in a daily paper. The story goes that the airman climbed a tree and the leopard moved around for forty-five minutes. The airman, a full-throated bass, burst out with "The Admiral's Broom," "Two Eyes of Grey," "O God, our Help in Ages Past," and concluded with a sonorous "Amen." The latter did the trick. Perhaps the leopard bolted to avoid a collection.

The Bishop of Winchester says "it is not true that the clergy have a soft job. Their lives are hard, especially in war-time." We do not know what his lordship's idea of a "soft job" may be; but most of the clergy are well paid for their work. Moreover, they are altogether exempted from military service. His lordship's own modest stipend is a paltry £130 a week.

The Salvation Army is advertising its "hostels," and the Girls' Friendly Society is asking for canteens for City girls. Surely this is taking the "bread of life" a little too literally.

As Mr. H. G. Wells becomes more pious, he is losing his sense of humour. Referring to a book published in 1908, he says it was the "wet clay" of *God the Invisible King*. This suggests that an invisible spirit is made of clay, which is almost as funny as the definition of Deity, "A sort of a something, somewhere."

The Bishop of London, in asking for prayers for victory throughout his diocese, says, "My own belief is that God alone saved us at that critical moment in the history of the world"—presumably at the Marne. We cannot say God was not with us, only we marvel that he was not with us earlier, or more effectively when he did arrive. That is the worst of gods. Either they do what we could do just as well without them, or they do nothing at all. And we prefer the god who does nothing.

"Confirmation, as a habit, is not confined to the Eversley jockeys. In his book on the Cotswolds, Mr. Francis Duckworth recalls the case of a servant girl in the Manor House at Stanton, in Gloucestershire. She had been confirmed three times. When interrogated on the subject she replied that she had found confirmation a good cure for rheumatism!"—*Daily Chronicle*.

"General" Booth suggests that "some of the depressed and hungry millions of the East could be fed and civilized and blessed there. They might even be loved and gospelled and saved." The non-military "general" might ask their permission before starting the offensive.

The *Evening News* says: "In every sense of the words the Pacifists of this country are a contemptible minority." Yet Christians profess to worship the Prince of Peace.

Of thirty-one Wesleyan ministers who are retiring, most of them have completed over forty years in the ministry. Evidently the profession is not a dangerous one.

The dear *Daily News* says "a certain type of modern journalism" works usually by noise, but "does not ignore the possibilities of silence." In plain English, the newspaper editors realize that prejudice may be created by saying too little as well as by saying too much. It does not say much for the glorious free press of a civilized country.

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The late Rev. Henry Buckston, of Sutton-on-the-Hill, Derby, left estate of the value of £45,547. This sum seems sufficient to keep Brother Buckston from entering Paradise.

A newspaper paragraph states that Bishop Boyd Carpenter "has a country seat in Devonshire." The carpenter who founded the Christian religion had not where to lay his head.

The *Daily Telegraph*, explaining why the British Advance in the recent "push" was not greater, blames the weather, and remarks on the frequency with which it has been on the side of the enemy during the War. Now here, clearly, is a chance for the clergy. Providence has not had left it much of its ancient state, but God is still allowed some influence here. So let the clergy set to work and call the attention of Providence to the matter. Or, perhaps, some member of the House of Commons might put a question enquiring whether attention had been called to this unneutral behaviour of Providence.

What the newspapers call a "scene" occurred in the House of Commons during the debate on Mr. Henderson's visit to Paris. General Croft charged Mr. Ramsey Macdonald with being "on the side of the Germans." Mr. Macdonald asked him to withdraw the statement. The General offered justification. "The Hon. Member," he said, "believes in the brotherhood of man." The evidence not being considered decisive, the General withdrew the implication, but the frame of mind indicated by the remark is interesting. In the mind of General Croft it would seem that belief in the brotherhood of man and support of Germany is synonymous. We sincerely hope this is not the case, although it may well be that our own militarists see in the belief in the brotherhood of man an enemy to be dreaded.

In Ireland an order has been issued prohibiting the wearing of uniforms by other than members of the Forces. We wonder if this will affect the flat-chested warriors of the Salvation Army.

A headline in a daily paper reads, "Women Saviours." Why not? They can hardly be less successful at this business than men.

The rector who told his parishioners that the War stimulated church-going, will read with pleasure that some thousands of Londoners went to a church at Southgate recently and that the building will cost several hundred pounds to be restored.

Alluding to the mistaken views regarding education, Miss M. J. Tuke, M.A., Principal of Bedford College, London, said at a meeting at Hitchen, that up to the outbreak of war it was firmly thought that silly women made the best wives. Maybe this is one of the reasons why the Christian superstition still flourishes in our midst.

Dr. Charles Mercier, a specialist on mental diseases, has attacked Sir Oliver Lodge in a book, entitled *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*. He says roundly that Sir Oliver and other professors "have shut their eyes and opened their mouths and swallowed any trash the mediums liked to present them with."

"The quality of priest and prophet is one which develops under encouragement and cultivation" says a writer in a daily paper. How true the remark is concerning the higher clergy, who point the thorny road to heaven whilst they tread the primrose path of dalliance on the salaries of cabinet ministers.

Says the *Church Times*: "It is not militarism that the world is suffering from, but bellicosity, and, if peace were absolutely and permanently assured, it might still be worth while to pay for a big army as a training-ground for a nation under arms." We gave one instance a week or so back (the *Daily Telegraph* appeal to the Catholic Church to assist in the application of conscription to Ireland), and here is another, of the sinister alliance between militarism and religion. We may take it for granted that when this War is over, and the attempt is made to foist permanent conscription on this country, we shall find the Church using its best efforts in its behalf. Religion and militarism have always run well together, and will continue in double harness to the end of the chapter.

Our very pious contemporary quite reverses the truth in the above statement. Bellicosity is not at all a bad thing; militarism, which may be taken as a special manifestation of bellicosity, is detestable. The fighting impulse in man leads to discovery, to invention, to improvement; and the man who is fighting against war may be a more pugnacious individual than the one engaged in warfare. The usual error made by the militarist is to assume that because one protests against the value of armed warfare, one is blind to the importance of struggle and effort in human affairs. And *if* peace were permanently assured, what value is it to have a nation under arms? Is it to keep the home population in order?

The *Irvine Valley News*, a Scottish local weekly for July 20, contains a lively and thoughtful article from one of the Conscientious Objectors imprisoned at Dartmoor. The following passage is both amusing and interesting:—

> Dartmoor to-day has another side—bright to dazzling point, and the man who does not find humour here would not find salt water at "Trin." Now this that I'm gaun tae tell is as true as there is spite in a cat. On oor stairheid there are 23 different religious and political parties. We have Quakers, P.B.'s, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostalists, Salvationists, I.B.S.'ers, Christian Scientists, I.L.P.'ers, B.S P.'ers, Anarchists, Atheists, Deists, and heaven only knows what. From one cell door you will see a banner flying, "Jesus Saves"; another, "Socialism the World Hope"; another, "There is joy in heaveh"; while opposite an Atheist will fly his banner asking, "And where the Hell's Heaven?"

We should not be at all surprised if some leave Dartmoor with very different ideas from those with which they entered its precincts.

Dr. Selbie, President of the Free Church Council, and Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, says it is fatal for the Church to go to people with a list of "dont's." In this case the Church is doomed, for the Ten Commandments all commence "Thou shalt not."

At the Grocers' Conference at Plymouth a speaker called for the prohibition of trading after ten o'clock on Sundays. The time selected would enable the Sabbath breakers to count their ill-gotten gains, and afterwards attend a place of worship and confess they were miserable sinners.

Charged as an absentee at Gateshead, Ernest Bell, a fruiterer, said he was a member of the Church of Christ, and conducted services. The magistrates held that he was entitled to exemption. Even half-time holiness has its advantages.

Some excitement was caused at a Christian Convention at Brighton through the Rev. Charles Inwood asking a blessing for an unnamed "military hospital where God's name is never mentioned except in ridicule." We have no doubt but that Mr. Inwood exaggerates, but we suppose his lament may be taken as an admission that the War is knocking the fear of religion out of the minds of many. Mr. Inwood also prayed for mercy on "doctors and nurses who scorn to think of Thy Holy Name." So that some Brighton hospitals are quite in a bad way—from the Christian point of view.

An Essex clergyman says that the world needs "the Peace of God." This is a peace that passeth all understanding.

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To Correspondents.

E. L.—We do not care to discuss the question of German *versus* British missionaries. You may be quite sure the trader is not far behind either or both. All we feel warranted in saying of both is that they are always a nuisance, and often a dangerous nuisance.

E. B.—Thanks for quotations and cuttings. It is good of you to take so much trouble.

J. Niel.—Quite a good heading, as you say. Thanks.

G. E. Quirk.—You are doing good work in getting letters, such as the one contributed by you to *Common Sense*, into the public press. We wish more of our readers would follow your example.

C. W. B.—Received. Shall be pleased to use some of the verses.

A. V. Harris.—Very pleased to hear from you. Am sending some literature for use among the men, which we hope will prove useful.

Lance-Corpl. Royston.—Pamphlets being sent as requested. Will do what we can to make the agents more attentive, but please continue to apply pressure at your end.

A. A. Partem.—We do not think you have taken the real point of last week's "Views." We should not have blamed the clergy, *as citizens*, for their support of the War. Our criticism was concerned with their attitude as clergymen, and to have claimed exemption afterwards was surely the height of folly—or knavery. You are correct that there are no creeds in this War, and that in Germany Freethinkers will be saying the same things as Freethinkers here. But surely there is a distinction between this and people *in both countries* praying to the same Deity, and thanking him for his assistance? Finally, we cheerfully concede that there are rules governing war as there are rules governing the prize ring, and that those are to blame who break these rules. But that hardly touches the point that the rules of war are, considered as a fight between men, on a lower level than the rules of the "ring."

T. C.—Glad to know you were pleased with article. The praise of one who possesses discrimination is always appreciated.

A. L. Morris.—A chapter on "Cain's Wife" was included in G. W. Foote's *Bible Romances*. There is no elaborate treatise on the subject that we can call to mind, the subject being hardly of sufficient importance.

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.

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

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.

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.

Too late for notice last week, we received a copy of the *Hawick Express* containing a notice of the interment of Mr. J. C. Goodfellow, an old correspondent of the *Freethinker*. The funeral presented the interesting feature of being a Secular one conducted by a clergyman. Rev. David Muir delivered an address at the graveside, and, after paying a tribute to Mr. Goodfellow's intellectual attainment, said:—

> But to-day we think not merely, and perhaps not chiefly, of the intellectual attainments which made him a conspicuous figure in this town. We remember his wide and genial sympathies, the inborn courtesy that gave distinction to his personality, the qualities of heart and character which won for him a large circle of friends, and in the intimate relationships of home-life united him with lasting bonds of affection to the members of his family. But we remember most of all that during the long years of his life, he stood before his fellow-townsmen as an example of scrupulous honour and irreproachable integrity. All who knew Mr. Goodfellow are aware that in the early years of his life he arrived at convictions which placed him out of sympathy with the creeds of the Christian religion, and outside the fellowship of the Christian Church. These convictions were reached not through any light or ill-considered impulse, but as the result of the severest mental conflict. Therefore, deeply conscious as we are of the mysteries of the unseen world in whose presence we stand, it is due to the sincerity with which he held his opinions that we should refrain from associating his grave with a religious ritual, against which the whole trend of his mind was in resolute revolt. But, far apart as our cherished beliefs are from those which he maintained, we cannot but honour in him the unflinching intellectual honesty which could brook no compromise, and which refused to rest in any conventional pretence of faith. And we must admire the fearless courage which in scorn of consequences shrank from no conclusion to which he was led according to his light, however painful the sacrifices and alienations it might involve.

We congratulate Mr. Muir on his liberality of mind and geniality of temper.

Another letter from France which, we are sure, will be read with interest;—

> Let me assure you that far from a religious revival taking place, there is a widespread wane of Freethought abroad among our men out here. Unmistakable signs are everywhere in evidence. Debates and discussions are taking place in many camps, notably in this one. Let me name a few of the subjects raised: "Christianity, is it a Failure"? "Religion after the War"; "Wake up, Church of England." "What is Wrong with the State Church?" "Brotherhood of Man"; "Abolish the State Church."
>
> The writer who is a keen supporter of Freethought (and has been for a number of years in South Africa), has had many opportunities of forming opinions, both in the line and at the base, of the trend of thought in this direction. The Churches have failed miserably. I have heard the parsons say so from the platforms of our meetings. And no doubt they are making frantic efforts to retrieve their mistakes, etc.; but their days are numbered, their game is fast being played out, and no one knows it better than they. As regards the majority out here, I might quote Scripture: "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Living on the fat of the land and drinking of the best, clothed in khaki and Sam Browne belt, which ill befits them, they are an example of hypocrisy and sham. Shepherds! more like wolves. We men see a lot of their carrying on. A few chaplains, but they are men, play the game. A religious revival (what a damnable lie) trumpeted through the land to hoodwink the religious and credulous fools that these gentry fatten upon.
>
> One could write pages on the subject. Certainly the public money is squandered shamefully in the upkeep of these clerical shams. But, never mind, their day is nearly over. The War (in a way the parsons know little of) is indeed a blessing in disguise.

We should hardly have thought it worth while anyone devoting a special reply to the sonorous banalities and platitudinous word-spinning of Mr. Ralph Waldo Trine. Those who are captivated by such writings as *In Tune With the Infinite*, will be proof against criticism, however keen. Still, if it were worth doing, this author is very well dissected by Mr. George Bedborough in *Harmony or Humbug?* (Garden City Press; 6d.). So far as a remedy may be applied to such as suffer from the defect of taking more or less attractively constructed sentences which serve only to disguise an author's lack of clear thinking, Mr. Bedborough's pamphlet is useful, but we have our doubts as to the extent of its application. There are a great many useful pieces of criticism set forth by Mr. Bedborough, and these *will* prove serviceable to the reader in dealing with others than the much boomed Mr. Trine.

An important business meeting of the newly-formed Regent's Park Branch will be held this Saturday evening, August 11, at the Shamrock Coffee House, North Street, Edgware Road, at 8.30. All members are urgently requested to attend.

Friends and members in the vicinity of Battersea Park are requested to give their support to Messrs. G. Rule and W. H. Braddock, who are holding a meeting at the gates of the Park, by request, on Sunday morning next at 11 o'clock. The intention is to re-start a Battersea Branch.

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The Rise and Progress of Mental Power.

II.

(*Continued from p. 485.*)

THE faculty of memory forms the basis of all mental operations. On its physiological side memory power must be viewed as the result of a nervous discharge which, having travelled along a certain channel, generates molecular changes that remain partly permanent, so that when subsequent discharges pass along the same path they revive the modifications set up by their predecessor. Impressions made upon any of the nerve ganglia serve to sustain this truth. For instance, the numerous muscles of an athlete's body will, after long training, automatically respond to the demands made upon them. In the superior nervous centres the like verity holds good. The more frequently a lesson is intelligently repeated the more letter-perfect the learner becomes. On the other hand, after a long interval of inactivity, a proficient performer on a musical instrument will enfeeble his playing power for want of practice, while an expert juggler will become less dexterous in manipulating his balls. A small amount of practice, however, completely restores the original aptitude. A man who has learnt to skate in England may, after a lengthy residence in India, even if he has not skated since boyhood, recover with comparative ease his youthful acquirement. This power of reviving old impressions proves that the nervous ganglia involved possess the capacity of remembering their earlier sensations when the appropriate stimulus is applied.

Memory alone would render small service in mental processes of an involved character were it not the foundation of animal ability to associate sensations as well as to revive them. The single discharges along nerve fibres become compounded when several nerve discharges are generated through the connection of one nervous ganglion with others. The principle which operates when one nerve cell, as the result of repeated stimulation, tends to establish more and more permeable paths of nervous transmission, is equally applicable to several groups of cells linked up by various nerve fibres. We may picture a series of discharges conducted through the same aggregate of nervous arcs as always awakening the same, or a similar series of impressions, and we are entitled to assume that this antecedent series of discharges will facilitate later discharges, because the channels of communication have been rendered more permeable. Not merely do the successive discharges from a common starting-point pursue the same paths, but they revive the same sensations. This explains "the tendency of ideas to *recur* in the same order as that in which they have previously occurred." This also may be regarded as "a psychological expression of the physiological fact that lines of discharge become more and more permeable by use."

Whether of high or inferior quality, all mental phenomena present a physical substratum. Every mental change is invariably associated with a physical change. These changes represent the two faces of one phenomenon. Moreover, processes ranked as mental have been derived from earlier purely physiological processes. The faculty of discrimination manifested in lowly modes of life is one of the most primitive presentations of psychical phenomena. Darwin's researches into the discriminative capacities resident in the plant domain disclosed remarkable facts. The sensitiveness of plant life in general to the minutest differences in light and darkness are astonishing enough. But this sensibility is feeble when compared with the extreme susceptivity displayed by the insect-eating and climbing plants. In plants, streams of protoplasm replace the nerve tissue of animals, but the responsive powers of the former unquestionably rival those of the latter. The tentacles of the sundew (Drosera) close round their insect victims just as the tentacles of the animal sea-anemone embrace that creature's prey. Yet the rain pattering on the sundew's sensitive surfaces fails to awaken response, while the pressure of substances weighing only 1-78740ths of a grain excite the movements of the plant's tentacles, and several other insectivorous plants are known to display powers of discrimination equally remarkable.

The experimental labours of Hertwig, Loeb, and other biologists have revealed many curious properties of a similar character to the foregoing in single-celled organisms. Microscopic specks of plant and animal protoplasm display a preference for light or shade, heat or cold, or manifest marked differences of responsiveness to chemical stimuli. These simple reactions —tropisms as they are called—doubtless form the foundations of all higher modes of discrimination. If we assume a chemical and physical basis for all the most involved mental processes, we may quite legitimately regard even microscopic jelly specks as responding to appropriate impressions; or, in other words, to stimuli which prove beneficial to them. For we must remember that the most primitive unicellular organisms are themselves the products of evolution, and those so chemically constituted that they responded to stimuli which were fatal to them necessarily disappeared from the roll of life, while those only whose reactions were either appropriate or adaptive survived in the struggle with environing conditions.

That very lowly protoplasmic creature, the amœba, displays its capacity to distinguish between particles of a nutritious or non-nutritious kind. This apparently discriminative power is, probably, purely physical and chemical in character. Organisms higher in the scale of life possess more complex qualities both of adjustment and discrimination. And these superior attributes arise *pari passu* with a more advanced mechanism. Distinct progress is shown in the medusæ, for these jelly fish are provided with a simple nervous system which enables them to distinguish between light and darkness, and they appear to possess a rudimentary sense of hearing. They also discriminate between stationary and moving objects, and quickly detect the difference between edible and non-edible substances. They are endowed in addition with the capacity to move rapidly, and various other adaptive features indicate their increased powers. In better organized animals, such as the star-fish and worms, their nerve and muscle structures bring these organisms into completer correspondence with their surroundings. A still further advance appears among the mollusca. These creatures are furnished with very sensitive feelers, they select their varied food materials, possess a locality sense, and choose members of the opposite sex as mates. Crabs and lobsters, whose sensory organs are still higher, and whose range of experience is, therefore, larger, manifest activities more numerous and involved, while the delicate antennæ of the spiders, with other elaborated organs of special sense, combined with their advanced type of muscular co-ordination, permit them to attain a higher level of mental development than organisms less evolved.

The principles controlling the preceding phenomena prove equally valid when applied to the superior vertebrates, including man. All the more intelligent animals

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possess appendages which enable them to increase their powers to perform varied activities. As Spencer noted, the parrot, which is the cleverest of birds, utilizes beak, tongue, and claw in its examination of objects. The elephant's remarkable mental powers are largely the result of that animal's capacity to extend its experiences with the aid of its marvellously adaptable trunk. And when we rise to apes, monkeys, and men,—

> we find repeated under other forms, this same relation between evolution of intellect and evolution of tactual appendages. Not more in the contrasts between them and inferior mammals is this seen than in the contrasts between the genera of the *Primates* themselves. The prehensile and manipulatory powers of the lower kinds are as inferior as their mental powers. On ascending to the very intelligent anthropoid apes, we find the hands so modified as to admit of more complete opposition of the thumb and fingers; the bones of the forearms so articulated as to give the hands greater powers of rotation; the arms attached to the body in such a manner as allows them increased range of lateral movement. In all the more developed of the order, the forelimbs are so constructed that an object can be grasped in one hand while it is being manipulated by the other, or by the lips and teeth—can be held at the most convenient distance from the eyes—can be applied to any part of the body, or any neighbouring objects (*Principles of Psychology*, vol. i., pp. 361, 362).

And with the human race itself the possession of highly specialized organs subserving manipulation, has conferred upon the paragon of animals powers which have played an enormous part in the progress of civilization.

This correspondence between muscular and nervous development; or, stated in other terms, the correlation between the growth of the power of discrimination and a more extensive range of adaptive actions, is precisely what the evolutionist anticipates. For it is plain that the extension of one function would be perfectly useless without the progress of the other. The ability to discern between a beneficial and detrimental stimulus would prove utterly valueless were the organism unprovided with that capacity of co ordinated movement essential to its profiting through its discriminating faculty. Also, it is clearly evident that an organism possessing powers of co-ordinated adaptation could derive no advantage in life's combat if it lacked that discerning capacity which is imperatively necessary if co-ordinated action is to be other than useless. Science has shown that "all the mechanisms of muscular co-ordination are correlated with mechanisms of nervous co-ordination," and it is now demonstrable that the one system of mechanisms in the absence of the other would prove utterly unserviceable.

In the highest animals the number and complexity of the nerve-fibres and cells form an array so formidable that several generations of workers will be required to determine their various functions. But from the simplest to the most complex creatures the same principles operate, and the discoveries of neurologists in the superior realms of life increasingly testify to this truth. Moreover, as we have seen, there exist numerous forms of life in ascending stages of evolution whose less involved neuro-muscular systems most admirably lend themselves to an understanding of their structure and function. These inferior organisms plainly indicate the paths leading to a far fuller knowledge of the physiology of nerves and muscles than we at present possess.

T. F. Palmer.

(*To be continued.*)

For freemen mightier grow,
And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe.—*Shelley.*

Shameless Inconsistency!

In his article, "The Relation of the Sexes" (July 27), "Ignotus" truly says that "there is no question that has been more stupidly treated by the Churches than the question of sex." Neurotic novelists, howling dervishes, and prurient prudes have done their very worst to confuse all the true issues and avoid all real solutions.

Macaulay, in his review of Hallam's *Constitutional History*, passes some scathing comments on the place of the Churches in our history; but in relation to sex matters there is one sentence which stands out as specially applicable, for "Never were principles so loudly professed and so shamelessly abandoned."

Every day for the last two years, in relation to sex, population, marriage, and children, the papers have provided some fresh proof of Macaulay's statement.

In the *Freethinker* of November 12 last, I brought before its readers a sample of what I have for years regarded as one of the most glaring and evil proofs of our national insistency in relation to the State religion and public morals, a sham celibate army, with its inevitable universal flood of prostitution and the futile purity campaigns by which the initial evil is tinkered with.

Just then one of our overworked goody-goody generals, Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, aided and abetted by that modern wonder of the Church of England and the Colleges of Unreason system, the logical bachelor bishop preacher of Big Families for Poor Curates, Foley Winnington-Ingram, started on a new campaign against the music-halls.

"Furious" and "futile" are the only terms by which to deal with these recurrent explosions of sham morality. The great General seemed to start with the idea that he was the "It" specially suited to, and provided to make a job of, cleaning the so-called Augean stables of "immoral" London; but when he was challenged to define some of the terms he was making such free use of, he had no sort of reply; and when Mr. Oswald Stoll put up a fight and forced him into court, he had to partake of that most nauseous dish a public man can be made to eat, some of his own words.

The mouthy Bishop of London, at the close of an interview reported in *Reynolds'*, September 24, 1916, talked big, as he always does. "We mean to have, when the War is over, a cleaner London. What I want to see is a cleaner London for the boys to come home to."

Mr. Oswald Stoll, in a letter to the *Daily News*, September 17, 1916, recited one of the Bishop's wild statements, "That it was a disgrace there should be 150 bad women in every music-hall every night," and closed his letter by a sentence which seems more and more justified day by day, "That the Bishop had been working too hard, and was beginning to lose the thread of Christianity which should connect his utterances."

Many people have had this idea for a long time.

General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien and his Bishop, having had their little flutter, retired—after, we hope, having a decent lawyer's bill to pay—and after awhile another great reformer appears on the scene. We are treated to a fresh exhibition of military purity mongering futility, in the person of General Sir Francis Lloyd, who, doing the star turn at a performance given by one of the organized purity-mongering associations, gave clear evidence that, however good he might be in defending London against air-raids, knew almost nothing about true morality and sociology.

Another great man on the platform was Sir Edward Henry—also an expert on morals, and much engaged with London's morals—who, according to the *Daily Mail*,

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June 28, 1917, made the following statement:—

> Conditions in London streets were much better than a few years back (which is in direct contradiction to many of the statements made by the clerics).
>
> In the last three years 19,000 women had been arrested. In the parks things were different. In Hyde Park every day five or six couples were brought into the police-station. The evil was really very serious, and no leniency should be shown.

They who like to believe this are free to do so. It does not really matter whether it be true or not, for whichever way the statement be taken, the final issue is all to the disgrace of those at the top. The statement was followed by the General's "official" word, as the officer commanding the London district, he had no control over the women, but he was taking steps to have more control over the soldiers, especially in Hyde Park, in relation to which he had given the most stringent orders.

A letter was addressed to the General, enclosing a copy of the one sent to General Smith-Dorrien on the occasion of his venture in 1916, drawing special attention to the Army Red Book on Allowances (quoted in *Freethinker*, November 12, 1916).

Sir Francis, by an A.D.C., made answer that his business was not to criticize the "Regulations," but to carry them out, quite failing to see that by his action in taking part in the futile "Purity" Movement he is criticizing a system which is primarily responsible for an immense mass of the prostitution, venereal disease, and sex crime about which he, Sir Edward Henry, and the mass of thinking people are so much moved at the moment—some special phases of which in Hyde Park and Bayswater no discussion is permitted in these days of rigid censorship. (See H. Ellis, *Sexual Inversion*, in Hyde Park.)

This is one view of the Sex *plus* Cant position at which we have arrived: official prohibition of State Church Commanded Marriage, an utterly impossible standard of celibacy and sham morality, and a deluge of indecent behaviour, 19,000 women arrested—are women the only sinners?—and five or six couples per day seized in one public park.

Then, by way of proving the full truth of Macaulay's statement of the scandalous contradictions which obtain, we turn to the public utterances of another Church sociological economist and financial expert.

The *Daily Chronicle*, July 9, 1917, reported that the Rev. R. Meddings, Rector of St. Margaret's, Lee, Kent, preached a sermon on some of the aspects of "Baby-Week." It was no doubt a moving and quite fitting sermon. He dwelt on the facilities and advantages of raising children "for the Empire."

"Parliament should debate the proportional endowment of families; the Government had already accepted the principle in its consideration of remission of the income-tax"; "every childless home 'must be made' to minister to the homes that were not childless"; and then the capstone of his futility, "Bachelors must be taxed." He noted that some of his hearers smiled, but he was confident it would come. "Our greatest national asset and glory was the traditional home."

Having noted which, turn to the back page of the same *Daily Chronicle*, or almost any newspaper, and count day by day the number of advertisements issued by State, municipal, and other public bodies, and private employers, inviting employees, and specifying, "Must be unmarried," or with the yet fouller, "Man and Wife, healthy and of good character, and without encumbrances."

What in the name of common sense and hygiene are these people trying to do by their idiotic "tax the unmarried" nostrum—one of the meanest taxation dodges ever put before worried taxpayers and sweated workers. Do these Janus-faced teachers, pastors and masters, really believe that any educated, self-respecting democracy can be forced to procreate *ad lib.*, even though they be forced to marry by a tax-collector; do they seriously think that the appeal for big armies to build big empires will ever be of value in face of the memory of the waste in life and treasure of the last two years?

In all the long record of taxation futilities and illogical injustice there has never been anything so idle as the much-canvassed taxation of bachelors, a suggestion forced to the front by the age-long attempts of the Churches in encouraging celibacy, as to which I have gathered some strange material of the part played by the body of which the Rev. R. Meddings forms a unit.

(To be continued.) T. SHORE.

New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

III.—POWER OVER DEMONS.

A PERSIAN went to a wild and lonely spot, taking some food with him; and he drew a line round himself on the ground, and began muttering sacred words, or magic charms. Each day, he muttered. Very little food did he eat, and each day he tried to eat less than the day before. If he kept this up for forty days (so he had been told), and had no fear of lions, tigers, dragons, and the like, which sprang into his magic circle, he would become, on the 41st day, a Master of the *Jinn*; that is, a Master of Demons. If a lion appeared, it would come on the 21st day. The Persian of whom I speak told an Englishman (Professor E. G. Browne, about the year 1893) that he had tried the plan, and fancied he beheld a lion on the 21st day, but afterwards he doubted! But, in far-back times, many a Persian had spent his forty days in the Wilderness in this way; and he would afterwards present himself to the people as a Master of the Jinn; and they believed him.

The disciples of the Indian teacher, Buddha, say that he lived under a Bo-tree (or peepal tree) for seven weeks, trying his strength against the demon Mara. The demon promised, that if Buddha would be his ally, he would in seven days give Buddha the wheel of empire, so that he might roll as king over the earth. But the wise Indian said No. Then Mara sent three evil spirits in the shape of very lovely girls, and they thought to win Buddha to the way of sin. This plan also failed. On the 49th day, the king of the gods brought cool water for Buddha to bathe his face, and four angels presented gifts of flowers and perfumes. And now, as the Persians would say, Buddha was Master of the Jinn, and he was ready to go forth as a teacher of the people.

Another such story we shall find in the gospel of *Luke*.

* * * *

Crowds of people followed a long-haired, and shaggy man, who kept shouting,—

"Turn away from wrong! Wash away your sins! Come and wash in the water of baptism!"

From towns and villages, folk swarmed to hear the preacher, and they shook at his rough words,—

"Poisonous snakes, are you afraid of the fire of God? Bad trees, can you not bear good fruit? If you do not bear good fruit, I tell you in truth, God's axe will hew you down, and in God's fire you will burn!"

"John," said the people, "what shall we do?"

"Give clothes to the poor," replied John the Baptist, "give meat. Do something instead of mere talk! You

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that are tax-collectors, mind you don't squeeze more money than is fair from the taxpayers. You soldiers, behave peaceably, and don't brawl and act brutally among the people in whose towns you are billeted. God wants wheat, not chaff. The good honest wheat goes into the store; the chaff goes into the fire. Fire, fire!"

Hundreds of folk stood in the stream, while John poured water on their heads, or dipped them under.

This John was "Heaven's Gift," whom we have met before.

A man, thirty years old, came from Nazareth down to the river, and was baptized. As he stood in the Jordan, a white dove fluttered down upon his head, and a voice from heaven was heard, saying,—"My son, my beloved; I am well pleased with you."

Then the dove flew towards the rocky wilderness, leading the way, and Jesus of Nazareth followed after, till he came to a wild and lonely spot, where he was to try his strength against the demons. Forty days he dwelt in the place of cliffs and mountain torrents, and the king of the demons,—Satan,—tempted him. His answer was always No.

At the end of forty days, he was very hungry; and when the demon said the Son of God ought to be able to turn the stones into bread, and would he not do so? Jesus answered No.

When, from the top of a high mount, the demon showed him a vast scene of many castles, and cities, and armies, and kingdoms, and said all should be his, if he would bow to Satan as his over-lord, Jesus answered No.

Would he throw himself off one of the spires of the Temple roof at Jerusalem, and float down softly into the street, to the wonder of the crowd? Jesus answered No.

Satan retreated, baffled and beaten: and Jesus, Master of the Jinn, prepared to go out as a preacher, all over Galilee county; and in many a synagogue he spoke to the people about the Coming Kingdom; the devils should be cast out, and God's Kingdom be set up in joy and peace, and every man who put away wrong, and did the right, should enter in, no matter how poor and hungry he was. News of the preacher spread from village to village. Then he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. He went into the synagogue on a Sabbath day, mounted the pulpit, opened a Scripture roll, and read some lines of Isaiah's poem about prisoners let out of jail, and slaves set free from slavery. He rolled up the book, sat down, and looked keenly at the people.

"This is coming true, my friends, now—and here!"

"Fine words from Joseph's son," whispered some of the townsfolk.

"But," he said, "the preacher may not be listened to in his own Nazareth, and the new prophet may not be accepted in his own country. In olden days, God's prophets were sometimes sent, not to the Jews, but to Gentiles."……

A roar of rage came from the throats of the people in the synagogue. They felt it was an insult to talk as if Gentiles were worth preaching to more than God's own Jews. They rushed to the pulpit, dragged Jesus down, bundled him out, and shoved him towards the edge of a cliff, meaning to fling him headlong.

But he escaped. Whether some of his friends formed a body-guard around him, and bore him away to a place of safety, or whether his own persuasion softened the angry hearts, I know not. Anyhow, the next we hear of Jesus is that he visited a city that lay on the shore of the Lake of Galilee—a sheet of water, pale blue, and bordered by a beach of white pebbles.

There was hardly room for the people who pressed into the synagogue when the preacher from Nazareth spoke about the kingdom. They were listening most eagerly to his speech when a scream was heard. A wild-eyed man shrieked out:

"Go away. Jesus of Nazareth! Away! You are our enemy!"

"Be quiet, demon," said Jesus. "Be quiet! Come out of the man."

The man fell as if in a fit, and lay still awhile, and then rose up, smiling and content.

"Here is a Master of Jinn, indeed!" said the people one to another. "He bids demons come out of men's bodies and hearts, and they obey him. What a word is this! What power!"

Wherever he went, mobs ran after him, anxious to see more marvels. His deeds were the talk of every market-place in Galilee.

"Have you heard?" people would say, "have you heard how Simon's mother-in-law has been healed of her terrible attack of fever? Have you heard of neighbour A., and neighbour B., and neighbour C., getting rid of the demons that were worrying them into their graves? The demons know a Master of Jinn when they see him; yes, indeed! They howl, and rave, and call him Christ, the Son of God; and then they fly out of their victims, and the poor souls have rest."

Such was the gossip of peasants in the fields, customers in the bazaars, and fishermen on the lake.

Early one morning Jesus rose, left the humble cottage where he lodged, and climbed the hills, and went to a silent corner where he might be alone with his thoughts. But the trampling of feet was soon heard. A multitude of country folk had tracked him, and were come to beg him to stay, and show them more wonders.

"No," he replied, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also."

* * * *

The legend of the Temptation is told again in John Milton's poem of *Paradise Regained*, which was first published in 1670.

In this poem Satan first appears as an old rustic gathering sticks on the hill-side; and he gets into conversation with the Son of God, and offers him a richly spread table, whereon are set dishes of fish, flesh, fowl, pastry, with wine, and with fruit and flowers heaped up, and music playing all the while. When this lure fails, Satan spreads out a grand view of cities, and armed hosts, and troops of chivalry; and also shows—

> Great and glorious Rome, Queen of the Earth,
> So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched
> Of nations. There the Capitol thou seest,
> Above the rest lifting his stately head……

And in the streets are swarms of Roman soldiers, and Hindoos with white silken turbans, and barbaric Britons and Germans. Of all this grandeur Jesus may be emperor, if (says the Demon-King)—

> ……if thou wilt fall down
> And worship me as thy superior lord,
> (Easily done), and hold them all of me.

Of course, the man of Nazareth says No.

Then the night falls, and the Demons try to terrify Jesus by raising an awful tempest, and sending infernal ghosts and hellish furies to yell about his resting-place in the woods. But the Son of God remains calm. After the last scene on the roof of the Temple Satan vanishes, and angels carry Jesus to a flowery valley, set him on a green bank, and spread a banquet of fruit.

Milton was a poet; and the man who wrote the Gospel of *Luke* was a poet. Each poet told the tale in his own way, and as his fancy listed.

F. J. Gould.

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Correspondence.

SOCIALISTS, FREETHOUGHT, AND RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I generally avoid the semblance of ambiguity, but probably, like the Scotsman, I "joke wi' difficulty"; hence any misinterpretation of my meaning in the phrase "emissaries of Rome." I wrote in Dublin, but for the moment forgot that I was not in Belfast! Let Mr. Jackson disabuse his mind of the idea that I could ever have thought that James Connolly was other than a "brave man who did his duty according to his lights," and I, living in the slums of Dublin, know of his Herculean work and his heroism. But, surely, I cannot be blamed for referring to a "twenty-year-old pamphlet" which the Social Party of Ireland thought fit to reprint in 1917!

Mr. Jackson protests against my not doing what I had no intention of doing, advancing the discussion on the basis of human society, much as I may agree that that would be advantageous. As a matter of fact I asked Mr. Cohen to elaborate his "psychologic bond" idea.

I do not deal in red herrings, and although my article was prompted somewhat by the recent correspondence in the *Freethinker*, I did not enter the lists as a controversialist. I propounded my own propositions, and kindly note the title of my article. I believe as much as any one in keeping Atheism and Socialist propaganda separate, but as clearly stated in this week's "Sugar Plums," my article was a protest against the "deferential attitude" adopted by many Socialists towards the Church and the clergy. Whether Socialism is concerned with "the objective validity of any religion" is another question altogether.

I clearly pointed out that Connolly's inference was that many Socialists were Christians; I stated without dubiety that I had never met a Marxian who was a professing Christian. Mr. Jackson is a Marxian and an Atheist, but can he tell us of any who were Marxians and militant Christians? That might give some reason for respecting a creed which I think stands in the way of progress. J. EFFEL.

Two Sonnets on July 28, 1917, Anno Domino.

"Never mind if they bleed," cried an old woman, "so are our boys bleeding in the trenches".....A Canadian called upon the audience to sing "God Save the King."
—*Sunday Times.*

I.—INTOLERANCE AND THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.

O HISTORY take thy stern and truthful pen,
A sister muse in bitterness desires,
And write these words until their meaning fires
To life and thought the dullest citizen;
That yesterday a mob of Englishmen
In London, which a Freedom's war inspires,
Roused the worst passions of their basest sires,
Crushed a minority as one to ten.
They burned with ghostly rage intolerant
Of other men's opinions, drove them forth
As animals, and then began to sing.
They sang the tyrant song, the sickly chant
Of slaves who live yet in this hardy North,
They sang, O History, "God Save the King."

II.—THE SEVEN SEAS.

These men who think they serve the modern State
By fierce intolerance in time of war,
Driving the imperial city to uproar,
Against that little school by yon Peace-gate;
Are they not worthy children, much too late,
Of all the tyrants, from that one who swore
The primal curse, to them who still deep-score
A tortured world with black sulphuric hate?
Sweet Liberty, "return to us again
And give us manners"; these low tyrannies
Remove to chaos, giving us release.
Then shall our country, taking this new plane
Of virtue, thus command the Seven Seas:
Truth, Right, Law, Justice, Progress, Hope, and Peace.

H. V. S.

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.

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Views and Opinions.

The Origin of Parsons.

In an age saturated with the philosophy of evolution, we are all more or less interested in the question of origins. And rightly so. Our best teachers have taught us that, as all history is evolution, so all evolution is history. It is in studying how things came to be *what* they are that we understand *why* they are what they are. This being so, and it being the holiday season, when busy people make a little leisure, we venture to propound a problem that has given us much thought. What is the Origin of Parsons? Are they born, or are they made? We use the term "parson" in its generic sense as embracing all varieties, Catholic and Protestant, High and Low Church, Established or Dissenting, and would even extend the term so as to embrace local preachers, who are, so to speak, parsons in embryo, and may thus form a kind of missing link that will help to bridge the gulf between a parson proper and a normal human being.

* * *

Congenital or Acquired?

We propound this question with all seriousness. Are parsons like poets? Are they born, or made? Are the parsonic qualities congenital or are they acquired? Books on natural history give us little help. The study of a whole species appears to have been overlooked. Not wholly so, perhaps, because anyone with a taste for symbolism who has watched a crowd of penguins must have noticed how suggestive they are of a conclave of parsons. Their colouring, so suggestive of a parson in full war-paint; the gravity with which they sit contemplating nothing in particular; their activity at feeding-time, and their fight for the poor eel, so reminiscent of the struggle between Church and Chapel for the control of the child. There is, also, a curious suggestiveness about the description of a penguin—"body eliptical, head small, bill moderately long, tail short." True, only modesty would describe their *bill* as moderately long. Their *tale* is certainly shorter than it used to be, intelligence is demonstrably small, and if we take "body" as the equivalent of parsonic reasoning, there is no denying its eliptical character. Apart from this, natural history helps but little. Literature is equally indecisive. Montaigne does discourse about religion in a chapter "On Cripples," but Oliver Wendell Holmes suggests there is a religious microbe, which would point to parsons being made, not born. Anthropologists derive all existing varieties of parsons from a species that made its appearance about the time of palæolithic man, and explain their present existence as an example of the "persistence of type"; but, against this, parsons protest that they are really without ancestry. They simply began to be—were called into existence by a power of which we know nothing. *Pro* and *con.* seems about equally balanced here.

* * *

The Case for Congenitalism.

Let us try and sum up the reasons on the one side and on the other. We will take first the thesis that parsonic qualities are congenital. And it must be noted that the function of the clergy is, in its way, unique. Every other organism known to science is related to a known environment. But the parson is not related to anything we know. He is not here to give reliable information, to inform people about things that can be otherwise discovered. His function is a heavenly one. It has no earthly use. The sole reason for his being is the existence of another world—a world of which nothing is known, of which in all probability nothing can be known, and of which he certainly knows no more than anyone else. We have an organism *minus* an environment. Then consider the qualities manifested by a parson—so peculiar that one of their own order placed the clergy in a separate sex. A parson *knows* that his career has been selected, just as the career of a boot-maker or a miner is chosen. Yet he *believes* that he has been specially called to it by God. He *believes* that prayer will save the sick, although he *knows* that in the absence of medical attention or native vigour, recovery is impossible. He *believes* a number of stories which for sheer improbability outrival Munchausen, although he *knows* they are not true. And it is argued that this capacity for knowing one thing to be true and believing the opposite proves the existence of an innate quality not possessed by ordinary human beings.

* * *

Per Contra.

Those who believe to the contrary admit all the facts above stated, but place on them a quite different construction. They rest their case on the cumulative effects of habit and education. Sydney Smith's classification of "men, women, and clergymen," they put on one side as a piece of mere pleasantry. They admit that parsons are *now* different from ordinary human beings in their view of truth and of other matters, but they claim that this difference may be explained as the result of the two factors just named. They argue that if we take two children, as equal as we can get them, and subject them to a widely different training, the results will be widely

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different also. If we train the one to take nothing for granted, to suspend judgment where the evidence is inconclusive, to observe, to analyze, to classify, and to compare, we shall evolve a scientific type of individual. He may not be a Newton, or a Darwin, but he will have a scientific cast of mind. But if we take the other, cram him with doctrines and dogmas that have no conceivable relation to present day knowledge, teach him that rational enquiry is the greatest of crimes and blind credulity the noblest of virtues, teach him to regard those who differ from him as either criminals or lunatics, train him on history specially written to conceal the truth, and on science with special interpretations to conceal its meaning, and then keep him for years repeating formulæ devoid of meaning to himself or to his hearers; do all these things, they say, and you will have created all the qualities that go to make the typical parson.

* * *

The Power of Self-deception.

There are also additional arguments worthy of note. There is the influence of self-interest and the power of self-deception. So long as men of mediocre intellect find a living waiting for them in the Churches, so long there will be no lack of applicants. Five hundred a year for preaching a doctrine is, to many, five hundred reasons in favour of its truth. It is an illustration of the pious rule: "Prove all things and hold fast to that which pays." It is not alone in the law courts that a counsel argues his brief. And self-interest is first cousin to self-deception. With many people, wishing a thing were true is a long step towards finding it true. And with a much larger number still, if the same thing is repeated often enough, a kind of belief is inevitable. Many parsons are, unquestionably, in this state. They are not exactly hypocrites, they believe their own stories as the outcome of sheer repetition. And many who commence by deluding others end by deluding themselves. Thus, while we have one party explaining the existence of parsons as due to some inherited quality slowly evolved during generations of growth, we have others who point to self-interest, to habit, to education, to unconscious self-deception as completely covering the ground.

* * *

A Rudimentary Structure.

There are strong arguments on both sides, and it is to be hoped that the question will receive greater attention in the near future. For there is no denying its importance. It is no small matter to have in the community a body of people, many thousands strong, with their origin unknown, their function unsettled, their utility doubtful. Probably a careful enquiry would disclose the fact that the parson stands in the same relation to the community that the rudimentary tail does to the human organism. In the latter case we have a structure which points to an earlier type of life from which the present man has evolved. So in the case of the parson, it may be found that he also is a rudimentary structure in the body politic. He may be reminiscent of the time when man crawled on the earth fearful of those imaginary powers he believed determined his destiny. The parson, in the form of the magician or witch doctor, may then have performed what people believed to have been a useful function. To-day he is a mere survival, a rudimentary organ of the body politic. As a piece of natural history he is interesting, as a part of civilized society he is an anachronism.

Chapman Cohen.

Is Life Worth Living?

The love of life is an instinct common to all living things. Consciously or unconsciously the state or condition known as life shrinks from the state or condition known as death. What it is to be alive is, as yet, an unsolved mystery, though not necessarily insoluble, all we know being that the very idea of being dead is instinctively disagreeable. Of course, it does not follow that this instinctive clinging to life is any indication that life possesses intrinsic value of any sort. The question so frequently asked, Is life worth living? is really meaningless, because we have not an authoritative definition either of life or of worth. It is utterly impossible to determine life's worth when we do not know what life is. To the theologian alone is the mystery of existence easily soluble; but it so happens that his solution only intensifies the mystery. The Shorter Catechism assures us that "man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever"; but everybody who thinks at all is aware that, even according to the Church's own teaching, God is an unknown being; or, in the words of the Athanasian Creeds, "the Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible." Now, can anybody inform us how we can glorify and enjoy an incomprehensible Deity? The Catechism's definition of the chief end of man is thus seen to be but a darkening of counsel "by words without knowledge." You cannot solve one mystery by the introduction of another and greater mystery, as the theologian endeavours to do.

One who signs himself "Lay Preacher" asks Professor David Smith, in the *British Weekly* for August 9, to expound the text, "The candle of the wicked shall be put out" (Prov. xxiv. 20). "Lay Preacher" has a Bible class of young men, to whom he attempts to interpret the Scriptures; but that passage baffles him completely, and the commentaries render him no aid whatever. The statement is most emphatic, and the natural inference from it is that death ends all for the wicked. Dr. Smith treats it thus:—

> The best commentary on Scripture is the Scripture itself. It frequently illuminates a passage when another passage is laid beside it, and the passage which connects itself in my mind with this of yours is Prov. iv. 18: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

He then calls attention to the fact that our English Bible is "merely a translation," and that "the shining light" would be more accurately rendered "the light of dawn." The following passage explains itself:—

> The idea is that the life of the righteous is like the day; the light breaks dimly, but it deepens and broadens until it attains the full radiance of the glorious noontide. This is his comfort. He may be compassed with shadows, but he knows that they will disperse; the clouds will lift, and by and by he will see the blue sky and the light of God's face. The perfect day is the glory of Heaven, "the Shadowless Land behind the light of the setting sun."

The righteous is thus immortal, and it is immortality alone that makes his life worth living. Now comes the contrast:—

> "There will be no future to the evil man; the lamp of the wicked shall be put out," in contrast to the experience of the righteous man, whose path is as "the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

We are now in possession of Dr. Smith's philosophy of life, which is that life is worth living only to those whose interests are in eternity. What eternity means we are not told, but love and purity are represented as

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"eternal possessions." Does Dr. Smith verily believe that a man of the world is destitute of love and purity, that he cannot rise to the highest forms of goodness and nobility? He admits that "the light of a man's life is what he sets his heart on and finds his gladness in." It inevitably follows that "a worldly man is one who sets his heart on worldly things and finds in these his gladness." The Professor goes a step further and allows that worldly things are "not necessarily evil things," and that, consequently, a worldly man is not necessarily wicked. Strangely enough, "this is God's world, and all its things are good and beautiful." Yes, a worldly man may be exceptionally refined and philanthropic, who lives to serve his fellow beings. And yet the Professor looks down upon him with pity, and says that death will be the putting out of his light. Of worldly things he declares that "their defect is that they are all transitory. When we pass from the world we must leave them behind us; and if they have been our only gladness then death is indeed 'a putting out of our light.'" But this passing from the world is a theological invention, completely outside the sphere of verification. So far as we can see, death is the end of individuals. We are children of the earth, and to the earth we return. There is absolutely no evidence that we shall pass from the world and leave its things behind us. Death is simply a return to the inorganic state. As Meredith puts it, "we go that others may come—and better if we rear them in the right way." Death is dissolution, disintegration, disorganization, and beyond it we cannot go.

Is life worth living? In certain moods we confidently exclaim, "Yes, abundantly"; but in certain other moods our answer is emphatically in the negative. Much depends upon the state of our health, and upon the circumstances in which we find ourselves. But we totally disagree with the following statement by Dr. Smith:—

> It seems to me, more and more, that the supreme good is the prospect of reunion in the Hereafter. The dearest and sweetest thing in life is human affection, and it would be, to my mind, an unspeakably awful calamity if death were the end of it, if we parted to meet no more. I simply could not endure to live, if I had not the assurance more clear and strong with every passing year, that death is, in St. Bernard's phrase, the door of life, the entrance into a larger and nobler world, where all the broken threads will be knit again, and we shall find all that we have lost, and resume the old familiar relationships with a closer and more tender intimacy.

That is a fine picture of life after death, and the only fault we can find with it is that it has been painted by the imagination alone; or, rather, is but an interlude of the fancy. Dr. Smith regards it as literally true, and is of opinion that he could not endure to live if he did not so take it; but myriads of people look upon it as a dream, and are not distressed by the thought that death ends all. As birth marks the beginning of individual existence, so does death indicate its close. The worth of life is not dependent upon its duration, but upon its quality. What supremely matters is not how long we live, but the use we make of life, be it long or short.

Because he cherishes, with such glowing fervour, the hope of immortality, Dr. Smith imagines that if he were to lose it, life would be an intolerable burden to him; but he has no moral right to affirm what he would feel were he to get into a frame of mind as yet unexperienced by him. Sir George Adam Smith admits (*Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, pp. 209, 213) that "in the thinking of civilized men there has been for years a steady ebb from the shores of another life," and that "it is well for us all sometimes to pitch our religious life in terms which do not include the hope of a future." It is certain that, for those in whom that hope has been extinguished, the present life is not less, but more interesting and joyous, than it was before, and that to them, as to Dr. Smith, "the dearest and sweetest thing in life is human affection," which is all the dearer and sweeter because it so soon comes to an end. Life *is* pre-eminently worth living, if lived wisely and well, even if its day be but of twenty-four hours.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Charm of Marcus Aurelius.

> To bear all naked truths,
> And to envisage circumstance, all calm;
> That is the top of sovereignty.—*Keats.*

Times of war and stress are usually supposed to be fatal to philosophic calm, and it is curious that the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, the immortal book animated by high purpose and fortitude, should have been largely written at odd moments in a tent on the battlefield. Indeed, many of the famous maxims in the *Meditations* were jotted down in the actual theatre of the present war—as, for instance, at Carnuntum, on the Danube, a few miles from Vienna.

Monarchs have rarely been philosophers. Frederick the Great delighted in the society of Freethinkers, and attracted the best brains of Europe to his court. The Empress Catharine, of Russia, befriended Denis Diderot and other French Freethinkers; and Marguerite, of Valois, to her eternal credit, held out her fair hands to the "intellectuals" of her day, at a time when to avow heretical opinions was a matter of life or death. Once only, however, has a philosopher sat on the world's throne and realized the dream of wise Plato, who sighed for the fulfilment of his ideal of a philosopher-king.

Marcus Aurelius, one of the greatest of the Roman Emperors, was no feather-bed soldier, nor did he review his troops solely within the safe purlieus of the parade ground. His philosophy was thought out amid the storm and stress of actual battle, the elation of real victory, and the sorrow of defeat. What others learnt in calm, he learnt in tempest. The most perfect expression of "the gospel of those who do not believe in the supernatural" was produced to the dread monotone of war. Far away on the wide Roman marshes might be heard the endless, ceaseless sound of beating horses' hoofs and the marching feet of men. The barbarians were gathering their legions, and no man could say what the morrow would bring forth.

The Emperor died in the camp, surrounded by the soldiers he led. "Why weep for me," were his last brave words, characteristic of the noblest Roman of them all. His legacy to posterity was his book of *Meditations*, which was never intended for publication, and in which he recorded his inmost convictions on life and death. Burdened with the weight of empire and of Rome, he penned such words as these—not to be read at the distance of twenty centuries without an accession of pride and strength: "Every moment think steadily as a Roman and a man to do what thou hast in hand with perfect and simple dignity." And, again, "Do every action of thy life as if it were thy last."

This life, he tells us, is all that concerns us:—

> Though you were destined to live three thousand, or, if you please, thirty thousand years, yet remember that no man can lose any other life than that which he lives now, and neither is he possessed of any other than that which he loses.

Epicurus bade his followers depart from life as a satisfied guest from a banquet. Marcus Aurelius, in

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sterner language, bids us leave life's stage as an actor who has played his part. It is this perfectly sane view of things which has caused the golden book of the *Meditations* to become one of the most prized of volumes. It is this wise Secularism which takes tired people back to Marcus Aurelius when all other religions and philosophies have failed them. What a book might be written of the great men who came to the *Meditations* in the bad moments, when fame and fortune, and honour itself, seemed as unreal as the fabric of dreams. For, by the irony of fate, this austere wearer of the imperial purple has become one of the great consolers of men. His treasure of the *Meditations* is one of the most precious heritages handed down the centuries by the masters of the world.

Oh! the charm of Marcus Aurelius. He was so much more than a mere writer, for he bound men by something stronger than a chain of roses, the thrill of the dance, or the sparkle of Falernian wine. It is not his grace of language that causes men to read his book to-day. It is not merely his philosophy that causes men to turn to him from all other wisdom. It was not to Lucretius, with his world-grip of human destiny; or Virgil, with his tears of mortal fortune; or Horace, who sings so well and sweetly of banquets, the laughter of women, the joy of summer days; but to the austere soldier-leader, that men turned in the last resort to which they are pushed so often "with close-lipped patience for their only friend."

The waters of thought slip slowly away, and it is not a little amazing to realize that the ideas of the Roman Emperor should still have sufficient vitality to fire the hearts and brains of men and women of our generation. It is a splendid achievement—power over millions of all ages, races, and sympathies. Small wonder that Ernest Renan, a writer of nice distinction, and a rare critic, has spoken of the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius in terms of more unmixed eulogy than he has ever bestowed elsewhere.

The *Meditations*, be it remembered, were never intended for publication, and were written for their author's own eyes alone. They are simply the Emperor's commonplace book, where he entered his reflections, often quite unconnected, on life and death; and the questions that knock at every thoughtful man's heart. The little volume was considered for long a literary curiosity. It fitly headed the very brief list of the writings of kings, a class not in any way remarkable for literary genius. Critics talk of the Greeks as being the teachers of Marcus Aurelius. It is true; but the golden book of the *Meditations* could only have been written by a Roman. The strength, the tenderness, the humanity, the resignation, these are the gifts of the lords of human things, the masters of the world.

Matthew Arnold has pointed out that the *Meditations* are counsels of perfection. They do not claim to be other than self-communings. The maxims should be read, as they were written, one at a time. Marcus Aurelius addressed them, not to any reader, but to himself, as the sentinals and supports of a conduct of life. The present moment is one in which such high-minded advice is priceless, for in all the world's literature there is no other book so full of perfect sanity and Secularism. It is because the *Meditations* are a bracing tonic in a time of moral slackness that the book ranks among the assets of the day. The pomp and majesty of ancient Rome has long faded, "like snow upon the desert's face"; but the great Emperor's words of wisdom remain a most precious legacy, because he saw life steadily and saw it whole.

> Not Cæsar dying amid Roman sighs,
> By Pompey's statue, seems more great than thee.

Mimnermus.

The Rise and Progress of Mental Power.

III.

(*Continued from p. 507.*)

Out of automatic actions states of consciousness slowly emerge. In those animals in which faint remembrances of past sensations are combined with a capacity to associate simple impressions, a dim form of awareness arises. Organisms, such as the Coelenterata (jelly fishes, etc.), manifest a rudimentary mode of consciousness, while the Echinodermata (star fishes, sea urchins, etc.), judging from the complexity of their nervous adjustments, are possessed of a fuller power of perception. Many competent observers place the Annelida above the Echinodermata, and various of their activities indicate a fair amount of intelligent adaptation. The Mollusca display even clearer signs of intelligence, and conscious adjustments become increasingly involved as we ascend the ladder of life. Insects and spiders are certainly remarkably adaptive in their responses to stimuli. Wasps, ants, and bees manifest associative capacities of a degree most highly developed. The Batrachia—frogs, toads, etc., and the fish family, reveal more intelligence than any of the invertebrates, save only the ants, wasps, and bees, and, perhaps, the spiders and crabs.

Slightly more advanced in mental development are some of the reptiles when compared with frogs and fish. But the social insects appear to possess the power of communicating information, for the evidence of this, both in ants and bees, is very considerable. The birds show a wide range of mental ability, thus rising immensely above their reptilian ancestors. Some of the rodents, notably the beavers, reveal marked intelligence. Many, if not most of the herbivorous quadrupeds, unquestionably reason, while carnivorous creatures, such as the lion, tiger, wolf, and bear, display mental powers of a complicated character. Even one of the lowlier rodents—the rat—is notoriously cunning in his conduct. With the monkeys and the elephant mental capacity of a high order is found, while, in the man-like apes, psychical powers approaching those of man himself, stand clearly revealed.

As already intimated, the semi-erect attitude of the anthropoid apes enables them to utilize their upper limbs as organs of manipulation. The complete mastery of the power to stand erect that was gained by man's semi-simian ancestor provided him with still greater opportunities for amassing knowledge of surrounding nature. In the mammalian world, as a whole, as among the less evolved reptilia, all four limbs remained for untold ages mainly occupied in locomotive duties. Among the bats and birds the fore limb became modified into an organ of flight. Representatives of the family, of which man is the first member, evolved the beginnings of the later marvellously pliable hand of apes and men, and with the advent of a mammalian biped a revolution in the world of life began.

While many of the lower animals are endowed with more than a mere modicum of mental faculty, the apes rise above them all in capacity for thought. The superior mental qualities of the apes have profoundly impressed all those who have studied them, and even prejudiced observers have admitted their astonishment. A qualified judge, Professor Hartmann, declares that "their intelligence sets them high above other mammals." Professor Romanes, who enjoyed exceptional opportunities for study both in the Zoological Gardens and his own residence, came to the conclusion that they, undoubtedly, "surpass all other animals in the scope of their rational faculty."

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While many animals are easily taught, and unquestionably reason for themselves, it is noteworthy that the apes seldom need teaching, and display every evidence of independent thought. And this, despite the fact that our intelligent domesticated animals have derived great advantages from their contact with man through countless generations, and have inherited increased mental aptitudes, while the monkey tribe has almost invariably been confined to its native forests. Among the numerous psychical qualities manifested by a cebus monkey closely observed by Romanes, was his untaught custom of cracking his nuts with a hammer. The animal showed a quite human dislike for ridicule, and would hurl any available missile at his tormentor in a manner most dexterous. He would secure any object out of the reach of his hands with the aid of a stick, and when the stick proved unavailing the monkey utilized a shawl in the most ingenious fashion to gain possession of coveted articles. Perhaps the most striking instance of this creature's cleverness was shown in his dealings with a hearth brush, which he had managed to purloin. He was anxious to remove the handle, and he soon discovered how to unscrew it, and then he was determined to screw it in again. On this problem he promptly set his wits at work, and as Charles Morris, in his excellent *Man and his Ancestor* continues the story :—

> At first he put the wrong end of the handle into the hole, and turned it round and round in the right direction for screwing. Finding this would not work he took it out and tried the other end, always turning in the right direction. It was a difficult feat to perform, as he had to turn the screw with both hands, while the flexible bristles of the brush prevented it from remaining steady. To aid his operations he now held the brush with one foot, while turning it with both hands. It was still difficult to make the first turn of the screw, but he worked on with untiring perseverance until he got the thread to catch, and then screwed it in to the end. The remarkable thing was that he never tried to turn the handle in the wrong direction, but always screwed it from left to right, as if he knew that he must reverse the original motion. The feat accomplished, he repeated it, and continued to do so until he could perform it easily. Then he threw the brush aside, apparently taking no more interest in that over which he had worked so persistently. No man could have devoted himself more earnestly to learn some new art, and become more indifferent to it when once learned.

Innumerable examples of a kindred character could be cited among the higher apes and monkeys in which the feeling of curiosity has revealed itself spontaneously. This spirit of inquisitiveness, so very widespread throughout the monkey group, forms one of the most important foundations of all mental advance.

Social creatures are the monkeys, and, like social animals in general, they manifest superior intelligence when compared with their solitary kindred. The social beavers, and, perhaps, the noxious sewer rat, stand immeasurably above the entire rodent order in the realm of mentality. Yet there are more than 900 known species of rodents. The ants, bees, termites, and a few others, amid all the immense array of insect life, are profoundly distinguished by their psychical activities from the remaining insect fauna. The intelligent forms are all extremely social. Various other gregarious animals illustrate the same truth.

But the part played by the social instincts in the evolution of mind is, probably, most pronounced in the case of the communal ants and bees. Hundreds of species of social ants are distributed through the world. Varying materially alike in habits, and range of intelligence, all display high powers of mentality. Yet the various solitary ants scarcely rise above the ordinary insect mental standard. Of the bees the same holds true. The most elaborately organized community, that of the hive-bees, is composed of the most intelligent representatives of these insects. Bees with less perfected social arrangements are on a lower mental level, while the solitary bees rarely ascend above the average insect plane. Among the carnivores, with the gregarious dogs, wolves, and others, the same fact is seen, while herbivorous animals, which dwell in troops and herds, are usually more intelligent than their solitary cousins. Jackdaws, gulls, rooks, the house sparrow, and starling, birds both impudent and clever, are all fond of the company of their fellows. There is this, however, to be remembered that strictly communal creatures tend to evolve psychical specialization. The mental powers, which have been developed in the course of their social evolution, tend in these animals to relapse into instincts when their objective has been completely gained. There, then, remains little scope for further variation.

Albeit social in its habits, the monkey family retains ample scope for the play of individual initiative, and with this group continued progress remained possible. No monkey is specialized for, or restricted to, a particular function. In this sense the ape is an individualist, and any variation of value tends to be preserved through imitation. Mental communication among the lower animals is, probably, more extensive than is commonly supposed. Remembering how rare are original ideas among mankind, we cannot escape the conclusion that useful discoveries have, in most cases, been treasured through a recognition of their value by the general community. The few discover and invent, while the many ultimately benefit. Apart from the social bond, which binds organisms together in groups, this would be impossible, and it is also to be noted that new notions are extremely unlikely to arise among solitary creatures.

Modern civilization and culture are chiefly due to the intellectual achievements of the superior few which have ultimately become the property of the general population. As a recent writer says :—

> The intellectual standing of any civilized nation depends upon two things: the preservation in books, in memory, and in works of art and industry, of the ideas of ancient workers and thinkers; and the mental activity of living thinkers and inventors, whose work takes its start from this standpoint of stored-up thought. Rob any community of all its basic ideas, and it would quickly retrograde to a primitive condition of thought and organization, from which it might need many centuries to emerge."

The lemurs are related to the monkeys, but they are quite destitute of social life, and they are decidedly unintelligent. Dwelling in similar surroundings, the apes derive enormous advantages from their social habits, and when placed in an environment entirely unlike that to which they are accustomed they constantly exhibit keen powers of observation, and a remarkable fondness for experiment. Probably, if primitive man had made his cousin a domesticated friend; had the monkey enjoyed the same advantages as dogs and other tamed animals, simian mental powers would have been developed quite equalling those of many dull-witted men still to be met with in the most civilized communities. Absence of opportunity rather than lack of native ability has tended more and more to widen the gulf which exists between the mental capacities of apes and monkeys and modern man.

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer.

A London newspaper, in reviewing the life of Herbert Spencer, refers to it as "a drab existence." Christian editors prefer highly coloured lives, such as the career of Dr. Crippen.

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Palmistry and Priestcraft.

IN the minds of all right-thinking persons, there can be nothing but contempt for those sleek, designing rascals who, under the pretence of scientific knowledge and the possession of wonderful powers, exact money from the ignorant and credulous for "information" concerning individuals and events, which could not possibly be known in the ordinary way.

As a means of looking into the future, of finding happiness for oneself or of preventing misfortune, palmistry, clairvoyancy, psychometry, or whatever fancy name the nimble professors and madames may give the art they practise, is valueless, and the high priests of occultism are either scoundrels or fools.

I cannot say I enthusiastically agree with that highly virtuous section of the community which would seek to stamp out fortune-telling by heavy fines and terms of imprisonment, conviction invariably being procured by an *agent provocateur*. After all, there are degrees of villainy, and P.-C. XYZ—even in plain clothes—has not great powers of discrimination, whatever may be said for his veracity. In my experiences in show-land, I met on every fair ground some lady who could "tell the tale" according to a stereotyped formula; she was generally the wife of a showman, and, if sufficiently weather-beaten, posed as a gipsy. "The fair young man, not the tall dark one, my dear; a long journey, short illness, plenty of money showing in your hand," etc.—that was the stock-in-trade. I don't for a moment justify fortune-telling when it is only on a small scale, and done stupidly, but most of this sort of thing is indulged in for a lark by those who are "doing the shows" in proper fashion; and I have found the caravan-living itinerants, as a body, decent folk of a simple live-and-let-live philosophy.

When, however, we consider the machinations of educated men and women, who, taking advantage of the widespread anxiety caused by the War, are working on the overstrung nerves of wives and lovers of our fighting men, and extracting money from these victims under the pretence of affording them comfort or by predicting the safe return of the loved ones, it is small wonder if our atavistic instincts for revenge are aroused. But, of course, punishment is the wrong end of the stick. I don't think the members of the N.S.S. will part with much money for crystal-gazing to find the issue of fighting in Flanders. Conversely, it seems strange that Christians, whose religion teaches them to believe in all manner of weird prophecies and predictions quite at variance with our knowledge of daily happenings, should disapprove of modern prophets; or, rather, one section of the mystical fraternity only. If it be granted that those who delude the weak-minded ought to be punished, then the whole army of professional ministers, priests, spiritualists, and salvation sellers ought to be arraigned along with the palmists, seers, faith-healers, and kindred rogues. But the punishment ought to be graduated to fit the enormity of the offence. As sixpenny hand reading, dealing with the trifling detail of the colouring of a suitor's hair, and the number of children likely to accrue from a happy marriage, is venial beside the traffickers in the emotions of tortured wives and mothers, so even those latter fall short of the preachers of "the Word," with their stupendous falsehoods, their feeble philosophy, and, above all, their hypocritical pretence that, whatever happens, all is for the best, and that sufferers in this world can extract comfort from their speculations of the compensating rewards in a hereafter of which nothing has ever been known.

I have before me as I write a little magazine called the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, an Irish Catholic publication, the organ of "The Apostleship of Prayer." Part of this issue is devoted to letters of thanksgiving from "grateful patrons" of the Sacred Heart for favours received; and it is, in truth, gloomy reading for Rationalists. We have undoubtedly a long way to go in Ireland. Let me give readers of the *Freethinker* one or two samples of the thanksgivings.

> Two parties (25 and 10 respectively) of Catholic soldiers wish to thank the Sacred Heart for signal protection. Both parties were engaged in dangerous patrol work behind the German first line. They all received Holy Communion that morning, and carried badges of the Sacred Heart. Both parties returned without a scratch, and now wish to fulfil their promise of publicly thanking the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Now, the worst of this is, that *all* of them took communion and wore badges, and that there doesn't seem to have been a solitary shot fired. Had one of the number been a wicked Protestant; or, better still, a dirty Atheist, and had a stray bullet ricocheted merrily from each of the thirty-five bits of red flannel worn by the the devout Irishmen, ultimately finding its billet in the unguarded body of the unbeliever, that would have been "some" evidence of discrimination.

"Through the Sacred Heart shield and Invocation" we hear of wonderful doings in County Cork. "Things were looking very dark with us twelve months ago." Then, after purchasing a shield (which is a painted bit of tin), and placing over the door, "Thank God, from that day on, things began to improve rapidly."

Readers of Zola's *Lourdes* will remember his description of the excellent business done in holy water bottles, candles, etc., at the grotto. The same thing obtains with the Church everywhere. Sacred Heart badges, scapulars, shields, and the latest innovation, rosary beads in Sinn Fein colours, meet with a good sale, and are generously advertised by patrons who have derived benefit from them.

"Things looking dark," and then, "Thank God, improving rapidly," doesn't seem a very serious state of affairs; but I cannot complain that all the grateful ones are indefinite. Expressions of gratitude, which are pretty well stereotyped, are grouped under different headings. Like the Astral Planers, the Sacred Hearters find "The War" productive of most trade, but "Means of Livelihood," "Temperance," and "Conversions" appeal to many.

"Thanksgiving for not being on duty when one of our guns exploded, and we had a lot of casualties." My criticism in the other case of superstitious soldiers applies here; and were there no devotees of the Sacred Heart on duty? The Sacred Heart is thanked for protecting some; those who pray and yet fall, succumb to the Divine Will, which we must not question. We treat God with infinitely more charity than we show towards our fellow-men. Why is it always all praise and no blame for God; who, after all, is responsible for everything?

"Employment found," "Good position secured," are typical; but "Husband kept on when he feared dismissal" is a departure. Probably, if he ceased praying, or wore his scapulars at an irreverent angle, the Sacred Heart might get him the sack, to provide employment for a client more assiduous in praying, or who spent more in gee-gaws.

"For forty years my father has lived, nominally a Protestant, but in reality a Pagan. He has now entered the true fold." Poor old dad! Fancy, after forty years lying a-bed on Sundays, smoking and reading his sporting paper, to be "converted," and have to rise for early Mass! Not if my wife and children put shields all over

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our doors, sew Sacred Hearts inside my waistcoats, gird themselves with scapulars, and, prostrate before burning candles and highly coloured Virgin, offer incessant supplication in Gaelic, will I give up my long-lie and Sunday paper. My heart is sore for the nominal Protestant.

Unfortunately, there are millions who think that the "Sacred Heart" means more than "The Shielding Shadow" or "The Laughing Mask." That half-witted illiterates should be fooled in this manner is bad enough, but that men of education, and good sense in all mundane affairs, should allow themselves to be chloroformed into tacit acceptance of idolatrous superstition, shows what a price is paid for the abnegation of private judgment in matters of Faith and Morals.

As I said earlier, there are degrees of rascality, and the priest who condemns a Hindu for telling fortunes to the wife of a policeman, while himself perpetuating mendacities concerning the great problems of life, is a hypocrite as well as a charlatan.

J. Effel.

Acid Drops.

The Lutheran Synod issued a pastoral which was read in all the churches in Berlin on the anniversary of the outbreak of War. In this document it is declared:—

> We will comport ourselves as Christians towards our enemies, and conduct the War in the future, as in the past, with humanity and chivalry.

We should be the last to deny that in sinking hospital ships, torpedoing passenger vessels, etc., that the Germans have not comported themselves as Christians, because there is no barbarity that Christians have not manifested towards their enemies. But humanity and chivalry! That is quite another matter. We advise the German pastors to stick to the claim that they have behaved as Christians towards their enemies. That is at least a defensible proposition.

In our own Christian country we observe that Major Carter, the man who was responsible for exposing the scandal of the treatment of the wounded in Mesopotamia, and for the improvement effected, has been rewarded by being transferred to another post where he is receiving £300 per year less in the shape of salary. So said the Secretary for India in the House of Commons on August 7.

The Dean of St. Paul's has been dubbed "gloomy," or "dismal," because he is too conscientious to indulge in optimism at the expense of well attested facts. His brethren confidently assert that Christianity is a grand success; Dr. Inge knows and frankly admits that hitherto it has been a gigantic failure. The fact is that it doesn't pay to speak the truth, the truth being the commodity least required at any Christian market, specially the truth about religion.

At a Conference of Modern Churchmen, organized by the Churchmen's Union, held at Girton College, Cambridge, on August 9, the Dean read a paper, entitled "Did Christ Found the Church?" in which he maintained that the "Church was the result of historical conditions," and in no sense whatever founded by Jesus Christ. This is heterodoxy with a vengeance, but all scholars know that it is the truth. Speaking of Catholicism, the Dean said:—

> It owed more to Greece and Rome than to Galilee. It was an adaptation of the old religion of the Mediterranean races, and derived much of its strength from its non-Christian elements.

For teaching this heresy, M. Alfred Loisy, of Paris, was deposed from the priesthood of the Catholic Church, and Dr. Inge would undergo a similar penalty were the orthodox party in the Anglican Church to have their way. The Church has flourished on fiction in all ages; and even now she stands in mortal terror of the truth.

The piety of the Sunday papers is a fearful and a wonderful thing. The *Sunday Herald* had an article on "Sickly Illusions of Doddering Pacifists." Would the editor of the *Sunday Herald* describe the author of the phrase, "Blessed are the peacemakers," as a "Doddering Pacifist"?

Politics and religion usually make a delightful blend, but it is seldom that English editors have the courage to express themselves as freely as the Christian conductor of the Louisville *Courier Journal*, who bade farewell to Herr Dernburg in the following words: "Let him go and be damned to him, and now, as ever, to Hell with the Hohenzol'ern and the Hapsburg."

The text, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," used to be parodied by the old Radicals as "The earth is the House of Lords" etc. The recollection is prompted by the number of estates which are changing hands. Recently, the Duke of Sutherland sold the Lilleshall estate of 6,818 acres in Shropshire, while Earl Normanton disposed of the Rushall estate of 4,647 acres in Wiltshire. Lord Alington is selling his famous Hoxton estate with its 2,500 houses, and Lord de Saumarez is offering the Lawshall Hall estate of 1,000 acres in Suffolk. The Earl of Shrewsbury is also selling his Cheshire possessions, totalling over 4,000 acres.

Principal P. T. Forsyth is in a painfully depressed, pessimistic mood, as, in a short article in the *Christian World* for August 9, he contemplates the prospects of the Church of Christ. She has lost her "great note," and he can see but few signs of its coming again. Of the future of Congregationalism even he entertains no strong hope:—

> First, *it* may break. Second, it may die of futility and sink away into sand—not for lack of natural energy, but for lack of energetic power in its belief. Its spiritual imagination is ill-nourished.....Third, it may be swamped, for lack of belief in the Church and its ministry, by the undenominational religion of the Y.M.C.A. or the Student Christian type.

The Principal is perfectly right. The "great note" has departed never to return. Spiritual imagination is ill-nourished, because it has been touched by the light of reality through the intellect, and the food on which it used to subsist no longer agrees with it. It is lack of confidence in the supernatural that accounts for the steady decay of religion, and not all the theologians and preachers in the world can bring back that confidence. At last knowledge has come to stay, and in its radiance faith is doomed to vanish away.

Everything does not go well with the Brixton Parish Church, of which Rev. A. J. Waldron was Vicar, before forsaking it for the music-hall. The present Vicar writes in the Parish Magazine under "Answers to Correspondents":

> Aggrieved Parishioners.—We refuse to see people at the vicarage except by special appointment or in case of serious illness (1) because our parlourmaid has nineteen steps to climb before she arrives at the front door, if she is in the basement when the bell is rung, and anything up to three flights of stairs to descend if she is upstairs, at the time; (2) because we must have some leisure in which to read and write. If you were to subscribe to the Freewill Offering Fund, we might be able to...

The Government must be careful! There are some things that liberty-loving Britons will not stand. They have stood well the taking away of liberty during the War—indeed, vast numbers of them do not appear conscious that they have lost anything worth bothering about. But there are limits, and the proposal that the ages of people shall be given on the new sugar cards, which are to be handed in to the local grocer, has called forth indignant protests in the *Daily Telegraph*. "To what purpose," writes one indignant correspondent, "is this affront to our womankind?" The Government control of the press was nothing, conscription was a bagatelle, the suspension of Habeas Corpus a trifle, but to expose the age of our women folk to the rude gaze of the local grocer—that is really serious and leads for revolt.

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The leader-writers became lyrical on the occasion of the third anniversary of the War. That distinguished Christian, Mr. Horatio Bottomley, wrote that on the fourth of August "each of us became a soldier in the army of God." In his excitement, Mr. Bottomley forgot that 50,000 clergymen were "too proud to fight."

According to the *Daily News* there have been worse Augusts than the present. In August, 1577, a thunderbolt struck Blythburgh Church and killed twenty people; passed on to Bungay, six miles distant, and fell on another church, killing two people whilst kneeling. Providence was as much given to practical jokes in the sixteenth century as in the twentieth.

The sedate *Saturday Review* is calling for a film controller, and remarks: "Passing through the remotest country villages of Englrnd one finds that the primeval disfigurement of the local Græco-Baptist chapel has everywhere been supplemented by the white and gold of the local picture-palace." Another testimony to the revival of religion.

At last we have the explanation of the heavy August rain. Rev. J. Thomas, Precentor of Chelmsford, attributes the rain to "Divine displeasure at the amount of Sunday labour performed on allotments." Good Lord!

"The Universe has been in labour for a hundred million years," says Sir Oliver Lodge, "and has produced—us. We are a remarkable product, and we are behaving at the present moment in a remarkable manner." Noting *how* we are behaving, it hardly looks as though the product were worth the hundred million years of labour. Certainly, if the universe were conscious of what it has produced, it might with justification decide to bury its past, blot the whole lot out again, and start afresh.

But, naturally, Sir Oliver thinks the labour justified because it has produced "us." Human egotism is a monstrous thing, and it assumes that, because we have been produced, it is "us" that the universe was striving after. But man has been produced in no other sense than has anything else that lives. It took as long to produce the germ that destroys human life as it did to produce the human life that is destroyed. There is as much, or as little, intention in the one case as in the other. Nay, it takes as long to produce an earthquake that wipes out a city and all its inhabitants, If we are to read purpose into the process, we must say that Nature laboured for millions of years to get a crowd of people into a given area, and then let loose an earthquake which it had been carefully producing for their destruction. The truth is, of course, that there are no purposes and ends in Nature; there are only processes and results. As a scientist, Sir Oliver knows this perfectly well. As a religionist, he forgets all about it.

Sir Oliver Lodge gives it as his "firm belief" that "science will shortly prove the definite survival of human life after death." We are under the impression that many of Sir Oliver's followers are inclined to believe that science *has* proved the fact of survival. They will please note that he only expresses the pious belief that one day science *will* prove it. And, of course, it is very hard to disprove a statement of that kind.

Another of Sir Oliver's opinions is that after the War "great and powerful assistance will be given us by 'spirit helpers.'" There is really no limit to this kind of thing. Anyone can go on supposing things of this kind without end. But why on earth should these great and powerful spirits wait till after the War? There was room for them to operate long before the War, and even during the War. Next to the absurdity of the spirits the most striking thing about them is their uselessness.

"If the shade of Jeremy Bentham still hovers around the philosopher's old home at Queen Anne's Gate, it will be interested in the location there of the new Ministry of Reconstruction. And the Ministry might do worse than emulate Bentham's attitude towards social problems. Whatever may be thought of his principles of 'Utility,' and 'The greatest good of the greatest number,' his passion for civic liberty, his terseness and simplicity, and his contempt for time-worn formulæ, made him one of the most influential reconstructors of his generation."—*Daily Chronicle.*

The Rev. T. Rhondda Williams, of Brighton, contributes a weekly article to the *Christian Commonwealth*, entitled "From my Point of View." In the issue for August 8, he criticizes most sarcastically the form of prayer which has been prepared for use in the Free Churches at the commencement of the fourth year of the War. The principal petition is this: "Send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead us and bring us to a speedy and successful conclusion of our great endeavour." Mr. Williams mordantly observes:—

> What sincerity can there be in asking that God's light and truth should lead us to victory in war when we know perfectly well that for such victory what we have to use is, not light and truth, but as much deception and trickery as possible? Was it by the use of God's light and truth that we took the Ypres salient? Or was it by secret tunnelling and stealthy placing of explosives for many months before action?

The whole article is in the same sarcastic but truthful strain, and our only wonder is that so sane a thinker believes in God at all. We fail to see where God comes in in this brutal conflict. The divines all assert that he *does* come in somehow and somewhere, but no two of them agree as to the how and the where.

Hushing up the Mesopotanian Report is "a crime against God and Man," says Mr. Bottomley. It may be a crime against man, but as God allowed so many of our men to suffer through official neglect, it is not clear why it is a crime against him. If Mr. Bottomley carried any intelligence with his piety, he would see that the Report is naturally an indictment of God, as well as certain officials. Particularly as Mr. Bottomley believes that we are on God's side and he is on ours. But piety—particularly new-found piety—and intelligence seldom run together.

Lord Burnham, of the *Daily Telegraph*, presided over the Hampstead Summer Garden Meeting the other day, and took occasion to make a few remarks on the present position of the press. "The Press," he said, "was now part of the machinery of the State, but he hoped that this arrangement would not survive after the War." The tone of this is sufficiently serious to make all lovers of real freedom anxious. That the press is now largely under Government control, both in the kind of news it gives, and in the news it suppresses, we are all aware. Practically we know all that a handful of men thinks it good for us to know, and this is tolerated because we are at War. But we believe, as we have said more than once, that this control of the press by the Government will not be readily given up even when the War is over. Every governing class, once it has seized power, struggles to keep it, and, unfortunately, the general public cares very little for liberty of any kind that does not interfere with the pleasures or requirements of the moment. Witness the fact there was greater public concern over the shortage of beer or the stopping of racing than over the establishment of a press censorship. Anyway, we are glad to see Lord Burnham alive to the danger, and we hope that his warning will awaken others.

The clergy appear to be singularly narrow-minded. The vicar of a parish, near the district devastated by the Silvertown explosion, is advertising plaintively for help because the girls' club and mothers' meetings have to be held in the vicarage drawing-room. Dreadful, isn't it?

The London daily papers wasted columns in describing the War Service at Westminster Abbey, and some of them even printed verses from the hymns used on that occasion. The editors of parish magazines could not have done more.

The pious *Daily News* refers to Bank Holiday as the feast of Saint Lubbock. The founder of Bank Holidays did more for the working people than all the calendar of the saints.

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To Correspondents.

T. M. Mosley.—Your letter appears to have been delayed in transmission—judging from the date it bears and that of its receipt. However, we are pleased to hear from you, and also to get your account of the discussion on "The Case for Atheism." Is it not time there was some definite organization in your district?

C. Emery.—Don't trouble about whether science can explain *everything*, the real points are (1) that science does explain things, and (2) where science fails, nothing else succeeds.

Thanet.—We do not know a better pamphlet for your purpose than *Bible and Beer*, by G. W. Foote. It can be sent, post free, from this office for three halfpence, or on special terms if a quantity is needed for distribution.

Y. C.—Received. Hope to publish shortly.

J. O. Harding.—(1) An Atheist is one who is without belief in a God. No other meaning has ever been given to it by those who were in a position to speak. (2) Freethinkers are not, as Freethinkers, hostile to Socialism. Some believe in it, and some do not. (3) The origin of protoplasm is a question that belongs to the region of bio-chemistry. Almost any up-to-date text-book will give you information on that point. At any rate, we could not, without misunderstanding, reply in this column.

C. Martin.—We are not sure we have your name correctly, but, as is not unusual, the signature is the least legible part of your letter. We do not write that everyone will agree with us. If we did, we should confine ourselves to platitudes. We write only that people may read us and consider what we write. That is all any decent person asks or expects.

T. Richards.—It *is* curious why a writer, generally so clear as Fielding Hall, should revert to the *Designer of Nature*. Probably, however, he means less by it than a literal acceptance of his language would imply. We do not know whether you have read the same author's delightful *Soul of a People*. If not, we strongly advise you to do so. It is a charming work. We are pleased to have your appreciation of "the excellence of the *Freethinker*."

J. A. Reid.—Thanks for cuttings. We could print some copies of the verses if desired.

F. Betts.—Received. Hope to use shortly.

Remlap.—Quite all right. Paper will be sent as usual.

T. Jones.—Our manager is writing the newsagent on the subject. Thanks for your trouble in the matter. We quite believe there is good scope for the getting of new readers in your locality.

C. W. Marshall.—Pleased to note that your newsagent has secured new subscribers through the slips advertising the *Freethinker*. Our shop manager is sending more as requested. Thanks for help.

S. Lidgett.—See "Sugar Plums."

B. Dupree.—Next week.

N. Douglas.—Thanks for the lines from Juvenal.

D. Houplain.—We can quite appreciate a Frenchman's astonishment at the English people tolerating a priesthood which urges all civilians to join the Army and then demands exemption from military service for itself. But what do you suggest we can do more than we are doing? We are trying to make Freethinkers, and that seems to us the best way of working. If we kill the religious cant, other forms of cant will weaken considerably.

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.

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

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.

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.

It is really time the Home Secretary undertook to give instructions to some of the Jacks-in-office who sit on the judicial bench. At Eastbourne, on August 10, a taxi-cab driver was summoned for driving his vehicle to the danger of the public. Offering evidence on his own behalf, he declined to take the oath. On this the magistrate's clerk asked: "You have no religious convictions at all?" "No," replied the defendant, "I am an Atheist." The clerk then retorted: "You had better go back if you cannot take the oath." Subsequently, the man's evidence appears to have been taken, but this does not excuse the impertinence of the clerk. As he does not appear to have been ignorant of the terms of the Oaths Act, there is no word other than impertinence that fitly describes his remark.

Our attention has been called to a misprint in the letter from France in last week's "Sugar Plums." Our correspondent wrote, "There is a widespread *wave* of Freethought abroad." By printing "wane" for "wave," the meaning of the sentence was reversed.

The *Two Worlds* is on our list of exchanges, but we overlooked a letter in its issue for July 27 reflecting on the editorial conduct of this journal. Mr. E. W. Oaten writes to the *Two Worlds* complaining that he had asked if the *Freethinker* columns were open to a reply to Mr. Mann's articles on Spiritualism, but that he had "not even had the courtesy of an acknowledgment of my letter." We recollect receiving Mr. Oaten's letter, and we replied saying that these columns would be open to a brief reply, "brief" being interpreted with a view to the length of the articles criticized. Apparently Mr. Oaten did not receive our letter. We regret this; but we cannot make ourselves responsible for delivery. We need only add that our reply still holds good.

The *Humanitarian* reprints the following effective lines from Mr. Ralph Hodgson's *Poems*:—

The Bells of Heaven.

I would ring the bells of Heaven,
The wildest peal for years,
If Parson lost his senses
And people came to theirs,
And he and they together
Knelt down with angry prayers
For tamed and shaggy tigers,
And dancing dogs and bears,
And wretched, blind pit ponies,
And little hunted hares.

Want of space prevented our noting last week the very successful close of the month's mission at Sheffield, conducted under the auspices of the N.S.S. The speaker on the concluding Sunday was Mr. Willis, of Birmingham, who reports that the meeting was well attended, orderly, and enthusiastic. We feel sure that his address must have left an excellent impression, and it remains now for local friends to see what can be done to improve the occasion. There are a large number of Freethinkers in and about Sheffield, and we feel sure that, provided it is taken in hand by the right people, a good local society could be built up. Headquarters will give every possible help, but it must be on the basis of local effort.

We do not know whether the *Sydney Bulletin* is prevented circulating here, but several times this year we have received notes from Australian readers saying they were sending a copy with marked passages for notice, but none have come to hand. We are writing this so that they may understand the absence of any kind of acknowledgment of their kindly offices.

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Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

V.

(Continued from p. 502.)

> By their own showing, the mediums cannot command their manifestations. These appear and disappear, come and go, in the most capricious manner. A spirit will be voluble and communicative and expansive at one hour, and in the presence of one set of people, and the entrance of a single sceptic like Sir James Crichton-Browne will so offend him that he goes off in a huff, and the failure of the rest of the sitting is due "to the offensive incredulity" of the stranger. Queer people, these spirits! One would have expected the presence of a known sceptic to put them on their mettle, and rouse them to give some manifestation that should compel conviction even in the most doubting Thomas; but not a bit of it. They are so tetchy and so easily offended that when doubt is thrown upon their existence, instead of taking steps to remove the doubt, they run away.—*Dr. Charles A. Mercier, "Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge,"* p. 57.

TELEPATHY, or Thought-transference, can never be proved until it can stand a scientific test; for Sir Oliver Lodge and his followers absolutely decline to furnish test cases to men like Dr. Ivor Tuckett and Sir Ray Lankester. They want us to believe these things on their word, without proof. Why should we? Sir Oliver Lodge, with other distinguished men, publicly declared that some of the phenomena produced by Eusapia Palladino could not have been produced by the known forces of Nature. He believes so still—at any rate, he has never publicly retracted his statement. We know now that all Eusapia's phenomena were nothing more nor less than common conjuring tricks. What reason is there to suppose that Sir Oliver Lodge is any more correct regarding Telepathy and spirit communications than he was concerning Eusapia Palladino?

Many scientific tests have been made to prove communication with the spirits of the dead. The best known was that devised by Mr. F. W. H. Myers. Mr. Myers' book, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, may be described as the New Testament of modern Spiritualism. It is an immense compilation, in two volumes, of the phenomena of mediumship, hypnotism, telepathy, death-warnings, hallucinations, trances, etc.—a veritable encyclopædia of superstition. There is no doubt that the influence of this book has been very great, and has had a great deal to do with the present revival of Spiritualism among the upper classes.

Mr. Myers was an educated gentleman—he had been appointed classical lecturer at Cambridge—and there is no doubt that he honestly believed in the marvels he wrote about. Not only did be devote his life to the attempt to find a firm foundation for Spiritualism, but he devised a test which, if it had proved successful, as he anticipated, would have convinced the world that the spirits of the dead continue to exist, and that they can communicate with the living. The test consisted of a message in a sealed letter, which Mr. Myers entrusted to Sir Oliver Lodge on the understanding that after his (Myers') death he would communicate the message through some medium. Ten years later, on January 17, 1901, Mr. Myers died. On February 19, 1901, about a month after Myers' death, Sir Oliver Lodge had his first communication from Mr. Myers, through the mediumship of Mrs. Thompson. The spirit of Myers says:—

> Lodge, it is not as easy as I thought in my impatience. Gurney (a deceased friend) says I am getting on first rate. But I am short of breath.
>
> Sir Oliver: Do you want to say anything about the Society?
>
> Myers: What Society?
>
> Sir Oliver: You remember the S.P.R.
>
> Myers: Do not think I have forgotten. But I have; I have forgotten just now. Let me think.

After some more of this sort of thing, Myers tells Sir Oliver that he will see him in April; whereupon Sir Oliver asks: "And will you then read what you wrote in the envelope?" To which Myers replies: "What envelope?—I shall be told."

This is Sir Oliver Lodge's own account, as given in his *The Survival of Man* (1909), pp. 287-288. Is it conceivable that the spirit of Myers, who spent his life in searching for evidence of the survival of the spirit after death, and left a message behind which, if repeated, would bring conviction to the most stubborn sceptic, would answer in this fashion? Is it conceivable that a spirit would talk about being "short of breath?" Do spirits have lungs, then? And if so, how do they travel through the ether of space, where there is no air to breathe? Is it conceivable that Myers would ask "What envelope?" when asked about the all-important message, and then reply? "I shall be told." How could he be told? No one knew what message the sealed envelope contained but himself. Is it not as evident as the sun in the heavens that the communications are the communications of Mrs. Thompson, the medium, and not those of the discarnate spirit of Mr. Myers?

After this, the spirit of Myers was in great demand; so much so that he complains through one medium that he can get no rest. Everybody is calling him, and he talks about everything and anything but the mysterious sealed envelope. However, nearly four years later, the well-known medium, Mrs. Verrall, reported that the message had been communicated to her. Sir Oliver Lodge immediately convened a meeting of the Council of the Society for Psychical Research, to be held at the Society's Rooms, 20 Hanover Square, London; and on December 13, 1904, Sir Oliver Lodge obtained the envelope from the bank where it had been deposited, and produced it at the meeting. The highest expectations were aroused.

Here, in the fateful envelope, lay the crucial test—the answer to the question which so many agonizing souls had addressed to the cold and indifferent stars, without success. If Mrs. Verrall had really received the test message from the spirit of Mr. Myers, the question would be settled once for all. The Materialist would be confounded; science itself would reel under the shock. To-morrow the news would flash over the world that the future life had been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. The papers would be teeming with the news—the greatest revelation, thanks to Myers' foresight, the world had ever known.

We give the result in Sir Oliver Lodge's own words:—

> On the envelope being opened, however, it was found that there was no resemblance between its actual contents and what was alleged by the script (of Mrs. Verrall) to be contained in it. It has, then, to be reported that this one experiment failed, and it cannot be denied that the failure is disappointing.[1]

Sir Oliver Lodge says "this one experiment failed"; but it is not the only failure. Dr. Hodgson, another member of the S.P.R., the exposer of Madame Blavatsky, also left a test letter behind, with the same result. Besides this, he "left behind him many private papers written in cipher. The key to the cipher is unknown to anyone now living." He has promised to reveal it, but has not done so yet. He was unable to give the solution to two charades of his own composition. Podmore, who gives the above particulars, adds:—

> He made many statements about his childhood, some true, some false, many unverified. His sister, to whom all the messages were sent, wrote: "To my mind there is nothing striking in any of the statements." She pro-

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge, *The Survival of Man*, p. 123.

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> pounded in turn three test questions, to which the trance intelligence gave no reply. Moreover, the Piper-Hodgson (that is, the spirit of Hodgson, communicating through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper), when questioned by a sister, could not remember the name of his schoolmaster in Melbourne. We have seen already that the Piper-Hodgson failed in England to recognize some of his intimate friends.[1]

That there are many people who honestly believe they receive messages from the dead I have no difficulty in believing. Those who have studied the history of witchcraft know that many witches were condemned to death on their own confession for having intercourse with the Devil, perhaps relying upon the power of the Devil to rescue them at the last moment. Flammarion, the French astronomer, has related the trust he once reposed in the spirits, and how he was disillusionized. He tells us:—

> As is well known, I have been one of the stoutest apostles of Spiritualism. I always believed I was having regular intercourse with the other world. Galileo's spirit never failed to come to me when summoned. His revelations about the appearance and manners of the inhabitants of other planets were incorporated in my writings always with the utmost confidence till modern instruments discovered five satellites of Jupiter and nine of Saturn, whereas what I believed was the spirit of Galileo always affirmed to me that Jupiter had four moons and Saturn eight. At first I felt sure the astronomers must be mistaken, but now I have seen with my own eyes. Therefore, as it is inadmissible that real spirits could err or jest, evidently my intercourse with Galileo was a long delusion. I acknowledge it frankly and without shame, because I have acted in good faith in this matter and refuse to lend support to error.[2]

In last week's article, the figures "1310," in the quotation from Dr. Mercier, should have been "13^{10}."

(To be continued.) W. Mann.

Shameless Inconsistency!

II.

(Concluded from p. 508).

Believing always in the efficacy of the "concrete" rather than disquisitions on the "abstract," it has been rather a habit to collect from the land of "Who's Who?" some of the examples of how they engineer their lives with their double standard of morality and ethics.

Of late, it has been unpopular, almost dangerous, to ventilate any views against birth-limitation. Bigger and yet bigger populations, so as to secure bigger and yet bigger armies, has been the cry in every land. The clerical purists and prudes have been extra busy in airing their half-baked ideas on sociology and economics, and the consequence is, that the papers provide the drollest commentary of the "mixed grill" which some call popular "thought," but which is so often the emptiest of rhetoric and foul gas; the empty stuff so contemptuously treated by a great judge in the House of Lords, when he stigmatized some much-quoted words of Lord Mansfield as mere rhetoric, and as of no value as law—rhetorical flatulence, which has been treated as law for years; and it is interesting to note similar happenings in connection with the teachings of the Church in regard to marriage and family, and mark the attitude of the clerics when it comes to a question of putting the teachings into practice.

Keeping in mind the axiom so stressed by King George V. that the State is built upon the family, and keeping in mind the claim by the Church that "only" by a marriage "sanctified by the Church formula" can a family be soundly built, it is interesting to take note of the attitude of Church personages when acting in any official or quasi-official position which calls into play some expression of authority.

By the unfair local power which the clergy have in the course of years been able to get, they now command an altogether too big and important share of almost every form of Local Government Board work, such as on Boards of Guardians, infirmaries, almost all forms of schools, and a detailed study of all such will prove to anyone the all-round evil of the sacerdotal slime.

A few samples from a collection of some hundreds will prove the truth of this contention.

The *Farnham Herald*, of July 27, 1907, in reporting the proceedings of the Alton Board of Guardians, mentioned the application of the "porter labour master" and the "assistant matron" for permission to get married.

The Chairman of the Board was, of course, a cleric, a canon of the Church of England, by name Theobald, and he was supported at this meeting by three other clerics of sorts, the Rev. A. C. Machlachlan, the Rev. H. Wheat, the Rev. C. Hopkins, this last being, I think, a Roman Catholic, and, therefore, to be excused if holding anti-marriage views; there were also one or two women Guardians—but you never know what to expect of them.

Leaving out of consideration the impertinence, the indignity of one public servant having to beg of some other public servant permission to get married, permission to be adult, permission to be a citizen; keeping in mind that there were several ministers of religion pledged to support the holy rite of marriage—leaving out of consideration the "Right"—we have in the reply of the Board, as voiced by the Rev. Canon Theobald, the clearest proof of the "shameless" disregard of loudly professed principles: "They can get married if they like, but they cannot retain their posts if they do."

It may seem a far cry to go back to the Alton Board but quite recently, at another Board in the same district, a new proof of the continuity of spirit and method of which so much is made when it serves some fresh tyranny, presented an opportunity to raise a fresh protest.

The *Farnham Herald*, of November 18, 1916, reporting a Guardian meeting, gives an account dealing with the penalization of a nurse for the crime of getting married without first having secured permission of the Board. At the Board table there were one or two military men, one or two lawyers, one or two women, at least one parson; all, one would think, persons concerned in upholding the dignity of marriage, the cause of morality, and, not least, the increase of the birth-rate. But the committee, the shylocks of bumbledom, cried for their bond, and felt that they must enforce the penalty in order that it might be seen that the Board meant what they said. The £10 bond must be enforced; morality, religion, law, and justice is of small account when there is a bond.

This case, like the Alton one, being in the diocese of Winchester, and in the town which has the honour of containing the official residence of the Bishop, seemed to warrant—and demand—a direct approach to the Bishop.

But in the opinion of the reverend big-wig the matter was not of sufficient importance, or the latter was not in sufficiently humble terms to suit the official supervisor of morality of the Union, or else contained too much truth to please, so the shepherd, called officially "Edward Winton," took occasion by raising a false

[1] Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 224.
[2] *English Mechanic*, July 28, 1899.

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issue to ride off—outside a pulpit they are shy of fight.

It is, perhaps, no part of a bishop's job to support a mere "labour-master porter" in his desire to be a citizen, or to help a nurse to comfort a soldier, broken in our wars when he returns to his native land and lover, in the hope of making a new start in life by taking a wife, and founding a home and a family; that's no part of Winton's job, whatever it may have been, if he had remained in a more democratic station, and with the name of Rev. Edward Stuart Talbot, D.D. It suited the mood of the bishop to make a charge of blustering discursiveness against the writer, winding up with a reference to the Alton case as being years old, which of almost all pleas is the poorest sort, in the case of an officer who makes use of a signature which claims its most important sanction from a far-reaching antiquity, that a bishop continues all the time.

This is the sort of conduct which justifies a statement made by the Rev. H. S. Woolcombe, Vicar of Armley, when he says that the Church, founded on democratic principles and the mother of all democracies, is, of itself, the most undemocratic of the institutions of the kingdom" (*Daily Telegraph*, January 18, 1917).

It is interesting to note that this same H. S. Woolcombe, when on the Bethnal Green Board of Guardians, took part with the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield, now Bishop of Chelmsford, in a fight in favour of morality and marriage, and against the official celibacy craze so cordially supported by the Local Government Board.

St. Gile's, Bloomsbury, is on record for having discharged an officer for getting married *sans* permission.

During the last few weeks the Chiswick District Council advertised for a man and wife without encumbrance, and when the attention of the President of the Local Government Board was drawn to the fact, he wrote that the discretion of the local authorities might be trusted to regard the claims of family life. This in spite of public advertisements to the contrary.

Some while back the Daventry Board of Guardians advertised for "Young Married Couple, without encumbrances"; and here, again, it was left to two ministers to put up a protest, one of them putting his finger right on the spot by charging the Guardians on the score of an attack on Christian morality, saying that "the Guardians were not merely encouraging race-suicide, *but attempting to enforce it.*"

From the reports of almost every public and quasi-public body in the kingdom, in almost every department of employment, this same shameless contradiction: pulpit and public encouragement of marriage on the grounds of religion and morality, and the same persistent "They can get married if they like, but they must leave their job if they do." The Rev. Canon Theobald *plus* the Rev. R. Meddings crystallize what is one of the most emphatic denials of our much-vaunted theory of religion ever put on record, for it is the formation of a complete indictment of every detail of our social, ethical, and political system, the so-called religious claims first and foremost.

T. Shore.

Glen Beauty.

Terrible and more terrible, with the passage of time, becomes the human carnage, heavier and heavier become the burdens on the shoulders of humanity, darker and darker loom the clouds that cover the fair face of the sun. Thundering reverberations of devilishly ingenious guns still deafen our ears. Ghastly shades, in ever increasing numbers, still tread the lonely road to crowded graves. Farther and farther into soul of society penetrates the subtle poison of reaction. The future fight becomes daily a struggle whose intensity develops in perspective with its postponement. It will try the bravest of hearts. It will test the strongest of spirits. Idle prophecy, perhaps, it may be to forecast the severity of this intellectual warfare; but the protection and strengthening influence militarism affords all the reactionary aspects of society can scarcely be overestimated.

So it is that peace seems to have become possessed of a new and more joyful meaning than before; and when we pass through the old beech and ivy robed archway, and walk up the avenue towards the house that has been to us a place of materialized peace, the real value of quietude floods our beings, and we wish never to leave it.

Tranquility of a degree unknown to the world resides here. Restfulness that men deem folly has nestled down within the walls of our home. Happiness is imprisoned between the beech hedges, and lingers within the glens, and uses the hills as its recreation-ground. Peace abides here in all its fulness, even in all its majesty. The ordinary everyday occurrences share not a little of its regal raiment; and difficult as it is to forget the bloodstained mad world, with its tragic infinitely sad conflictions, we can, for a little, let it slip our memories.

Peace is always more powerfully active than war; it is more valuable; it is more fruitful. Peace even produces war, and ultimately conquers it; and, however absurd it may seem, in the end war must come pleadingly to peace, asking that it may lay its weary head on her restful bosom. We discover the truth of this when the shrieking incoherencies grow dim in our ears, when the lurid streaks of conflict fade from our vision, and then we forgive the sentimentalist for speaking truthfully at the right time.

We climbed the hill in the forenoon, and risked our necks on a sledge that enjoyed burying its nose in the tufted grass. We explored the woods and glens in the afternoon. We dozed before a huge log fire in the evening until Nature awakened a vibrant chord in the complicated being of Mainie drawing her to the window. She unbarred the shutters and peeped out.

"Mack!" she whispered. "Come and see this!"

I said farewell to the man who wrote the Hymn to Proserpine. I knew what would happen.

"Look! See there!" she said. After a minute or two of mental concentration I could see them. On my life, I swear, I saw them, and Mainie can back me up. Hundreds of winter sprites of the fairy family were dancing around the rhoddy bushes on the lawn. They were clad in bright green garments. Their pink feet shone as they flitted above the snow. Curly hair streamed out from the little heads into the moonrays like silken threads of gold alive with light. These tiny strangers were radiantly happy, and as they danced on the snow-carpet they sang the quaintest of delightful melodies that ever one could hear.

Mainie spoiled the picture, for we went out to come into closer acquaintance with them, and to discover they had disappeared. But they had not taken the beauty with them into their old-fashioned home amongst the tree roots, as Mainie says.

Nature had robed herself in snow. Lawns, and paths, and terraces were covered with a glittering mantle of the purest white. Through the silvery filagree of tree branches streamed the moonrays. Bushes and hedges sparkled with millions of miniature lights. And down the slope to the road stood the pine strip, darker because of the snow light, impenetrable to the moonbeams, guarding the house like a sentinel who disregarded

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not one word of his duties, black-browed, immobile, statuesque.

After walking round the lawns we took the garden path to Glen Beauty, and in a few minutes we entered the woods. Overhead hung heavy pine foliage that transformed the trees into a huge natural cathedral along whose aisle we walked. Here and there the pathway twined into the light: but, with a few steps, we were again the quiet-footed, soft-tongued visitants of Nature's Holy of Holies. Through the restless windows, for the pines kept company with oaks and elders, sycamores, elms, and ashs, filtered queer gleams of light. On strange places they fell. Within a cleft of an old oak we saw a chaffinch's nest. Despite the frost and snow it was as cosily dry as if it had been finished but yesterday. In the hollowed bough of an elm one shaft of moonrays found the dainty little home of a wren; and another of the moon's searchlights played upon two black rabbits that were nibbling the juicy bark of a fallen sapling beside an entanglement of snow-tufted wild rose and bramble bushes.

Down and up glens we followed the aisle pathway, over fir-built bridges, along the shelving sides of fern-clad rocks, under archways of intertwined trees and bushes, until we reached Glen Beauty. In our ears rang the music of its creamy waters as they merrily flashed their way to the meadow burn. The moon was high in the heavens above the hill. Deep upon the bracken on the other side lay the snow. Each little bush that clung, beside the trees, on the precipitous declivity beneath our feet, bore its soft burden of white light rivalling the trees in its loveliness.

Mainie went into silent raptures: we had never seen Glen Beauty so entrancingly beautiful. The spirit of the place we loved deepened within us. Missionless it was, yet its knowledge, as it were, of our needs seemed as deep as that of genius. It brought us a message of peace. Reasonless it was, but its tranquility was profound like that of wisdom. Voiceless it was, yet the mellow music of the waters sang of joy to our hearts. In the quietude were no echoes of disaster, no reflections of folly, none of the brutalities that make men mad, none of the crimes that open the lives of women and children to endless sorrow and suffering. From the outside world peace had come here to rest awhile.

As we leaned over the fir railing and let the loveliness purify our hearts, we thought of the contrast the scene afforded to the lives of men and women. We could not help it. Here were light and purity; there darkness and mystery. Here was peace; there war. Here were the things that gave mankind the happiness for which we long; there nothing but striving and its hopelessness.

Life might be sweeter and cleaner did we love beauty more. We would not be content with the dirt, the squalor, the ugliness, and bitterness of the ingredients of our daily tasks if we knew what beauty was, and how easily it could become part of us and part of our everyday environment. We would not suffer the horrors to exist, nor would we tolerate the man who solemnly told us they were the fires through which we travelled to God.

There was no deity in the moonrays that turned the glen into a wonderland of joy and loveliness; there was no deity in its influence upon us; there was no deity in the happiness that stole through us. God remained as far from us as he does from his own children. Here was the peace God could not give to peace-craving nations—the peace that strengthens those engaged in a more fateful conflict than that which gives nothing and takes all.

To us the peace of Glen Beauty was the peace that shone in the eyes of the pioneers of all times. It was the peace the downtrodden and oppressed dreamed of and never experienced. It was the peace that glimmered far on the road of progress, and is reflected in the hearts of all revolutionaries—from the man Jesus Christ, if he lived, to the man who, to day, is spending his weary hours in prison that his conscience may still be free. It was the peace that every sensitive soul sees shining in the future; and Mainie and I discovered some of that peace in moonlit loveliness of snow-clad Glen Beauty.

Robert Moreland.

Correspondence.

SOCIALISTS, FREETHOUGHT, AND RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—There is virtually nothing left at issue between Mr. Effel and myself. Mr. Effel thinks that Christianity is an obstacle to progress—so do I. Mr. Effel thinks that Marxism and Christianity are mutually exclusive—so do I. Mr. Effel asks me if I "have ever met a Marxist who was a Christian?" I have met quite a lot of people who *thought* they were Marxist and *said* they were Christian, and weird "wild fowl" they were, too! The trouble is, they were perfectly sincere. "This kind is not cast out save by prayer and fasting." As for the "psychologic bond"—we shall see!

Thos. A. Jackson.

CHRISTIANITY AND COLOUR CONCEIT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I do not often defend Christianity; it is seldom accused of anything of which it is not guilty. But I think your article of July 29, in which you say colour conceit is "an offshoot of Christianity," is not true to history. Colour conceit is an independent growth, which the Christian Church has absorbed because she could not remove it. She absorbed the Christmas and Easter festivals for the same reason; she is absorbing the nebular theory and Darwinism for the same reason now.

Originally Christians classified men thus—(1) true believers, (2) heretics, (3) heathen. And they disliked all cross-classification as tending to distract attention from the main one. National patriotism was never regarded with much approval by the Church in its first fifteen centuries; still less would the colour line have been approved—if it had existed. But it did not exist. In the ages when Christianity was strongest, the Western Christians no more thought of despising Arabs or Indians than we would think of despising Germans. There was hatred, and curiosity, but no scorn. It is true our forefathers thought themselves more civilized than the African negroes, but the explanation is simple; they *were!* It was not till the seventeenth century that the West began to draw ahead of the East. The main reason of the gain is clear enough; Christianity was less powerful than Islam or Hinduism, and therefore did not succeed so well in suppressing thought. A secondary reason may be found in the alphabet we inherit from the Phœnicians. Imperfect as it is, it gave the printing-press and education a far better chance than the Arab alphabet or the 214 signs of Chinese ever could give them. A third reason is perhaps the accident that one man of genius, Francis Bacon, was born in the west. Whatever the reasons, the advance was real. And during the eighteenth century we find a subtle conceit creeping into the literature of the Western Aryans—especially that written by men who had not helped the advance or had hindered it, and who individually were not superior to the members of the races which had fallen behind. But this tendency has grown stronger as Christianity has grown weaker. The more pious Christians have always opposed it, and still oppose it, not on the true individualist grounds, but on the same ground as of old—it is a cross-classification to the classification they want to emphasize.

C. Harpur.

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On Seeing Princetown Church.

Princetown is proud of the fact that its Parish Church was built by the forced labour of American and French prisoners of war.

By sweating slaves were temples built,
And captives churches raise,
Wherein the saved may thankful lilt
Their grateful hymns of praise.

But still our God is Lord of Love;
He sets the prisoner free;
And any pious priest can prove
The Church's sanctity. PERCY RIPLEY.

"To any Clergyman in England."

THERE is no God—You need not pray:
Save your full words for such as they
Who took in youth the battle trail.
Some will live and some will fail,
But only their red blood can pay.

You need not kiss your "man of clay,"
Or crucifix, or Book and say—
"O God Forgive." 'Twill not avail.
There is no God.

There is no God—Yet these men lay
Their bodies down on War's red way
For love of man. And your sweet tale
Is foolish now. Behind the veil,
They too have seen—for France to-day.
There is no God.

C. W. B.

HEAVEN.

Fish (fly-replete in depth of June,
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,
Each secret fishy hope or fear.
Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond,
But is there anything Beyond?
This life cannot be all, they swear,
For how unpleasant, if it were!
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good
Shall come of Water and of Mud;
And, sure, the reverent eye must see
A Purpose in Liquidity.
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,
The future is not Wholly Dry,
Mud unto mud!—Death eddies near—
Not here the appointed End, not here!
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time;
In wetter water, slimier slime!
And there (they trust) there swimmeth One
Who swam ere rivers were begun,
Immense, of fishy form and mind,
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;
And under that Almighty Fin,
The littlest fish may enter in.
Oh! never fly conceals a hook,
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,
But more than mundane weeds are there,
And mud, celestially fair;
Fat caterpillars drift around,
And paradisal grubs are found;
Unfading moths, immortal flies,
And the worm that never dies.
And in that Heaven of all their wish,
There shall be no more land, say fish.

—*Rupert Brooke, "1914 and Other Poems."*

Lord Haldane says "an educated man does not take starvation wages or live in a slum." Was he thinking of the dear clergy when he made the remark?

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.

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WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Miller, a Lecture.

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Views and Opinions.

Christian Arrogance.

Next to the profound egotism embodied in Christianity is the arrogance and impertinence of its professors. Its egotism is shrouded in a profession of humility; its arrogance is the product of pride of place sustained through many centuries, during which its power was practically unquestioned. The old anti-evolutionary cry that human dignity was destroyed by an affiliation of man to the animal world; the demand that this, that, or the other Christian craving must be satisfied or the universe stand a confessed failure, are examples of what we mean by Christian egotism. Its arrogance and impertinence are not less striking than its egotism. Christians have ruled the roost so long, they have been so used to ignoring or trampling on other people, that the vast majority of them do not seem to realize there are other people in the world, with at least equal claims to consideration. In the case of education the subject is discussed as though it were merely a question of settling what Christians want. With the Sunday question it is, again, a question of whether Christians want music, or museums, or picture-palaces on the day of rest. No one else matters. Non-Christians must be content if they are permitted to exist. So, again, with moral qualities. Truth, honour, honesty, etc., are discussed as *Christian* virtues. Preachers are found declaring that they owe their prevalence, if not their existence, to Christianity. One would think that Christianity invented these qualities, and that other people were only entitled to them on payment of a royalty. One might as reasonably talk of the Presbyterian law of gravitation or Roman Catholic chemical affinity. Moral qualities are not the property of a sect, they belong to the race. What they owe to Christianity is distortion and degradation, not even development.

* * *

Pious Bunkum.

We were led to the writing of the above by an article from the pen of the Rev. Percy Dearmer, contributed to the columns of the *Daily News*. Mr. Dearmer is spending a holiday in Kashmir (it is remarkable how these poor, poverty-stricken parsons manage to get all these expensive outings), and his reflections have led him to comment on the development of political and social justice among the Western peoples, as compared with Eastern races. It would take us too far afield to discuss this question now, except to say that Mr. Dearmer suffers from the common fault of measuring the world by the standards of suburban London. And we cheerfully admit that a sound public life is dependent upon the development of a high standard of public service, a high standard of justice, and a sense of truth, as conditions of mutual trust and well-being. These all exist in the West, says Mr. Dearmer, with the stupid implication that they do not exist in the East—and he sees in the present War a proof.

> It is a struggle against the attempt to overthrow the decencies of Christendom by the brute force of a naturalist reaction—at the hands of men who have given up Christianity and have taken natural science in its place. But more than this, it is a struggle against the despotisms in Turkey, Austria, Germany, and also in Russia, which had survived in Europe as relics of the pre-Christian stages of society.

There is the parson through and through! The War is the product of men who have given up Christianity! Where? Has Germany given up Christianity? Has Austria? Has Bulgaria? Has any of the belligerent nations? Is there not an overwhelming majority of Christians in every one of the nations at war? Could there have been war had Christians been in any degree opposed to it? Where are the men prominent in this War who have given up Christianity and taken natural science in its place? And, after all, what has been the ideals of all the Christian nations now at war? Has it not been for nearly three centuries a policy of spreading over the earth, seizing territory East and West, counting national greatness in terms of money, and territory, of armies and navies? The responsibility of Germany for the present War is one thing. The responsibility for the conditions that have led up to the present catastrophe is another thing. And Christian nations were at the game of plundering, threatening, and the piling up of preparations for war long before Germany offered even a probable threat to the security of the world. This War, no matter where the responsibility lies, is a Christian war. Its outbreak was a proof that in the moralization of the world, Christianity has been, and is, a wholly negligible factor.

* * *

Christianity and Justice.

But Mr. Dearmer's most remarkable discovery is that the ideals of social justice and public service, in which he believes the West to be superior to the East,—

> can be traced directly to the belief in a good God which Christianity has implanted, not merely to the belief in some sort of Divinity, or in various kinds of gods, but to the belief in a personal God whose character is love.

That is a typically Christian statement—typically Christian, and wholly false. Observe that Mr. Dearmer does not say that social justice is due to the belief in God;

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that would give all religionists some of the credit. It is due solely to the Christian God. His is *all* the glory. But Mr. Dearmer should have been more precise. He should have told us where we are to look for evidence that the sense of social justice is due to Christianity. Is it in the New Testament? Surely not. As Mill said, it is the Koran, not the New Testament, which lays it down that a ruler must be appointed because of his justice and honesty. The New Testament is content with counselling the governed to obey their governors under penalty of damnation. Political justice is absent altogether from the New Testament. It does not come within its scope. Plato in the *Republic*, Plutarch in his *Morals*, Seneca and Aristotle in their various writings, did lay down some conception of the State, and insisted upon justice as the condition of a stable government. But such a conception is quite absent from the New Testament. And one consequence of this was the centuries of struggle to regain something of the conception of social life and social justice which was lost to the world through the triumph of Christianity.

* * *

Christian or Pagan?

Instead of the notion of social and political justice being an offshoot of Christianity, it is strictly correct to say that while, on the one hand, Christianity troubled little or nothing about either, both Greek and Roman thought was permeated therewith. A large part of the Platonic dialogues, such as *The Laws*, *The Statesmen*, the *Republic*, are mainly a discussion of social justice. Roman thought was chiefly concerned with it, and Lecky expresses the bare truth when he points out that it was during the reign of the Pagan Emperors—particularly under Hadrian and Alexander Severus—that a great advance was made in redressing injustices and "making the natural equality and fraternity of mankind the basis of legislative enactments." It was not a Christian, but the Pagan Epictetus, who wrote: "The duty of a citizen is in nothing to consider his own interest distinct from that of others." And it was the Pagan Marcus Aurelius who said: "There is but one thing of real value—to cultivate truth and justice, and live without anger in the midst of lying and unjust men." What has Christianity better than that? And what had these men to learn from a creed such as Christianity?

* * *

The Lie Historical.

A fortnight ago we were writing on the various kinds of lies that buttress Christianity. Among them we mentioned the lie historical, and we ought to thank Mr. Dearmer for so promptly providing us with an illustration of the truth of what was then said. For it lies upon the face of history that Christianity did nothing to develop the sense or practice of social justice, and much to hinder its development. Under its rule the Pagan legislation in favour of the emancipation of slaves ceased, the growing movement in favour of the equality of the sexes was crushed, the municipal life of the Roman Empire disappeared, and its legal system was overlaid with a mass of pious puerilities. And it is surely not without significance that in all the historic disputes between authority and liberty, at the Renaissance or the French Revolution, it was to the Pagan world that men turned for their ideals and their inspiration, not to the New Testament with its other worldliness, and its doctrine of passive submission to constituted authority. The late Professor Seeley says that the "whole modern struggle for liberty has been conducted not indeed without help from Christianity, but without help from the authoritative documents of Christianity." That seems to us only another way of saying that even Christians are not always true to the spirit of their creed. And their disloyalty in this instance is evidence of the coercive influence of social life.

Chapman Cohen.

Is there Anything in Religion?

Such was the question asked by a popular preacher in London the other Sunday evening, and, of course, he answered it in the affirmative. He was forbidden by his profession to give it any other answer, as everybody knew beforehand. The preacher was the Rev. Arthur Dakin, B.D., D.Th., of Coventry, who occupied the pulpit of Ferme Park Baptist Church during a portion of the pastor's holiday. Dr. Dakin had the courage to admit that "what strikes us most when we try to visualize London at this hour is not the number of worshippers, but the number of other people in the streets and elsewhere who are far away from the spirit and atmosphere of such a service as this"; but that admission was accompanied by the rider that "thousands of these people would probably say they believe in God, but that they are content to leave God alone—which is the greatest tragedy in human life." As a matter of fact, such people do not really believe in God, because, if they did, they could not possibly leave him alone. Does it not strike the reverend gentleman, however, as a curious and suggestive coincidence that when people do leave God alone he also leaves them alone? In other words, it is not a startling but undoubted fact that God exists only to those who believe in him, and that even they live exactly as if he did not? Wherein, then, does the tragedy of leaving him alone consist? Very probably the worshippers at Ferme Park Church regard themselves as occupying a much higher ground, in the sight of Heaven, than "the other people in the streets and elsewhere," who enter neither church nor chapel; but Dr. Dakin cannot but be aware that "the sight of Heaven" is merely a creation of the theological fancy, the real standard of comparative judgment being "the sight of earth." Thus judged, it will be found that, as a class, the non-worshippers, who leave God alone, are not inferior, to say the least, to the fervent believers who frequent church or chapel.

Our inference is that as a character-building agency religion is a tragic failure. Religion, in the accepted sense of the term, is a thing people profess, and religious people are generally known as professors of religion. The saved make a public profession of Christ as Saviour and Lord; and the first thing they are called upon to do as his disciples is to crucify themselves. Young people attend revival meetings on purpose to get converted, or to get religion, as it is often put, and conversion means the denying of self, and the acceptance of Christ to fill the void. Now, we are often told from the pulpit that the essence of the Christian life is self-denial, the surrender of self that God may become all in all. Take any list of Christian virtues supplied in the Bible, or elsewhere, and you will find that the majority of them are passive; or consult any schedule of rules for Christian conduct, and you will perceive that it consists largely of prohibitions. Out of the Ten Commandments eight are "Thou shalt nots." Self, we are warned, is notoriously untrustworthy; therefore, "it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." In Proverbs (iii. 5, 6) we are instructed thus: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." The New Testament equivalent to the Old Testament "trust" is "believe." To believe in Christ is to rely on his finished work, and let him do

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everything for us. The central idea is that self is evil, and, if followed, will lead us to everlasting destruction, or that of ourselves we can do no good whatever. But, we maintain, that to depreciate and distrust our own nature is the most dastardly crime we are capable of committing, and that not to lean upon our own understanding is to cover it with the lowest insult conceivable, as well as to jeopardise our own future. When, therefore, a religion teaches salvation by faith in the merits of another, it condemns itself as an instrument calculated to do unspeakably more harm than good to those who sincerely and consistently profess it. Such a religion preeminently is Christianity, and all sane people are bound to repudiate it.

We can never repeat too often or emphasize too strongly Emerson's famous saying: "Trust thyself; every heart vibrates to that iron string." In reality, there is nothing else to trust. God is nothing but the name given to a cluster of ideas, and as such alone exists. To trust him for salvation would be the silliest and most disastrous conduct possible. For the life that now is, nobody ever did trust him without coming to open grief. People pray, "Give us this day our daily bread"; but we know that bread is Nature's response to man's work, without which work it never comes at all. As Anthony Redvers, in Eden Phillpott's *Secret Woman*, declares: "Hard work's the only prayer as gets answered 'pon Dartmoor; a man must trust in his own right arm." Or as Emerson so well puts it:—

> In what prayers men allow themselves! That which they call a holy office is not so much as brave and manly. Prayer looks abroad and asks for some foreign addition to come through some foreign virtue, and loses itself in endless mazes of natural and supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous.

Salvation by faith alone is admittedly a mystery. Even Mr. Westaway, in the *Secret Woman*, seems to understand that God's ways are past finding out simply because otherwise there would be no work for the clergy. He says:—

> "Why, if his will was as easy to understand as big print, an' a clear thing for every humble heart to follow, there'd be no need of learned men, nor your bishops, nor prebendaries, nor rural deans. 'Twould be taking the bread out of parson's mouth if we could understand the ways of God."
>
> "Do you reckon that clergymen do all the good they claim to do?" asked Jesse.
>
> "More," declared Mr. Westaway. "Much more. They are the backbone of the nation. Without them all the mystery would be knocked out of religion, an' 'twould sink to be a matter of common sense. Dally-buttons! What a downfall 'twould be if us was allowed to run our lives by naked common sense. Away would go tithes an' all the other hidden things; an' not a man to marry us, nor christen our children, nor bury anybody."

There are strong reasons for fearing that Mr. Westaway did not discern the full significance of his illuminating words; but there can be no more completely attested fact than that supernatural religion and common sense are not on speaking terms. The divines acknowledge the truth of this statement; for in their estimation common sense, because it engenders unbelief, should be entirely avoided, and this is their advice:—

> Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
> But trust him for his grace.

We hold that we have no other standard of judgment than "naked common sense," and that, if we were to run our own lives by it, the only possible downfall would be that of the clerical profession, which exists alone for, and derives its only support from, the advocacy of the inherent depravity and consequent impotence of human nature, rendering its salvation impossible except by whole-hearted trust in the mercy of God in Christ. We contend, on the contrary, that human nature is neither impotent nor yet depraved, but possesses resources which entitle and empower it to manage its own affairs and work out its own salvation, without any interference whatever from the supernatural. "Is there anything in religion?" No; nothing but illusion and hindrance, nothing but an insult to the reason and an outrage upon the emotions. What we need, above all else, is confidence in ourselves and thorough training in the high art of self-reliance. Had the nations of Europe paid supreme heed to the development of the social sense, had they studied individual, national, and international problems on humanistic lines, and had they realized that it is the present life alone that matters, this disgracefully inhuman War could never have broken out. And yet, although the Church alleged to have been established by the Prince of Peace had been the dominant institution for nineteen centuries, she was powerless, possibly disinclined to attempt, to prevent such a calamitous carnage, and is equally unable, perhaps also disinclined, to bring it to an end.

J. T. Lloyd.

Renan the Rebel.

> So far as a man thinks, he is free.—*Emerson.*
>
> Instead of being made—make yourself.—*Herbert Spencer.*
>
> John P. Robinson, he
> Sez they didn't know everything down in Judee.—*Lowell.*

At that magnificent collection of French art which was shown some years ago at the Franco-British Exhibition, there was one portrait which left an ineffaceable impression upon the memories of the onlookers. It was Bonnat's portrait of Ernest Renan, a masterpiece which presented the man with absolute sincerity and fidelity. The picture was a triumph of genius, for the great French Freethinker lived once more upon the artist's canvas. Renan was seated, clad in the black broadcloth of the scholar, unrelieved save for the red button of distinction, and the long, unkempt, grey hair. The heavy face, the pendulous cheeks, the glassy eyes of the dreamer of dreams, the long finger-nails, all formed a perfect portrait of the solitary scholar who shook the world.

Ernest Renan never cared for the applause of the world; but he would have smiled his kindly smile if he had known that he was the subject of a great artist's finest masterpiece. And it is pleasant to think that we have a perfect presentation of the most accomplished author and scholar of his generation.

Renan's influence was continuous from the publication of his famous *Vie de Jesus*, in which he attempted to write the life of the young Jewish fanatic whom he had served in his youth. What a tempest the book provoked! For years it rained pamphlets. Fifteen hundred replies were published within a few months of its appearance. Whether men applauded or criticized, none could deny its power. Priests might rail and the pious might sigh, but they both have had to reckon with it. Not even the most reactionary of the commentators on the Gospel legends have written as they would have written had Renan's book never been published. It was a famous victory for Freethought, for Renan's kid-glove method is as fatal to religion as Strauss' analytical and critical thoroughness. Airily and daintily the scholarly Frenchman explained away the wonder and glamour of the Christian fables. The result was as deadly as the direct attack of the German scholar, although Renan does with a kindly smile what Strauss does grimly. Always under the velvet glove was the gauntlet of steel. The result

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was decisive, for it sapped the faith of tens of thousands:—

While we believed on earth he went,
And open stood his grave,
Men called from chamber, church, and tent,
And Christ was by to save.
Now he is dead. Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town,
And on his grave, with shining eyes,
The Syrian stars look down.

The man who could alter the faith of thousands was well equipped for his task, for he was a great writer as well as a complete scholar. In many hundreds of pages Renan showed the sarcastic power of the French language in hands that can evoke its subtleties and wield its trenchant blade. In his hands it was as effective and deadly a weapon as that handled by Edward Gibbon, although many tracts in the thousand years of history of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* seem as if they had been made to suit the greatest of all historians who wrote amid the quiet acacias of Lausanne. With his scientific bent on the one side, and his clerical training on the other, Renan was still at heart a Voltairean. He even suggested that Jesus in Gethsemane may have looked back with a sigh to the young maidens of Galilee, who, under happier circumstances, might have made his bliss. The sentiment was popular, for many sympathetic lady-readers of the Gospels have lamented that he was not a marrying man.

Renan's own pilgrimage from Rome to Reason is told in his own incomparable language in *Fragments, Intimes et Romanesques*. In it he tells the story of the sufferings he endured as he shook off his beliefs; and the series of letters addressed to his friend, the Abbe Liart, show, step by step, how he lost hold of his faith. In the final struggle he is driven to the Bible and to Pascal. In Pascal he finds that "the greatest brain that ever existed hardly dared to affirm anything." Then there were the domestic troubles, for there were foes in his own household. How Renan's heartstrings were tugged, for his loved mother was looking forward to his ordination in happy security. As he tells us in the *Souvenirs*, this was the most difficult knot to unravel. "I exerted all my ingenuity," he says pathetically, "in inventing ways of proving to her that I was still the good boy as in the past. Little by little the wound healed. When she saw me still good and kind to her, as I had always been, she owned that there were several ways of being a priest, and that nothing was altered in me but my dress, which was indeed the truth."

The way was smoothed by Renan's brave sister, Henriette, and the touching dedication of the *Vie de Jesus* expresses in a few sentences what he owed to her. The story of his mental development he afterwards retold in *Souvenirs*, but that is the memory of a man looking back upon the past, with the sadness and fragrance of the days that are no more. One thing emerges from all his writings, and that is his complete honesty. Truthful in his own despite, it was this uncommon quality that laid the foundation of his maturer influence and universal understanding. The real importance of such a man as Renan will be found as much in the processes of his quest as in what he discovered.

In all the little ironies of literature there are few things more interesting than that Renan's favourite subjects are chosen from a race of men, as he himself remarks, as different as possible from himself. But where his theme is one of the heroes of philosophy, Marcus Aurelius or Spinoza, his eyes kindle, and his smile is graver. For Renan was imperturbable. Through all the charlatanisms and devilries of superstition he went his quiet way, humming softly to himself. Far off, the murmur of the busy and noisy world sounded but dimly; but the scholar wrote his books and brought his dreams of the redemption of humanity within the realm of reality. He was well content, for he knew that he worked at the looms of the future.

Mimnermus.

Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

VI.

(Continued from p. 523.)

One day, alone and immersed in business in his "Cabinet," Oliver found himself confronted by a stranger who had somehow gained entry. The stranger stated that the Lord Jesus had appeared to him and announced that he, the stranger, would receive some great consideration at his, the Lord Protector's, hands; failing which, the consequences would, or might, be unpleasant for him, Oliver.

Cromwell, who, at this period at any rate, did not suffer from "nerves," explained to the stranger that it "was not the Lord Jesus, but a lying devil," who had appeared to him; that therefore he, Oliver, was under no moral obligation to comply with his requirements, still less was he, the stranger, obliged to take any further steps in the matter.

This view of the case so "flabbergasted" the stranger that he was left without an answer, and at once withdrew—and, no doubt, was suitably cared for outside. Oliver went on with his work.

It occurred to the writer that had Sir Oliver been able (as regards "Myers") to emulate the scepticism of his great namesake, some trouble—and much mischief—would have been obviated.—*W. Cook, "Reflections on Raymond,"* p. 51.

Several attempts have been made to gain new astronomical knowledge from the spirits. We append a sample given by the spirit of Sir Walter Scott, at the request of Professor W. Romaine Newbold, at a sitting with the medium, Mrs. Piper, June 27, 1895. Professor Newbold asks: "Sir Walter, is the sun all fire, or has it a solid mass?" To which the spirit replies that the sun is a solid body with a fiery envelope. But we had better give the exact words:—

> Well, now we move on towards this fire, now reach its borders, and notwithstanding the extreme heat we pass through it, and we find ourselves upon a solid bed of hot clay or mud. This is caused by gravity. Understand where we are; we have now reached the limit; we find it very warm and deserted, like a deserted island. We wish to find its inhabitants if there are any, *i.e.*, if it has any. Now we see what we term monkeys, dreadful looking creatures, black, extremely black, very wild. We find they live in caves which are made in the sand or mud, clay, etc. Now, sir, for that I will be obliged to discontinue our journey until some future time.
>
> Prof. Newbold: Will you come again?
>
> Sir Walter Scott: Yes, I will look down upon your planet and find you out. Good morrow, my friend. Leave the sun, or in other words we will remain on it. Adieu.
>
> W. Scott.

The sitting continued next day; but in the meanwhile the spirit discovers that he has been making an ass of himself, with his black monkeys in the sun, and tries to put himself right by explaining that, finding the sun very hot, he followed the light to the earth, where he "saw the monkeys flying in and out of sand caves." This explanation does not meet the case, for we left the spirit in the sun at the end of the sitting.

Immediately after this lame and halting explanation, the spirit makes another blunder just as bad. Professor Newbold asks: "What are the sun spots?"

> Sir Walter Scott: This is the shadow of the earth, sir.
>
> Prof. Newbold: You are thinking of eclipses. I understand this; but I mean the black spots sometimes seen on the sun?

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Sir Walter Scott: Oh, I beg your pardon, sir; I did not understand your question, thoughts.

Prof. Newbold: I beg your pardon.

Sir Walter Scott: No, sir; I understand now the spots on the sun are.....yes, sir.....are the so-called satellites which surround it; this produces a dark mass of spots.[1]

An intelligent schoolboy would know better than that. When the Professor asks about the climate of Mars, he is told it is "Very fair; it is in the *torrid zone*." As if the torrid zone existed somewhere in space, instead of being a zone on the earth!

When Professor Newbold and Hodgson were reading the record containing the description of monkeys being in the sun, they burst out laughing, and at the next sitting the spirit asks them what they were laughing at. Mrs. Henry Sidgwick describes this as a case of telepathy.[2] It seems to me that nothing more than common sense was required to tell Mrs. Piper that her error had caused laughter. These are just the little points of acuteness where Mrs. Piper scores, and endeavours to turn defeats into victories.

At another sitting held by Dr. Hodgson with Mrs. Piper, Hodgson asked the spirit of Sir Walter Scott to take him beyond Saturn; to which Scott replied: "I cannot catch your meaning, sir. I cannot take you to planets that do not exist." Hodgson: "Haven't you seen a planet further away than Saturn?" Scott: "Mercury."

"In the interval between this sitting and the next," says Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, "Scott has apparently made inquiries, or consulted Mrs. Piper's half-lost memories .....an expedition to Uranus is spontaneously offered, and on July 5 to Neptune. The previous ignorance or forgetfulness is the more curious as Neptune and its inhabitants turn out to be specially interesting, and are described at great length."[3]

All of which proves two things. Firstly, that the spirits only know what Mrs. Piper knows, and where she is ignorant, they are ignorant. Secondly, that Mrs. Piper uses the intervals between sittings to acquire knowledge ready for the next sitting.

Any account of the evidence for communion with the spirits of the dead would be incomplete without an examination of the claims of the celebrated medium, Mrs. Piper, who has practised as a medium for the past thirty years. One whole volume, of 649 pages, of the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research (vol. xvi.) is devoted to sittings of Mrs. Piper. Another volume of 652 pages (vol. xxviii.), by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, is devoted to the study of the psychology of Mrs. Piper's trance phenomena. Many other volumes of the Society contain records of her sittings; many others have been published by the American S.P.R.; and many have been published independently of either Society, as in Sir Oliver Lodge's *Raymond*. "Certainly," says Podmore, "here, if in any case in the whole history of Spiritualism, is such evidence to be found."[4] If it cannot be found here, it is useless to look elsewhere for it.

Mrs. Piper, then, is a trance medium, who has spent most of her life in Boston, U.S.A. "In 1884," says Podmore, "as a young woman, she consulted for some ailment a professional clairvoyant named Dr. Cocke. At her second visit to Dr. Cocke, Mrs. Piper herself became entranced, and was thereafter controlled by a large number of 'spirits.'"[5]

Before going further, it will be as well to explain, for the benefit of those who are not acquainted with the jargon of Spiritualism, the meaning of some of the terms used. At a sitting, or seance, there are at least four characters: (1) The Inquirer, or person who wishes to get into communication with the spirits. (2) The Medium, who claims to be endowed with an organization very sensitive to spiritual influences, and receives messages from the spirits. (3) The Control, or Familiar Spirit of the Medium, who seeks out and transmits messages to the medium from the spirit you wish to consult, or from the spirit who wishes to deliver a message to you.

Why Controls should be employed instead of direct communication with the spirit required is not very clear, unless we are to understand that all spirits cannot communicate with the living, but only a few who are especially sensitive to human influences. For our part, we heartily endorse the belief of Mr. Edward Clodd, that the Medium, the Control, and the Spirit, these "three are one."[1]

However, the theory works out mighty convenient for the medium, for if the information obtained is found to be untrue, which is often the case, in spite of the ambiguity and general vagueness of the messages, then the blame is thrown on the spirits—a false or tricky spirit (a "lying devil," as Oliver Cromwell would have called it) is personating the real spirit required.

When Mrs. Piper gives a sitting, she goes off into a trance, her head resting on a cushion or pillow. During this trance it is claimed that her spirit leaves her body, and the spirit of her Control enters in and takes possession, using Mrs. Piper's organs of speech, or Mrs. Piper's hand for writing. Latterly the communications have been in writing.

Mrs. Piper asserts that she has no knowledge of what takes place during the trance; has no idea of what she has been saying or writing, as the case may be. It is impossible to prove or disprove this statement, as the truth of the matter is only known to Mrs. Piper herself. Of course, *if* Mrs. Piper vacates her body and another spirit enters in, like the evil spirits used to enter the possessed, then it would be unreasonable to expect Mrs. Piper to remember what she spoke or wrote. But the Spiritualists, in their clever theories, have overlooked one thing: What becomes of the spirit of Mrs. Piper? Does it remain close at hand, ready to return to Mrs. Piper's body directly the Control vacates it? If so, how is it that Mrs. Piper knows nothing of what transpires? If, on the other hand, it goes wandering about, how is it she knows nothing about that? Spirits do not go into trances or become unconscious. We are assured that pure spirit, freed from the earthly shell or body, is pure intellect. No one ever heard of a sleeping spirit or an unconscious spirit. How is it that Mrs. Piper gives no account of what happened to her own spirit during the sitting? The most reasonable explanation is that spirits have nothing to do with the matter at all, and that the real author of the message is Mrs. Piper, and no one else.

The Spiritualists, however, call heaven and earth to witness to the honesty and veracity of Mrs. Piper. But as Podmore points out:—

> Now the fact that nearly all those who have had sittings with Mrs. Piper have been impressed by her transparent honesty is, in strictness, irrelevant. We have seen that many of Foster and Home's sitters were equally confident of the medium's honesty, and that, generally, the ability to impress his clients with confidence in his integrity is an essential part of a medium's equipment.[2]

And further: "Again and again we find persons,

[1] *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 1915: part lxxi., vol. xxviii., pp. 442-443.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[4] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 342.

[5] Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 164.

[1] Edward Clodd, *Strand Magazine* (July, 1917), p. 52.

[2] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 336.

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removed by education and social position from the ordinary temptations to fraud, who are engaged in the production of physical manifestations involving elaborate and systematic deception." [1] Of Madame Blavatsky he remarks: "It is impossible to doubt that for her, at any rate, there was an intellectual satisfaction to be derived from fooling the world, or that not inconsiderable part of the world which came under her influence. She was an artist in chicanery, a trickster not for gain only, but for glory. And researches in the squalid annals of Spiritualism have brought to light other cases where fraud was practised without the attraction of pecuniary or any social advantage." [2]

W. Mann.

(To be continued.)

Damned.

I can, I can't,
I shall, I shan't,
I do, I don't,
I will, I won't,
I am, I ain't.
I'm sinner, I'm saint,
I'm cursed by the fall,
I'm not cursed at all,
I'm saved by water,
I'm saved by slaughter.
I was damned in beginning,
I'm still damned for sinning,
I'm damned if I'm gay,
I'm damned if I pray,
I'm damned if I do, I'm damned if I don't,
I'm damned if I will, I'm damned if I won't,
I'm damned if I sing,
I'm damned if I swing,
I'm damned if I'm in, I'm damned if I'm out,
I'm damned if I dance, I'm damned if I shout,
I'm damned if I cry,
I'm damned if I die,
I'm damned if I'm hot, I'm damned if I'm cold,
I'm damned if I laugh, I'm damned if I scold,
I'm damned if I play,
I'm damned anyway.

—*Truthseeker* (New York). Bailey K. Leach.

OF THE CHARACTER OF COIGNARD.

His free intelligence trampled under foot vulgar beliefs and never accepted without examination the common opinion, except in what had to do with the Catholic faith, in which he was immovable.

The sagest of moralists, a kind of miraculous blend of Epicurus and Saint Francis of Assisi. He preserved, in his boldest explorations, the attitude of a peaceful promenader. He sauntered through the world with the audacious naivete which is the essential trait of his character and the elemental principle of his teaching.

He despised men with tenderness. He tried to teach them that, since they have nothing anywhere near to greatness in themselves except their capacity for suffering, they can cultivate nothing useful or beautiful but compassion.

He had to show them that their imbecile natures have neither imagined nor constructed anything worthy of attack or defence, and that, if they only knew the fragile crudity of the works of which they are most proud, such as laws, religions, and empires, they would fight about them in play only, as children that build castles of sand on the rim of the sea.

The majesty of the laws did not impose on his clairvoyant soul; and he deplored the fact that the unhappy ones are burdened with so many obligations, of which, generally, it is impossible to find the origin or sense.—*Anatole France*, "*The Sayings of Jerome Coignard.*"

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 288.
[2] *Studies in Psychical Research*, p. 106.

Acid Drops.

There is, perhaps, more in the Pope's latest appeal for peace than meets the eye. The Vatican never loses sight of a possible restoration of some measure of temporal power, and if a peace conference could be brought about through its mediation, it would have a strong claim for representation, and ultimately for consideration thereat. In the next place, the Roman Church is not blind to the extent to which Christianity has suffered through the War. It has given a serious, if not a mortal, blow to the idea that Christianity counts as a moral force in the world's affairs; and if a peace conference resulted from its efforts, it would enable the Church to plead that but for Christian influence, the War might drag on indefinitely. Finally, the Roman Catholic Church is the one Christian Church with anything like a claim to be called Universal. It has followers all over Europe and America, and is specially strong in Austria and South Germany. All of these naturally look to the Church to exert something like a helpful influence, however much they may be disappointed. Other Churches are at most national Churches, and are compelled to play the game of nationalism to the end. But whether we are dealing with the Roman, the Greek, or the Protestant Church, there is no need to look beyond the play of sectarian motive to account for their conduct.

Apart from this, the reception of the Pope's note proves that the only power exerted by Christianity to-day is a power for evil. The Allies are unanimous in declaring that the Pope is playing the German game, and is manœuvring for a "German peace." On the other side the Pope is quite unable to persuade either Germany or Austria to offer conditions that would provide a basis for negotiations. Thus, while the appeal to Christian belief and Christian feeling is everywhere powerful to rouse people to war and to keep them at war, nowhere does it exert any influence in the direction of bringing the War to an end. As a force for destruction it is still powerful. As a power for peace it is impotent and contemptible. Peace, when it does come, will not owe its coming to Christianity. And we are sure that large numbers will be alive to the significance of the situation.

A pastoral from the Lutheran Synod was read recently in all the churches of Berlin. The congregations were enjoined therein to recognize the hand of God in the fact of the soil of the German Fatherland having been protected from invasion. The Kaiser and the German Empress attended service in the Cathedral. Yet the truthful British clergy will have it that the Germans are "Atheists."

The Bishop of London said that he prized a photograph of himself taken aboard a vessel of the British Fleet. This industrious quick-change artiste is doing his best to advertise himself as a national hero.

A paragraph in the *Star* says that "St. Mark's parish, Camberwell, has sent over 2,500 men to the Colours, and all its assistant clergy are also serving at the Front." The casual reader would hardly realize that the parsons were engaged in serving communion port at the back of the Front.

A returned Army chaplain, the Rev. C. B. Mortlock, preaching at St. Margaret's, Oxford, on August 12, said:—

> A vast amount of harm has been done, he said, by the utterly unreal and extravagant nonsense that has been talked and written about soldiers. War is a foul mixture of brutality and ugliness and bad smells and a hundred horrors that cannot be named or described. To pretend, if not to believe, that soldiers exult in it is to go a long way towards brutalizing the national character by investing the horrors of warfare with a romantic glamour. To read as I did the other day—the writer was probably a woman—of the soldier hero waiting "with eager heart and starry eyes" to go over the top is as sickening as it is silly. Soldiers hate it. They recognize it for the hysterical tosh it is, and if some of our "popular" preachers and speakers had heard, as I have, the soldiers' comments on this sort of gush they would be astounded. *It*

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> is stupid, false, dishonouring, and wicked, and I know that many soldiers stay away from church because they are afraid of hearing more of it.

As our readers are aware, we have been saying much the same as this ever since the War began—and for years before it began. *Soldiers* know what a hateful, filthy, demoralizing business war is. It is the man at home, the newspaper scribbler, the empty-headed, Jingoistic, war-at-any-price man, the man who boasts of "doing his bit," getting well paid for it, who glorifies war. As Mr. Mortlock says, the real credit due to our soldiers is for what they have endured, and the manner in which they have borne themselves during the past three years. But nothing is more false, and ultimately more evil, than the talk of the benefits, moral or mental, derived from War. If these benefits do follow from war, then Prussianism in its most complete form is fully justified. If Prussianism is a thing to be hated and suppressed, those who dwell upon the way in which our soldiers are made better men, and we at home better citizens by war, stand self-condemned as fools or rogues.

"General" Booth is a good Christian, and a better man of business. A display advertisement in the daily press reads: "The War Work of the Salvation Army claims your interest and sympathy. Send a cheque to-day to General Booth." Unhappily, the Salvation Army is engaged in fighting the Nether Powers, whilst the Allies are in conflict with the Central Powers.

Speaking at Hampstead, Sir Oliver Lodge admitted that he had not had a scientific education. The confession was really unnecessary, for most people recognize that much of his parade of knowledge is all bogey.

The Rev. H. G. Veazey has been appointed honorary canon of Southwark Cathedral, and a press notice says that he has "done good, social work, particularly in connection with the United Girls' Schools Mission." Envious colleagues will now sing "Place Me Among the Girls."

The winter coal supply is causing anxiety. We wonder if there is a shortage in the place so often mentioned in sermons.

The clergy are like the Bourbons. They learn nothing and forget nothing. The Rev. Percy Dearmer has been repeating the ridiculous falsehood that the Germans are Freethinkers, and the editor of the *Daily News* permits the remark to pass unchallenged. The reverend gentleman's words are: "The present War—is a struggle against the attempt to overthrow the decencies of Christendom by the brute force of a naturalist reaction—at the hands of men who had given up Christianity and had taken natural science in its place." Yet the Kaiser's piety is notorious, and German soldiers have the words, "God with us" inscribed on their uniforms.

The Rev. John Neville Figgis, D.D., Litt.D., an Anglican clergyman, has published a notably sane book about Nietzsche and his teaching, of which the *Church Times* for August 17 furnished an equally sane review. We disagree with much in both book and review, but heartily welcome both as eminently hopeful signs of the times. After Drs. Clifford's and Campbell Morgan's ignorant and unscrupulous attack upon the Nietzschean philosophy, it is profoundly gratifying to find a Christian minister who can be perfectly just and fair to the greatest anti-Christ of the nineteenth century. The reviewer says of many references to Nietzsche in pulpits and newspapers:—

> It is assumed that the outrageousness of German behaviour is due to his teaching, or, conversely, that he is the one true exponent of the German spirit, the prophet of the "good old German God." Those who know disdain this facile ignorance, among whom is Dr. Figgis.

While ardently admiring and even loving him, Dr. Figgis is by no means blind to the fact that Nietzsche is "a real enemy" of Christianity. His recognition of this fact constitutes one of the chief beauties of *The Will to Freedom: or the Gospel of Nietzsche and the Gospel of Christ* (Longman's; 6s. net). Dr. Figgis never forgets that to the famous Basle Professor Christianity was "the one great curse, the one great intrinsic depravity, the one great instinct of revenge." And is not that indictment truer to-day even than when Nietzsche framed it?

Clergymen are wholly mistaken when they affirm, as they all do, that the world "not only needs but feels the need of redemption." The world does nothing of the kind, and this is the reason why it so persistently rejects the Christian religion. What the world really needs and feels the need of is freedom, justice, fairplay, a development of natural affection as the medium of universal brotherhood; and this it has never enjoyed under any form of supernatural religion.

"Viator," of the *Church Times*, met a red-hot Atheist from London, who said that he hated the Christian God with perfect hatred. Addressing himself to "Viator" and his friends, he exclaimed: "Your God! Your maker of the world.....He made this mess of a world, and leaves us the heart-breaking job of setting it to rights. If I believed in a God like yours, I should hate him, I would spurn him, I would defy him." Neither "Viator" nor his friends disliked the fellow from London, and on parting they all shook hands with great cordiality. One of them observed:—

> What a friar preacher that man would make; can't you see how love burns in him?

We congratulate "Viator" upon his sensible attitude to the Atheist.

Christ said "Woe unto ye rich," but numbers of Christians appear to be quite willing to bear all the risk of a decent balance at the bank. Even the dear clergy are no exception. The Rev. J. E. C. Colquhoun, of Killermont, Scotland, left personal estate of the value of £41,956. Another parson, the Rev. R. Evans, of Leominster, left £41,574. And the Rev. C. White, formerly curate of St. Mary, Plaistow, left £18,124.

The Emperor Charles is as pious as the Kaiser, and in a recent message to the German Emperor he congratulates him on the brilliant successes of his troops "with the aid of the Almighty." The message goes on, "May the Lord continue to aid our faithful co-operation in the future with the fullness of his blessing."

A press paragraph states that the paper used by the British and Foreign Bible Society has increased from twopence to sixpence a pound. Cannot these pious folk rely on prayer without resorting to the very mundane method of advertisement?

The Dean of Worcester says there has been a reaction in favour of religious education as a result of the War. We are not aware of any reaction, but we do know there are hopes amongst religionists of turning the war-spirit to the benefit of the Churches. It is against this attempt that Freethinkers will have to be on their guard. How much Christians hope to gain from the War is seen in the remark that what is taught to the children must be believed by the teachers. If that means anything at all, it means tests of the most rigorous kind for them. We are quite sure that so long as religion is in the schools, Churchmen will always be working in favour of tests for teachers; and we hope the prospect will arouse in them the perception of the necessity for clearing religion out of the schools altogether.

At Willesden Police Court a boy of 16 was charged with committing a number of burglaries, and stealing from automatic gas-meters. It is said he had been inspired to commit the burglaries by reading a life of Charles Peace. His religion was that of a Salvationist. It was not pictures this time; and in following Charles Peace the boy might have claimed a religious model. Peace's attachment to Christianity, particularly of the Evangelical or Salvation order, was well marked and sincere. He enjoyed the services thoroughly, deriving spiritual profit from them, and material profit from his burglaries.

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The New York *Truthseeker* publishes some interesting figures concerning the alleged number of converts made by Billy Sunday in his Boston campaign. Sunday declared that 1,381 Catholics had signed cards accepting his doctrine, and that this number of cards, signed, were delivered to the Catholic Churches. Whereupon inquiry was instituted, and eliminating eighty children, the following analysis was published in the Boston *Pilot* :—

Signers for curiosity and fun	372
Unable to verify because of change of address, etc.	298
Insufficient address on cards	205
No such person at address given	195
Not practical Catholics	66
Non-Catholics	46
Deny being present and signing cards	36
No such address...	35
Request of employer	23
Converts	6
Not responsible for actions	6
Perverts	4
Unable to give any explanation of their actions ...	4
Went with Protestant friends	3
Went to hear sermon on Temperance	2

The eighty children are thus accounted for :—

Curiosity and fun	57
Unable to verify because of change of address, etc.	16
Taken by Protestant friends	4
Not practical Catholics...	2
Never attended	1

These figures are quite in line with other statistics of the same kind. When Torrey and Alexander were in this country, an inquiry on somewhat similar lines produced the same result. Whatever else the professional evangelist may do or leave undone, his campaign never suffers for want of embellishment.

The Bishop of Norwich is blessing the War, and says it is "worth while to support right, truth, freedom and honour; to fight for peace and goodwill, and the things Christ himself taught us to hold dear." Does this mean that Christian soldiers are enforcing the Beatitudes with bombs and bayonets?

"It is the duty of the English people," said Dr. Page, at Plymouth, "to learn all they can. That day he had seen a statuette of Benjamin Franklin labelled George Washington." If Dr. Page pursues his studies, he will find thousands of statuettes of a Jewish peasant labelled "God."

A new reflector for the Mount Wilson Observatory, California, has been installed, but during its passage up the mountain, so says the *Illustrated London News*, "It was carefully guarded, as threats to destroy it had been made by cranky opponents of science." Evidently there are still good Christian representatives of those who opposed the use of chloroform as being against the Lord's wishes. The Lord left man ignorant, and he should remain so. That seems the theology of these people.

Owing to the scarcity of starch, it is rumoured that the clergy may have to wear soft collars. It seems appropriate that soft collars should be worn by men with soft heads.

The question of whether the War is helping or injuring religion still provides room for newspaper writing. In the *Weekly Dispatch* Mr. Edward Synton cites an English chaplain as saying of his experience at the Front with the Australians :—

> I was a great deal with the Australians, and they taught me a lot, these men from "down under." At first I thought them a hard-fighting, hard-swearing, hard-hearted lot of sinners. Then I got to understand their point of view and loved them. Religion? They mostly had none, at least no orthodox faith, and yet they were better men than I, braver, more unselfish, and broaderminded.

The curious thing about such confessions is the insight they give into the clerical mind. That a man should be surprised to find men without religion brave, unselfish, and broad-minded, illustrates the cramping influence of Christianity. Otherwise it would surely be recognized that such qualities are in no sense the property of a sect, but that they are to be found with men of all creeds and of no creeds at all. We are not at all afraid of chaplains in the Army converting Freethinkers, but we should not be at all surprised to find many conversions in the other direction.

Of course, Mr. Synton has the usual remarks about the War breaking down the barriers of sect and creed. And this may well be the case. The lesson that many draw from this is that while all religions divides men, social service of any kind, even of warfare, unites them. They will live together, eat together, fight together, and die together. The one thing we will not do is to pray together. The War has certainly brought out the essentially anti-social character of modern religious belief, and thousands are becoming alive to its significance.

The Rev. J. Thomas, who achieved notoriety by having imputed to him the remark that God sent the heavy rain because he was displeased with Sunday labour on allotments, has now explained that he did not say exactly that. What he said was that there had been a lot of work put into the garden. "This appeared in the sight of Almighty God, and the heavy rain did seem to be God's answer." His view was that the people should "bring their tools and seeds to church, and offer them and the work that was going to be done to God." We cannot see that this mends the matter much. If God has anything to do with the weather, the rain was his work, and if he has not, we don't see much use in men offering their work to God—unless by some kind of hocus-pocus Mr. Thomas sees some benefit to his Church.

The Bishop of Birmingham has written to the *Times*, protesting against Mr. Thomas's view of the operations of Deity. That is a domestic quarrel, and we will leave the two to fight it out. But we would like to ask the Bishop where his God does appear in the business? If the weather happens without his help or interference, why not other things? And if all things happen without him, what is the use of bothering about him, anyway? The stock apology for a king in this country is that he doesn't interfere with things; he does nothing. Is the Bishop adopting the same policy with regard to God?

The *Christian World* protests against the attempt of Roman Catholics to discredit Protestantism by pointing to Germany. But is there not more excuse for this than for Protestants of this country trying to saddle the responsibility for the War on the Materialism and anti-Christianity of Germany? Germany is quite as Christian as is this country, and before the War, English Protestants were loud in their endeavour to prove that Freethought had little influence in Germany, and that the ruling minds there, as here, were Christian. The truth is that Germany *is* a Christian country, in the sense that the majority are Christian. And the Russia of the late Czar—the Russia of the Siberian prisons, pogroms, Black hundreds, and other villainies; the Russia that the Bishop of London extolled so highly—was also Christian. That Freethought and national villainy go together is a pure inference; there are no facts to support the charge. That Christianity and national villainy often run well in harness all history proves abundantly.

The *Cape*, a South African journal, publishes in its June issue a note on the Governor-General's (War) Fund raised at Malmesbury. The sum realized was £628 8s. 2d., out of which £517 5s. 6d. was received from a "Rev. Mr. Grove." On the expenditure side of the account, however, it appears that Mr. Grove received five per cent. commission, or £25 17s. Mr. Grove is the local clergyman of the Dutch Mission Church, and the *Cape* expresses surprise at the commission being paid, when in Capetown account collectors never ask more than two-and-a-half per cent. We are surprised also, not at the facts, but at the admission. We think the usual way is to put in such payments as "expenses." That covers much. But we fancy the eyes of many would be opened if the expenditure in connection with the various War funds in this country were carefully scrutinized. Scotland Yard could tell a tale were it so inclined.

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To Correspondents.

O[illegible]E of our readers, who some years ago translated into French a pamphlet by Mr. Foote on *The Virgin Mother*, wishes to know if any reader of the *Freethinker* possesses a copy. In that case, will they be good enough to write to this office.

W[illegible]LL FRASER (Cape Town).—We are obliged for cuttings and MSS. Pleased to have your appreciation of the *Freethinker*. We have many readers in South Africa, and have often wondered why something definite in the shape of propaganda is not attempted there.

L. NEWLYN.—So long as we can scrape along we are quite content. There is a pleasure in the struggle, otherwise we should neither have commenced nor continued it. And the only place in the Freethought ranks for the man who is not content to struggle and enjoy it, is outside. Please overlook the bull, it is excusable.

L. ANSELL.—The *Freethinker* is not registered as a newspaper, but it can be sent abroad on a postage of one halfpenny. There is nothing against it being sold in the way you name.

A. WAYMARK.—Thanks. Criticism, particularly when it is well meant, is always acceptable.

T. HARDING.—It was quite usual to issue the Apocrypha along with the Authorized Version of the Bible until early in the nineteenth century. The Apocryphal New Testament books were only issued as a separate volume. An edition was published by William Hone, and can still be obtained in second-hand condition.

L. N.—Thanks for offer of articles, but they do not fall quite within the scope of this paper.

MATERIALIST.—The question of the nature of the atom is not really vital to the position of a scientific Materialism. The Materialist takes his conception of the atom from contemporary science, and he is at liberty to revise that conception as fuller knowledge requires, without prejudice to his philosophy.

A. R. RICHARDS.—P.O. received. Pamphlets are being sent as directed.

C. W. BAKER.—Many thanks for copy of article, which we greatly appreciate.

J. ROBERTS.—Pleased to hear from you. We can quite believe that our soldiers appreciate the Y.M.C.A. activities in the shape of picture shows. The good souls who picture the soldiers crowding to the religious services are to be pitied. Pleased also to learn of the readiness with which the *Freethinker* is read amongst the men. The War has brought us many new readers, and we shall be surprised if it does not bring many more.

W. J. HEPWORTH (Johannesburg).—Your P. O. was received quite safely, and the pamphlets and book ordered duly sent. There was some delay in sending as we were waiting delivery of the book ordered from the binders. The parcel was sent on June 14, leaving a balance of 6s. to your credit. Barring submarines, you ought to have received it before this. If not, let us know, and duplicates will be sent.

T. L. K. MUDALIAR (Bangalore).—We are writing the parties named in your letter.

W. THOMAS.—Articles on Omar have appeared in the *Freethinker* from time to time, but we cannot put our hands on one at the moment. We *must* have that index one day. Will have another look, for next issue.

E. PURCHAS.—We cannot say from which translation of Omar our contributor was citing. There were several versions of Fitzgerald's issued, and numerous other translations have appeared.

F. C. HOLDEN (Utah).—We are afraid we have been remiss in not acknowledging before now your goodness in sending cuttings. They are appreciated none the less.

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.

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

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.

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.

Eternal vigilance may be the price of liberty, but that is because its opposite is unsleeping and unweaned. A friend, whose daughter is about to enter a Teacher's Training College, sends us a letter, received *before the girl arrived at the College*, asking her to join an Archbishop's Certificate Examination. The letter, it should be said, does not come from the College, which makes it the more curious. The prospective pupil is reminded that if she teaches in a Church school, the Archbishop's Certificate will be a valuable addition to other qualifications. Secularist parents would do well to be on their guard in these matters, for it is evident that where religion is considered "all things are lawful." Nothing short of clearing all religion out of the schools will ever stop these gentry at their old-time tricks.

The new Swansea Branch of the N.S.S. has drawn up a good programme of lectures up to the end of November, and the Secretary, Mr. B. Dupree, 12 Short Street, Swansea, is anxious to secure the co-operation of friends in the district. These may assist either by donations, by becoming members of the new Branch, or in both directions. There is plenty of energy in Swansea, and we hope that this will not be discouraged through lack of support. Mr. Cohen has promised to open the course on September 30, and he will be followed on October 14 by Mr. Lloyd.

The re-formed Manchester Branch is also making preparations for a good winter's work. The Secretary, Mr. H. Black, of 446, Great Cheetham Street, E., Higher Broughton, writes that our last note on the subject brought several new members, but he is anxious for more. We hope he will get them. May we also again urge Freethinkers in other parts not to let the coming autumn and winter months pass without a really serious attempt at organization. We are specially anxious to see greater activity in South Wales and the West and North of England.

We are pleased to note that the *Christian Registrar* (U.S.A.) for July, in giving a notice of the result of the Bowman case, remarks: "The House of Lords in England has given a judgment of importance, and with no little credit to itself." We are glad to see the justice of the verdict recognized by a journal so wholly opposed to the views it is the business of the Secular Society to promote.

The printing of the full report of the House of Lords judgment is now in hand, and it will be published as early as possible. Printing is, however, nowadays a matter of some uncertainty, owing to the shortage of labour and the delays occasioned thereby. The settlement of affairs in connection with the Bowman estate is also going on, but that is also a matter which takes some time.

A curate had asked an East End godmother the usual question: "Do you, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world?" and she gaily replied: "Oh yes, *I recommend them all!*"—*Raymond Blathwayt, "Through Life and Round the World."*

"Now, boys," said the vicar one day to a class of bright little fellows, "I have to divide four potatoes fairly and equally between five boys. How shall I do it?" Dead silence until one little fellow held up his hand: "Mash 'em, sir!"—*Raymond Blathwayt, "Through Life and Round the World."*

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The Rise and Progress of Mental Power.

IV.

(*Continued from p. 517.*)

The differences which separate the psychical powers of man from those of the lower animals are, undoubtedly, material in degree. But when we survey the wide interval which yawns between the feeble mental capacities of the lowest savages and the intellectual achievements of a Newton, Darwin, Spencer, Goethe, or Shakespeare, it becomes obvious that the range of human mentality itself is, indeed, vast. And, as we have already seen, just as mind in its highest manifestations in the brute may be traced step by step upwards from the simplest modes of sensation, so do we discover that from ape, through savage, to cultured man, there extends a chain which binds all these creatures in one close embrace.

The transcendent importance of any satisfactory solution of the problem of human psychogenesis is acknowledged by all. When modern man meditates over the mocking resemblance to himself, which all the monkey tribe display, above all, when he still cherishes the fond delusion that mankind alone are endowed with a mental, moral, and spiritual pre-eminence which establishes their right to regard themselves as specially favoured forms of life, designed to reign supreme over all other modes of being, and destined to enjoy an immortal bliss denied to their meaner living contemporaries; when confronted with a caricature of man's peerless self, the lord of creation cannot avoid the problem of the meaning, not merely of simian organisms, but of the savages who scornfully suggest to him the inferior state from which he has slowly arisen. As Huxley so admirably put it:—

> Brought face to face with these blurred copies of himself, the least thoughtful of men is conscious of a certain shock due perhaps not so much to disgust at the aspect of what looks like an insulting caricature, as the waking of a sudden and profound mistrust of time honoured theories, and strongly rooted prejudices regarding his own position in nature, and his relations to the wider world of life; while that which remains a dim suspicion for the unthinking becomes a vast argument, fraught with the deepest consequences, for all who are acquainted with the recent progress of anatomical and physiological sciences.—(*Man's Place in Nature*, p. 59).

The three leading opponents of the doctrine of the derivation of human mental faculty from lower animal intelligence never composed their own differences. For, although Quatrefages, Mivart, and Wallace were all convinced evolutionists, they inconsistently endeavoured to break the continuity of Nature in order to establish their contention that the intellect of man had a separate origin from that of animal mentality in general. Their objections were based on three antagonistic postulates. And, although with his declining Catholicism, Mivart's opposition steadily weakened, he long insisted that human reason could not be of kindred genesis with that of brute intelligence, because the mental capacity of the lowest savages rises immeasurably superior to that of the highest apes. On the other hand, Wallace claimed that the psychical powers of primitive men are so similar to those of anthropoid apes, that their relatively massive brains proved that their possessors were ordained to act as the forerunners of future intellectual races to which a powerful mental organ is essential to enable them to fulfil the functions of civilized existence.

In supporting his theory of the mental independence of man, Professor Quatrefages confined his dissent from the more logical conclusions of naturalists in general to the realms of conscience and religion. For he frankly confesses that "the animal is intelligent; and, although an (intellectually) rudimentary being, that its intelligence is nevertheless of the same nature as that of man." The argument of Quatrefages counts for little when we remember that ethical feeling is very feebly represented in the lower races of mankind. Yet, there are marked evidences of rudimentary moral feeling in dogs, horses, and other mammals, while the maternal instinct is strongly developed both in quadrupeds and birds. Indeed, apart from at least a faint feeling of reciprocity, it is impossible to account for various actions which the numerous social animals so constantly display.

The theology of a Newman, Martineau, or Pascal, quite obviously, could not exist among aboriginal savages any more than among cats or monkeys. But the sensations of fear and curiosity so largely responsible for the genesis of religions, and of which they were the natural outcome, found their first supernatural expression among animals gifted with conceptual powers. Apart from terror, theologies have been mainly generated through malobservation and misconception of Nature's phenomena, with the consequence, that in their crudest and most bloodthirsty, as in their most refined and attenuated forms, they reflect more or less the mental and moral outlook of the communities that cling to them.

Metaphysicians obstinately allege that thought is impossible in the absence of language, a fallacy to which even the poet Shelley fell a victim. For he declares in his *Prometheus Unbound* that the Titan—

> ...gave man speech, and speech created thought;
> Which is the measure of the universe.

But "speechless" creatures indubitably possess general ideas. One has merely to observe cattle, horses, or sheep, grazing, to realize that these animals know what to eat and what to avoid. Or, as Romanes urged in his *Mental Evolution in Man*:—

> If I see a fox prowling about a farmyard I infer that he has been led by hunger to go where he has a general idea that there are a good many eatable things to be fallen in with—just as I myself am led by a similar impulse to visit a restaurant.

A terrier has a distinct idea of a rat, and the dullest cat never fails to recognize a canine creature. Infants, again, long before they speak, easily form ideas of a simple character. Moreover, animals dream, which indicates that they are not entirely dependent upon the impressions of the moment, but retain sufficient of the sensuous experiences gathered in their waking hours to enable them to restore them in the imagery of a dream.

Romanes introduced the useful term "recept" to denote that condition of consciousness which unites things perceived with things conceived. This psychologist thus phrases his case:—

> A recept differs from a concept in that it is *received* not *conceived*. The percepts (things perceived) out of which a recept is composed are of so comparatively *simple* a character, are so frequently *repeated* in observation, and present among themselves resemblances or analogies so *obvious*, that the mental images of them run together, as it were, spontaneously, or in accordance with the primary laws of merely sensuous association, without requiring any conscious act of comparison.

Taine felicitously pictures recepts as the unelaborated ore from which the metal of a concept is subsequently smelted. As Mill remarked in his *Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy*, the higher animals possess as distinct consciousness of the nutritive qualities of food as if they had a word for edible substances. Apparently, all

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visual perceptions, wherever present in the animal series, arise from automatic inferences necessitated by correspondences between what is supplied by the sense of sight, with the more primitive perceptions furnished by the sense of touch.

This far-reaching principle is justly extended to recepts. Things perceived are automatically registered in consciousness, for racial experience has compelled sentient creatures to detect the differences which obtain between unlike objects. Whether a lamb wishes to see a wolf or not, when its enemy comes within visual range the lamb is obliged to realize its unwelcome presence. Out of percepts, recepts are generated through comparisons and combinations of an automatic character. The conscious organism receives impressions composed of the memories of percepts, sometimes blended into simple recepts which spontaneously fuse when brought together. The elementary constituents of recepts, as a result of their frequent repetition, or of their pronounced resemblances, so cling together in consciousness that the elements immediately interlock to form compounds so soon as they are placed in apposition.

Among the lower animals thousands of instances might be cited proving receptual intelligence; or, in other words, practical inference. Ants, birds, mammals, and other intelligent animals, provide positive evidence of this.

All the higher animals profit by experience. Adult dogs, horses, etc., display more astuteness than younger members of their kind. Old wolves easily surmount obstacles devised by the cunning of man when in search of sheep or other prey, which baffle their less sophisticated fellows. Foxes learn to avoid dangerous districts, and when driven by grim hunger to brave the perils of death, they manifest the most astonishing dexterity in accomplishing their purposes of plunder. As Leroy, who spent his life as the Ranger of Versailles, attests, even where snares abound, the sagacious fox, after a careful examination of the trap, would sometimes succeed "without hurt to himself" in drawing the bait skilfully from the snare. All the available evidence conspires to prove that percepts form the raw materials of recepts, while from these are developed those supreme conceptual states which include the highest human powers of reason and judgment.

T. F. Palmer.

(*To be continued.*)

The Invisible Moral Governor.

Joe Robinson was an old-fashioned Tory and Churchman. He had prospered in business, and took a good deal of interest in local affairs. He had also interested himself in church affairs, and had become churchwarden in the parish in which he resided. When the great War broke out, he had four sons of military age, and although they were engaged in important businesses in the City, they were not long before deciding, like the patriotic Christian gentlemen they were, to join the Colours. The two eldest joined the Royal Field Artillery, one of the young ones the Royal Flying Corps, and the youngest—"Young Joe," as he was called—an infantry regiment. After a few months' training, the two eldest were sent out to France, and took part in several important engagements, and received promotion and honours for their distinguished services. In the early part of the second year of the War, Alfred, the eldest, was severely wounded, and had to have one of his legs amputated. A few months later, the second son, George, was killed in action.

These terrible calamities greatly disturbed the mind of "good old Joe Robinson," as he was affectionately called. Everybody in the parish sympathized with the bereaved parents, and some of the members of his Church told him that in the end he would come to see that the loss of one of his sons and the dreadful sufferings of the other were all for a good purpose. Joe Robinson bowed his head submissively to the will of the God he had been taught to believe in, but he nevertheless thought, in moments of solitude, that God had not been particularly kind to him in visiting upon his unfortunate head these great calamities. A few months later, the third son—James, the flying man—was "missing." He had taken part in an air-raid in Belgium, and had either been shot down or had fallen into the enemies' lines and been taken prisoner. Before he had time to get over this loss, poor Joe Robinson received a telegram to say that his youngest son—young Joe—had been wounded, and was on his way to a hospital in London that dealt especially with the wounds from which he was suffering. The parents were naturally overwhelmed with grief at this latest trouble, and Joe Robinson resolved to go and see his wounded son at the earliest possible opportunity.

When he arrived at the hospital, he was greatly shocked to see his youngest son, whom he dearly loved, with his head and face swathed in bandages. He had been hit by a piece of a shell that had exploded very close to him, and had killed and maimed several of his comrades. For some days young Joe was too ill to enter into any conversation with his beloved parent; but after some weeks of careful nursing and loving attention from friends and wounded comrades, young Joe was able to sit up in bed and converse most freely with friends who came to see him.

One day his mother came, and Joe was quite cheerful, and spoke most hopefully as to his speedy recovery; he also told his mother not to weep for the loss of George, who was out of his misery, sleeping, perchance, "the dreamless sleep of death." He spoke also most affectionately of his elder brother, who had lost a leg in the service of his country, and his brother who was "missing."

But he uttered no word about religion. Upon that subject he was resolutely silent. When, however, his father came to see him, young Joe thought he would speak frankly with him on that subject. Young Joe had never been a very zealous Christian. He had gone to church regularly, and had joined heartily in the service; but he listened with critical mind to the sermons, and he never professed to believe much in them. Indeed, on week evenings, before the War, he had often gone into the London parks and heard the various lecturers on religion, including the Freethinkers, and he could not hide from himself the fact that in argument the latter always seemed to get the best of it.

One evening, when his father came to see him, young Joe shocked him very much by telling him quite bluntly that he could no longer believe that there was a good, Heavenly Father watching over his children.

"I am astonished, my dear boy, to hear you talk like that. You have had many providential escapes from death, as you have told us; and now, although you have been wounded, you are still alive, my dear boy, and I hope you will live for many a long day to cheer your parents in their time of depression and trouble."

"Ah, my dear father, if you had only endured the torture I have undergone during these last two years in the trenches in France, you would understand and appreciate my meaning. For months I have been in the trenches up to my waist in water. I have heard the shells whistling through the air at dead of night, and some of them falling perilously near to me and my

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comrades; and while I have been talking to my chums the rats have been wading through the mud close to my feet; and then we could hear the thunder of the guns, and expect every moment that our 'number was up,' and grieve that we should never see home or parents again. In such times, if you have a moment to think about religion at all, you naturally ask yourself, What is God doing that he does not stop this dreadful War?

"I know," responded his father. "I know your feelings very well, but then we have been taught that God is all-wise and knows what is best for us—better than we do ourselves. He is the great invisible ruler and governor of the universe, and he regulates things according to his infinite wisdom and power."

"Well, dad, man has begun to doubt the wisdom of this God of the Christians, and to call in question the goodness and justice of many of his actions."

"Yes, but this is most impious on the part of man. Who is man that he should judge?" said the father in solemn tones.

"But, father, you doubted, I know, whether it was a kind act on the part of God when poor George was killed in action; and you did not think it was particularly good of God to allow Alfred to be so seriously wounded as to lose his leg. And what about poor James?"

"My dear boy, these are only personal matters; other families have, probably, suffered more than we have. In his great wisdom God has to take the larger view and consider not the interest of one family, one regiment, or one army, or even one nation, but the whole of mankind."

"Understood," said young Joe. "But see what has been going on in the world during the past two years and a half, or more, and ask yourself what God has been doing that he has not put a stop to all the foul crimes, the lying, the spying, the wholesale murder, the outrages against women and children, and all the other untold infamies perpetrated during this dreadful War."

"Yes, I know, but we have been told to believe that God knows best."

"By whom? By the priests and the parsons. Yes, they have misled and deceived us for their own purpose, but the people are beginning to reason for themselves, and to demand a rational answer to their questions."

"But, my son, the Bishop of London recently said that in all these things—even when young and unoffending children had been cruelly murdered by enemy aircraft—God was not to blame."

"Ah, if I wanted to be cruel, and to hurt the poor Bishop's feelings, I should say in the language of Macduff: 'He has no children.' If he had he would never talk in that way."

"Besides, if you glance over the whole of Europe, you will find the world aflame with this dreadful War. You will see that the earth is being drenched with human blood. Each man is fighting for his country, so we are told, and each is killing another man against whom he has no personal grudge. The Bishop says quite truly that God is not to blame, simply because no such being, as the Bishop talks about so glibly, exists. If he did, he would be the most miserable and contemptible creature in this great universe."

"Stop! don't talk like that, my son, your feelings at the present moment are overwrought. Pause awhile and reflect. I remember when I was a young man, in times of great catastrophe and trouble, I was very prone to think as you think now, but I got over that. I was told that the God of the Bible was cruel and revengeful, and I am bound to admit that some parts of Holy Scripture give some ground for such a conclusion; but, then, I remember *Butler's Analogy* points out that if God was cruel, nature was no better; that, in point of fact, nature was doing every day on a large scale, by earthquake, famine, pestilence, and disease—what you are now blaming God for doing in this world-wide War of death and destruction."

"Yes, dad, you are right. Nature is very cruel; but nature is not intelligent; in fact, nature is blind and deaf and dumb. She neither sees the tragedies she commits, nor hears the cries of her suffering children, and she is deaf to all appeals for help. No, dad, it is of no use blaming nature. Man causes all the wars, and war brings out all the worst features in human character. Under the stress and strain of war man becomes a wild beast, and he does deeds that he would be heartily ashamed of in moments of calm reason. I could tell you some of the things that have been done in this War that would make you shudder with horror."

"Don't do that, my dear boy. I have heard and read stories that have made me regret that my boys have had to take part in such indescribable scenes of horrible barbarity."

"Yes, dad, but nothing that you could have heard or read could give you the faintest idea of the hellish wickedness and crime that take place in the heat of passion on the battlefield; in fact, on such occasions men are transformed into wild beasts, as I have said, and if God made us with these characteristics he must have known what would have happened, and if he was all-powerful he could have stopped it, and if he was all good, his goodness would have prompted him to do so."

"There you are again, my son, why do you persist in bringing God into the matter when you have confessed that man alone makes wars, and, therefore, man alone is responsible for them."

"Yes, dad, but it brings me to another point, and that is, man alone brings about peace when it comes, and man alone gives succour to the wounded, and help to those in distress—men and women, they are the true saviours of mankind in the end. Religion does not do it, believe me—but humanity does."

"Well, well, my lad, I don't feel disposed to argue the matter with you any further at present. And let me beg of you, my dear boy, not to mention your change of opinion on religion—your unbelief—to your mother. It would break her heart."

"Very well, dad, I will not do anything to wound her feelings—dear old soul; but I daresay she will learn in time. But for the present (putting his four finger to his lips: 'Mum's the word'). Going now, dad? Well, come and see me again soon. Good-bye."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Prayers For Our Men!

May I plead once again, through your valuable medium, for the midday prayer on behalf of our soldiers? I know how much it is valued and counted upon by them.

—*J. Taylor Smith*, Bishop-Chaplain General.

WE do not ask for shells to strafe the German folk,
Nor bother Sister Susies to send us shirts or socks;
Your big guns and your maxims, your cylinders of gas;
Your vast accoutrements of war are wasted here, alas!
The tuck boxes that you kindly sent, the fags that you enclosed,
We do no longer need them, as our good chaplain knows;
The only thing we count on—perhaps its all we get.
Are the prayers we're told the good folk are offering for us yet.

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A Welcome Reminder.

The *Nineteenth Century and After* is a sadly different periodical from the days when Huxley triumphed in its pages over the armies of the orthodox, as represented by Gladstone and Dr. Wace. It can no longer claim to be the battle-ground on which great victories of Freethought are won. It has become predominantly orthodox, authoritarian, and "churchy." Opening the August number, I found three salient features to be an article by a Brigadier-General, declaring the German people, from the highest to the lowest, to be eternally hateful, and never, never, never to be forgiven, be they ever so much "democratized," and whatever statesmen may say; a hysterical wail from another gentleman because the "cursing" psalms are being dropped from the Anglican Liturgy; and a criticism by Mr. W. S. Lilly, in dialogue form, of Professor Bury's *History of the Freedom of Thought*.

It is this last article which I propose to commend to the notice of Freethinkers. Mr. Lilly, as is well known, is a capable and zealous Catholic, and unlike some of his modern co-religionists in England, there is no nonsense about him. He does not pretend to be democratic, still less revolutionary; he stands for Toryism as well as Popery, every time and all the time. This is all to the good. I appreciate a whole-hogger. I would much rather read (it is much better fun) something by Mr. Lilly that my teeth can meet in, than some sloppy, viscous concoction of a Campbell or a Horton.

The article, entitled "Christianity and History," takes the form of a dialogue between three Cambridge men about Professor Bury's book; but, unlike other dialogues, it does not seem to aim at setting forth more than one side to the question. The three interlocutors all agree in disparaging Professor Bury as inexact, no philosopher, chimerical in his views, virulent as a controversialist, devoid of the historic sense, and guilty of unfair conduct in "turning his Professorial Chair into an antichristian pulpit." Considering how many professors turn their chairs into Christian pulpits, the unfairness is hard to see. Professor Bury, no doubt, can take care of himself. He has braved the pinpricks of Mr. Hilaire Belloc, and it is unlikely that he will quail before those of Mr. W. S. Lilly.

The attack is entertaining, however, for its frank defence of Catholicism in history, persecutions and all. Mr. Lilly does not believe in freedom of thought. He characterizes Professor Bury's claim for "liberty to publish one's opinions on any subject without regard to authority or the prejudices of one's neighbours," as "monstrous" and "subversive of civil society," fit for "murderous Thugs or bomb-throwing Anarchists," on the ground that no one possesses absolute and unbounded liberty in any sphere of activity, but only subject to certain limits. No Freethinker, certainly not, I imagine, Professor Bury, would deny that there are such limits, as exemplified, for instance, by the law of libel. The root question is, however, what the limits are. All of us would concede that the freedom of each is limited by the rights of others. The law of libel and slander, the law against indecent publications, and the censorship in time of war, are instances of the limitations of free speech which are unavoidable. But Professor Bury did not write his book to attack these, and Mr. Lilly, I imagine, did not write his article to defend them alone. The point at issue is whether freedom of speech and publication ought to be limited otherwise than to protect the rights of others or the safety of the State (which arises from the rights of others). Mr. Lilly thinks that the established religion is entitled to the same protection: that is where he differs from us. He goes so far as to justify the punishment of heresy as a crime, and to claim credit for the Inquisition for having averted the triumph of the "licentious" principles of the Albigenses!

It cannot be said that Mr. Lilly makes his position as clear as we could wish. He evidently finds some little difficulty in reconciling his approval of the persecution of heretics by Catholics with his disapproval of the persecution of Christians by Pagans, or of Catholics by Protestants. He says rightly that the early Christians "did not rest their refusal to infringe the precepts of their own religion on Professor Bury's doctrine of freedom of thought. They no more dreamt of it than did their persecutors." But he wrongly goes on to say that "they founded themselves on a principle.....which they were to make triumph—the principle of the supremacy of conscience." The Christians did nothing of the sort. They were all for the supremacy of *their* conscience, no doubt, but they were equally for the suppression of the conscience of anybody who disagreed with them. Their principle, and that of their spiritual descendants to this day, is the principle of the special constable in the old *Punch* cartoon of Chartist days: "If I kill you, mind you, it's nothing; but if you kill me, by George it's murder." Besides, how does Mr. Lilly profess to distinguish between "the principle of the supremacy of conscience" and "freedom of thought"? The first involves the second. The belief in the necessity of a common religion, which Mr. Lilly properly attributes to the Middle Ages, clearly precludes "the supremacy of conscience" in the case of those who reject that religion.

Mr. Lilly proceeds to object to the mediæval period being judged by the standard of the twentieth century, and to pronounce Professor Bury "devoid of the historic sense." Of all the "blessed words" and cant phrases with which the modern world is cursed, this expression, "the historic sense," is about the most misused. What exactly do its users mean? We know what historical *knowledge* is; and Professor Bury has probably quite as much of that as Mr. Lilly. There is also an historical *perspective*, which may be called vaguely an "historic sense," by which we appreciate the greater or less influence that events have had on succeeding times, and therefore their greater or less importance in history; it is this which distinguishes scientific historians like John Richard Green from chroniclers like Froissart. But what is this "historic sense," the lack of which is invariably imputed to anyone who ventures to call past folly and cruelty by their proper names, or to attack any institution over fifty years old? Historic snobbery! As to judging one period by the standard of another, the ideal part for an historian is, perhaps, not to judge at all, but to content himself with a dispassionate recital of events and estimate of tendencies. But as this is difficult, seeing that the historian is but flesh and blood, and has his feelings like the rest of us, the next best thing is, surely, to judge men and periods by their contribution to the sum of human happiness or misery. That being so, if we find in history that men were burnt alive for innocent differences of opinion, it is mere cant to plead that such enormities should be condoned and made light of in the name of "the historic sense."

The real point is one which Mr. Lilly's article, whether advisedly or not, somewhat obscures. The answer to the question, whether the freedom of anyone ought to be limited otherwise than so far as is necessary to protect others in the exercise of their corresponding liberties, depends on the more fundamental issue of Secularism *versus* "other-worldliness." If you believe in a future state, and in a God who will, in that future state, punish

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not only wrong-doing, but wrong-thinking, with everlasting torment, you will logically proclaim it not only the right, but the duty, of the State, to penalize the propagation of what you judge to be damnable error. The Catholic Church is a persecuting Church, because it teaches belief in a persecuting God. Those forms of Protestantism, such as Calvinism and Evangelicalism, which have retained this conception of a persecuting God, are logically committed to persecute like Catholics, and have shown the same spirit when they had the power (as Calvin when he burnt Servetus, as the Scottish Presbyterians when they burnt "witches," and as Wesley when he openly defended such practices). If, on the other hand, you lose the lively faith in a persecuting God, you necessarily, if you have normally decent feelings, come to look on persecution as wanton cruelty. As Mr. Lilly very frankly admits, "modern toleration is the outcome of modern scepticism." The hazy Protestants of to-day, who so oddly describe persecution as "un-Christian," and make haste to drop the "cursing" Psalms out of their services, thereby betray the fact that they no longer really and earnestly believe in historic Christianity, and that religion is for them little more than a sentimental survival, a social convenience, or a concession to others' ignorance and prejudice. The chief difference between them and us is that they are willing to say things they do not really mean, while we are not.

At this time we are grateful to men like Mr. Lilly, who step in to remind the world what Christianity really is. The world is forgetting it; and if that is allowed to happen, the infamous superstition may cheat the gallows after all.

Robert Arch.

Scotch Intolerance.

Two true incidents occurring a quarter of a century ago in Scotland—one of a woman and the other of a man:—

The first: A friend was engaged for a time at work near a small town, and lodged with a widow during the period of his stay. Being a Freethinker he occupied his Sundays in walks through the adjacent country. This greatly incensed his landlady who took occasion to remonstrate and warn him of the wickedness of not "ganging to kirk." Whereupon he pointed out that he was following Jesus. "Don't you remember that your Saviour walked with his disciples through the corn-fields on the Sabbath day?" said he. "Ay," she replied, "an' I never thocht any the better of him for thart."

The other: During a holiday with some acquaintances I was held up by a storm and took shelter in a small public-house near the sea coast. In the tap-room were several fishermen and a better-dressed individual who were all waiting for a change in the weather, and incidentally enjoying a noggin of whisky. Having passed the time of day, the conversation turned upon the heat. This reminded me of a tale I had heard running something like this:

A clergyman, with a small party, paid a visit to an iron-foundry, and were invited to see a batch of castings run off. When the furnace was opened and the stream of molten metal poured forth, a workman thought to have a joke at the parson's expense. "'Scuse me, sir," said he, "but do you know 'ow 'ot 'ell is?" "No, my man," replied the parson, "do you?" "Well," answered the man, "all I know is that if you were in 'ell, you'd think that metal was ice cream."

When I had finished the tale the laughter I expected did not come. Instead of that, there was an ominous silence, and all the company looked down their noses. At last the individual I have referred to leaned toward me with hate and anger in his face and exploded: "Luk he-ere! I don' kno' wha ye a-are, or whar ye cum fra, but we don' want a-any o' yr agnosteek upe-enyons he-ere!"

I was told afterwards that he was a local week-end preacher.

E. Anderson.

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Views and Opinions.

About God.

A gentleman belonging to what W. S. Gilbert called "the dignified clergy" has been getting into trouble for saying that God had sent the heavy rains as a mark of his displeasure at Sunday labour on allotments. Subsequently he explained that all he meant was that people did not pay enough attention to God—did not give him enough of their time, or confidence, or trust. This, we may suppose, is really a serious offence—from the point of view of a clergyman. For in practice trust in God means trust in the clergy. It means giving *them* a portion of your time—and cash. It means subscribing to Church funds, and, if your belief is not lively enough to make you a pillar of the Church, imitating a famous Lord Chancellor and becoming a buttress. From A to Z of the religious order, from medicine-man to modern priest, "trust in God" means that. The parson speaks to you in the name of God. He collects your offerings in the name of God—even though he spends them in his own. The clergy are God's representatives on earth. And when we look at *them* we can only hope, for God's sake, that the representation is not a faithful likeness.

* * *

A Question.

But let us get back to God, and the allotments, and the weather. It is settled, apparently, that God was not responsible for the rain and the damage done. He did not cause the rain, neither did he prevent it. It happened without his connivance, perhaps without his knowledge. Very good. That relieves him of responsibility; but it also rules him out of the department of meteorology. We know he has nothing to do with physics, or astronomy, or geology, or chemistry, and various other sciences; but hitherto he has been left with a little influence on the weather. True, after creating and controlling whole planetary systems, this is not a very dignified post. It is like offering the job of local tax-collector to a man who has been Chancellor of the Exchequer. Still, even managing the weather is something. But if this is not to be left him, then one feels impelled to ask, "What the Devil does he do?" or "What the deuce does he exist for?" A God who does nothing might just as well not exist. There is no benefit to anyone in mere existence. Things, or persons, are to be reckoned with on account of their activities, good or bad. And *if* God exists, will someone be good enough to explain what it is that he does *now?*" So far as one can see, he does nothing—and he has a large army of clergy to help him get through the business.

* * *

The Unimportance of Deity.

Pseudo-philosophic defenders of Deity solemnly assure us that we must believe in God, because unless we assume his existence an understanding of Nature is impossible. By this they mean no more than that we cannot in the present state of our knowledge explain everything to our satisfaction, and that our widest scientific generalizations leave us with an unexplained residuum. We all admit this; but ignorance is no ground on which to base a positive statement. If we cannot explain a thing, we have a good reason for further search, a justification of silence, but no argument whatever in favour of belief. Besides, the difficulty is an imaginary one. In practical life, people see that scientific generalizations work in a quite dependable manner. They see that the belief in God is of no *practical* value whatever. Belief in God without a knowledge of science is of no use to anyone. Given a knowledge of science, the belief in God adds nothing of value. There is not a position of importance in the world to which a knowledge of theology is counted as essential. Natural forces affect all alike, and, observing this, the Freethinker concludes that our practical interest stops this side of Deity. God may have an interest in finding out man. For the life of us, we cannot see that man has any interest in finding out about a God who does nothing.

* * *

The Logic of Life.

And is there not something that calls for explanation in the fact of man ignoring God? Man has been in the world for a very long time, and he did not commence his thinking career by ignoring the gods. Quite the contrary, he spent a large part of his time in attending to their supposed desires. It was only as he grew older, mentally and socially, that he turned his back on them. And is not *that* suggestive? Facts are not things that men discover and then put on one side. Beliefs that are vital to welfare are not lightly cast away. A fact is a stubborn and undeniable thing; a useful fact a prized possession. How comes it, then, that we have learned to neglect God? And not only neglect him, but are quite unconscious that we lose anything by our neglect. Does not that argue that we are neglecting nothing of importance? It is quite useless the believer telling the unbeliever how much he has lost. *We* know all about his position; we have been there. He does not know our position; he has yet to arrive. A believer lecturing an Atheist on how much he has lost is like a

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confirmed drunkard instructing a teetotaler on what he has missed by not getting drunk. Health with whisky-drinking cannot prove whisky essential to prevent disease. Health without whisky does prove that it is quite unnecessary. The testimony of one man without religion must always be better evidence than that of a thousand with it. The pressure of fact is behind the Atheist. The logic of life is on his side. The world grows to ignore God, because the slowly maturing wisdom of the world proves that the belief in God is of no value. It is the logic of life *versus* the logic of mere theory. And the logic of life wins.

* * *

Practice versus Theory.

Of course, the world is growing to ignore God. How could it be otherwise? Experience may not be always expressed in words, or formulated in theory, but it is there. We may profess to believe that God cures disease, but we place more reliance on the doctor. We may pray for a safe voyage over the seas, but we rely upon a stout ship and a good navigator. We religiously profess to believe that God is on the side of right in the present War, but we rely upon men and armaments. We go on professing God in theory and ignoring him in practice until the incompatibility of the alliance becomes pronounced and a separation results. And this is only what one might expect. Practice is always before theory; it summarizes life rather than dissects it. And this separation of theory from practice, this trusting God in words and ignoring him in acts really means that the forces of life are too insistent for religious doctrines. Our beliefs are like forms of life, ultimately amenable to the law of the survival of the fittest. If they are useful they flourish and increase. If they are harmful they languish and decay. If they are merely harmless they may persist for an indefinite time. Practice tells, and man's lost confidence in God is an evidence that the confidence is unwarranted. It is to the misfortune of the clergy that men can neither be fooled nor go on fooling themselves for ever.

* * *

Creatures of Belief.

Emerson said that theological doctrines were the "soul's" mumps and measles and whooping-cough. He added that a simple mind, one that had not been distorted by training, would know nothing of these enemies. Unfortunately, few of us are permitted to grow up the possessors of a "simple mind." Our training from infancy to maturity, and social forces from maturity to the grave, lead us to place things last that should be first, and emphasize as of the greatest consequence things that are of no importance whatever. Apart from these inculcated notions, we are convinced that none would to-day bother at all about the question of "God." Atheists get on well enough without God, and it is hard to see where the Theist benefits with him. And yet the Atheist could not ignore God with impunity if he really mattered. If you ignore bad drains, or breathe bad air, you pay the price sooner or later. But no one suffers from not believing in God; no one but God. And that is what the lament of the clergy comes to. God suffers because gods, like kings, only exist so long as men believe in them. The gods are born of human credence; disbelief in them signs their death warrant.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

In an advertisement of the Poor Clergy Relief Corporation the patrons and president are stated to be the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London. These saintly ecclesiastics share £40,000 yearly between them.

The Newer Dogmatism.

THE City Temple, London, opened forty-three years ago, has had a remarkable history. For the first twenty-eight years its pulpit was occupied by Dr. Joseph Parker, one of the most famous pulpit orators of the nineteenth century. Though essentially orthodox, he was often suspected of heterodoxy; while his enemies, who were many, charged him with insincerity arising from his ruling passion, love of popularity. This charge, however, was generally made by men much less popular than himself, a fact which almost proved that it sprang from jealousy. The truth seems to be that Dr. Parker was naturally eccentric, impulsive, pugnacious, fundamentally honest, open-hearted, and endowed with a highly original and imaginative mind. He was followed by Mr. R. J. Campbell, who, finding the City Temple famous, made it notorious. For a time he was intensely evangelical, appealing directly and with considerable force to the emotions. Then a strong wave of Rationalism set in; orthodoxy was violently attacked, and its exponents addressed as "Liars"; supernaturalism lost its charms, and was to be resorted to as seldom as possible. This was the era of the New Theology which, while it lasted, was characterized by enormous enthusiasm and exasperating dogmatism. During this period, Humanism, pure and simple, or Secularism, was knocking more or less loudly at the door, but never succeeded in getting fairly in, supernaturalism being still in too strong evidence. To be a spectator of the New Theology movement was by no means an edifying experience, for it was chiefly a movement of bitter denunciation and arraignment of the Old Theology, the orthodox God himself coming in for his full share of abuse. We now learn (*A Spiritual Pilgriwage*, pp. 167-266) that during this time of acrid controversy, Mr. Campbell was under the spell of one or other of the representatives of progressive European thought, such as Professors Eucken and Bergson. Later on other influences, of a reactionary character, laid hold of him; the emphasis of his teaching, as he called it, changed, and gradually he returned to the orthodoxy he had so vehemently sneered at and condemned; and now, at last, having renounced Nonconformity and all its errors, he styles himself "Priest of St. Philip's Cathedral Church, Birmingham."

From a homiletic point of view, from Dr. Parker to Mr. Campbell was a step downwards, but from Mr. Campbell to Dr. Fort Newton, the third minister of the City Temple, may reasonably be described as a step upwards. Dr. Newton, too, is a New Theologian, but of a much quieter, milder type than his predecessor. He cannot rise to the torrential eloquence of Dr. Parker, nor play on the magnetic note peculiar to Mr. Campbell; but he possesses qualities which both his predecessors lacked, chief among which are judgment and weightiness. He has one thing, however, in common with all occupants of "the sacred box," namely, dogmatism. Curiously enough, he is a dogmatic despiser and contemner of dogmatism. The historic creeds are all wrong, but he and those who agree with him are all right. A sermon published in the *Christian Commonwealth* for August 22 may be selected as furnishing a fine illustration of his general theological attitude. The text is Hebrews xii. 27: "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken, may remain." If you consider those words in the light thrown upon them by the context, you will find that what they predict is the passing away of all created things, which are destructible, in order that the indestructible, or unshakable, things may remain.

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Now, after all so-called created things have been removed, what can there be left? When heaven and earth are no more, is it not sheer folly to talk of anything as still remaining? More strangely still, the text assures us that all created objects are to vanish that certain other uncreated substances may flourish abundantly.

Let us now turn to Dr. Newton's discourse founded upon that astonishing passage. The first thing we observe is that the reverend gentleman tears his text clean away from its context in the Epistle. He may justify himself on the plea that he does that in order to bring it to bear upon a new context found in the world-conditions obtaining at this moment. Well, then, let us take the War with all its unspeakable atrocities, and see how the teaching of this Epistle applies to it. Dr. Newton says:—

> God is in it all, behind it, above it, working out his awful will. If the old order is breaking up, passing away in catastrophe, and leaving only a wreck behind, it is God who is doing it.

Who can really believe in and bow down in adoration before such a Deity? Then the preacher has the audacity to assert that all this frightful, brutal carnage, which never ceases day or night, is no wanton, haphazard destruction, but "a shaking down of old outworn encumbrances, and a making ready for a new and better building." Are we to believe, can we, dare we, believe that those brave, fine young fellows on every battlefield who are being mown down by the million, are to be described as "old outworn encumbrances?" This preacher goes further still and dogmatically declares that "this shaking is not meant simply to remove what is no longer useful, but to reveal the eternal things that cannot be shaken." Can you conceive of a Being of boundless wisdom and love deliberately slaughtering countless myriads of young men in order to "reveal the eternal things that cannot be shaken"? For veritable believers in God no greater blasphemy is possible than to talk as Dr. Newton does here. Is it only in that fiendish manner that it is possible for mankind to "receive a kingdom that cannot be moved?" For our part we would infinitely rather go without the kingdom than obtain it at such terrific and senseless sacrifices.

Now, what are the things that abide upon which we are exhorted to lay hold in these troubled times, and not to give way to panic in the midst of the upheaval? We agree that such things do exist, but positively decline to believe that a God worthy of our faith and worship could only reveal and establish them by such a devastating conflict such as is now making the Western world a veritable hell. It is quite possible that the War may result in some permanent benefit to mankind, though we may regard it as being in itself the greatest of evils; but what we point blank refuse to admit is that a Deity of infinite justice and tenderness is in it, behind it, and above it, and using it as an instrument to accomplish his own beneficent designs. And yet, incredible as it may seem, this is how Dr. Newton proceeds:—

> First of all, whatever befall, God remains our refuge and our redemption, yea, "though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." As for man, he is of the present only, and a brief to-morrow; but God abides. Not the God of our clumsy creeds, not the God of our hair-splitting subtleties, but the real God of things as they are, whose designs are vaster than we can dream, and whose love is deeper than we can fathom. He it is who is shaking down our little systems as of old he shook down the empires of Egypt, Assyria, Rome, and the rest.

That is how the newer dogmatism glorifies itself and denounces the older. One would imagine that Dr. Newton is prepared to endorse the Bishop of London's foolish saying that this War is a "glorious day of the Lord," or as Dr. Orchard *used* to call it, "God's operation"; but is he? Listen:—

> Deny it who may or will, the Eternal Christ is still with us here, a living Presence even in these days when Mars seems supreme. At once our Captain and Comrade, he is fighting us while fighting with us—the keen edge of his sword felt in our innermost hearts—the Enemy of all that is evil within us and the Ally of all that is good.

If Dr. Newton's teaching is true, the greatest of all bunglers is God, and the most notoriously inefficient of all Saviours is the Eternal Christ, however emotionally real their presence may be to City Temple worshippers.

Apart from God and Christ, the things that cannot be shaken, as enumerated in this sermon, are typically human, and as old as the hills, such as "the splendour of courage," and the wonderful resources of the soul. We flatly deny that these things were unknown as grand realities in human life before the War broke out. We maintain that courage and endurance have been practised on a larger or smaller scale from prehistoric times down to this; but, in any case, to think of the King of kings and Lord of lords as sending this horrible conflict on purpose to bring them into play, is an inexcusable libel upon God, and an unforgivable insult to man. Good people act in accordance with their principles even in time of war; but Dr. Newton forgets that to thousands of other people the War is simply an opportunity of indulging in the lowest forms of selfishness and greed, such as even they never dared to exhibit in peace times. Did God send the War for their benefit also? The preacher dwells proudly upon one side of the picture, and prudently ignores the other, as the preachers of all ages have been in the habit of doing.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Shadow of the Sword.

War Poems from the West Country.

Plain Song 1914 1916. By Eden Phillpotts. Heinemann. 1917.

IN the intervals of such leisure as can come to an author who has won great and deserved success in the two arts of novel-writing and drama, Mr. Eden Phillpotts has sought relief by trying his hand at verse. To him, as to other authors, there have come moods which did not seem to lend themselves to the medium of the story or the play; lyrical moods that called aloud for the gracious help of rhyme and rhythm. These have accumulated till there were sufficient to fill a small volume, and he has issued them under the modest title, *Plain Song 1914-1916*.

The poems are mainly concerned with the present world-war, and Mr. Phillpotts sings of the conflict from the point of view of an Englishman. That is, he believes in war only as a last resort; but having accepted the challenge of the aggressors, he will fight with the passion of a righteous cause. His poems are eloquent and beautiful expressions of the moods of the fighting Englishman, who is a civilian rather than a soldier. To his credit, he has not ignored the sordid and terrible side of warfare, and there are passages that bleach the colour from the romance of war, and others that cause the optimistic faith that is in one to go out in darkness like a blown candle-flame. Let me quote in illustration the piece he calls "War":—

> They know war who freeze and drown and moil
> And breathe the air of corpses and breed lice;
> Foul to the aching eyes with filth they toil—
> Brothers, perchance, who made the sacrifice.

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Thigh-deep in slough they stand, where, like a den,
Opens the trench of torment; for a space
They fire and load and fire and load; and then
One brother's mangled heart splashes the other's face.

And they know war who, shattered, rent in twain,
Their living fragments still with power to think,
Half men, drag carnal rags to yonder drain
Raging for water, ravening for drink
Though it be blood. Their last expiring lust
Denied them, there a little while they roll,
Unseen, unheard, upon the reeking dust
In final agony of flesh and mind and soul.

To this the pomp and splendour of it come
Behind the burden of their country's yoke,
Behind the bravery, behind the drum,
Behind the Fetich that they all invoke:
Life, sacred life, without one pang of ruth,
In mad contempt of human sanctity,
Squandered for doubtful honour, doubtful truth—
All doubtful, save the scorn at frantic reason's plea.

Mr. Eden Phillpotts' poetry is a scholar's verse. The widest knowledge inspires his happiest phrases, and there is no narrowness in his terrible impeachment of Militarism. Listen to his lines on "Germania":—

We do not smite a nation, but a pest;
Humanity makes reasonable quest
To free a noble slave.
Full deep she groans and faints, and fainting feels
Archaic torture of a tyrant's heels
Grinding her to her grave.

Possessed of devils now, mad with her woes,
She wounds the world and turns her friends to foes;
But cast her devils down
And broken, humbled, contrite, healed and sane;
Oh may she shine her glorious self again—
Pearl in Europa's crown.

And they accurst, who bred this in her heart,
Shall from the councils of mankind depart,
While over sea and shore
The silver trumpets of the sunrise cry
That each pursue her solemn destiny
By blood and iron no more.

Enmity has seldom been expressed more chivalrously. Add to these verses his fine lines on "France":—

For all the wit of age and might of youth
Wed at her sweet, deep heart—therein we sound
A well of reason, where doth harbour truth,
And faith and an endurance without bound.
Most sane, most spiritual, because most sane,
Upon her bitter road she steadfast shows
The sacrifice majestic, while again
Freedom's own everlasting altar flows
With France's blood; in that most sacred stain
Once more her own immortal genius shows.

But you have not Eden Phillpotts complete unless you add to the scholar the humanist and the lover of Nature. He loves, as few scholars really love, the sea and the sky; he can picture the death of Rupert Brooke, the young soldier-poet, in a lyric purely Pagan in its atmosphere. But he reaches a higher note in his poem on the young soldiers who fell in the War, which has the dirge-like note of a funeral march:—

Now is death only plucking flowers, he leaves
The garnered grain and sunset-coloured fruit,
Neither to bending bough, nor mellow root,
Nor threshing of the amber harvest sheaves
He comes; but where in joyous youth serene
The sunny blossoms laugh and fear no sickle keen.

Gone; all their promise gone, for nevermore
Shall sun and rain rejoice to do them good,
Or glad earth labour to create their food.
Naked their places, and where, heretofore,
The shining blossoms sprang that now are sped,
Only remain the stocks who built and nourished.

No reader can take up this book of verse without gaining a further knowledge of one of the most thoughtful and keenest analysts of contemporary life, or one of our most distinguished literary craftsmen. For the thoughts set down are not only striking, but they are impressed with notable imagination, and their form is that of beauty. Although Mr. Phillpotts emphasizes again and again the horrors and beastliness of war, he sings of it with passion and intellectual conviction. To him one figure rises from the shambles of the battlefields, and blazes with the beauty and strength of courage, and that is the radiant form of Liberty. For Mr. Phillpotts realizes that if the Moloch of Militarism is allowed to work its will, the earth would be a shambles inhabited by slaves.

Again the world is meeting might with might,
And when the battle's fought and lost and won,
Pray victory decree, as primal right,
That reason also wins a kingdom in the sun.

Then shall she swiftly for our world-wide-shame,
Bend to the Mother from her starry place
And, in humanity's almighty name,
For ever dry the tears upon that sacred face.

It is significant that only your freethinking poets write with real conviction and intensity about the claims of humanity. But then their faith is set upon the rock of reason, their vision undimmed by dogma. But enough has been said about a little book of verse which, no doubt, its author regards chiefly as an interlude between strenuous bouts of drama and fiction. After all, Mr. Phillpotts may truly be credited with a passion for liberty, he is a humanitarian in a genuine sense, and he is always preoccupied with noble and lofty thoughts. We hope he is the harbinger of a great brood of poets, the herald of a New World.

MIMNERMUS.

The Rise and Progress of Mental Power.

V.

(*Continued from p. 539.*)

ALTHOUGH language is not absolutely essential to inferential reasoning, it enormously increases the scope of psychical processes. Perceptual consciousness of coloured objects is confined, for instance, to the recognition of red as the distinguishing colour of blood, or of blue as the constant attribute of a sunlit sky. But when we possess the words for green, blue, red, etc., it becomes possible to extend our perceptions of these colours to any object displaying them. The terms "redness" or "blueness" serve as a sign of colour appearances, and denote more abstract awarenesses arising out of our percepts and recepts of objects presented to our visual organs as red or blue. From our receptual impressions of this or that entity as red, blue, green, or yellow, will emerge a further abstraction—an idea of colour pure and simple—through a process of combining our percepts and recepts of coloured substances into an amalgamated concept of colour.

The name "man," again, embraces all our innumerable percepts and recepts of individual men. Such being the case, the term covers all the phenomena common to the various human stocks. Comprising, as it does, all the members of the animal kingdom, man among them, the term animal has an even wider significance. In truth, in all departments of objective study, the greater the necessity for generalizing the phenomena, the more comprehensive our word symbols become, and the further are their meanings removed from the relatively simple perceptions upon which they ultimately rest. With our verbal symbols

> we climb into higher and higher regions of abstraction: by thinking in verbal signs we think, as it were, with the semblance of ideas: we dispense altogether with the necessity of actual images, whether of percepts or recepts:

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we quit the sphere of sense, and rise to that of thought.

Darwin once half-humorously referred to mathematicians as beings gifted with a sixth sense. Yet the stupendous abstractions to which a Kingdon Clifford, Cayley, Sylvester, or Gauss, were able to rise, are all demonstrably based on animal capacity to count, and Sally, the ape, was ultimately taught to count up to nine. Upon our percepts of spatial relations, and an understanding of the simple arithmetical laws of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, are reared all the ideal achievements of the mathematician and astronomer. Savage man began by counting his digits, and his later symbols were the outcome of evolution. As Lewes said :—

> Man begins by counting things, grouping them visibly (*i.e.*, receptually). He then learns to count simply the numbers, using his fingers and toes for symbols. He then substitutes abstract signs, and arithmetic begins. From this he passes to algebra, the signs of which are not merely abstract but general; and now he counts numerical relations, not numbers. From this he passes to the higher calculus of relations.

It is much the same in commercial transactions. By a system of direct exchange commodities passed from one to another. Then certain tokens were employed as money, leading up to the use of the precious metals. Now all important business dealings are settled in terms of the more abstract notes, bills, and cheques, which have supplanted the more concrete commodities or coin as symbols of exchange value. Several thousands of millions sterling are now annually settled between debtor and creditor by the bank clearing houses in London without the interchange of a single coin. The condensation of complicated industrial and commercial phenomena into a few words and figures in a ledger would be impossible apart from the symbols which bankers and traders employ.

Gradually developed out of percepts, the recepts of animals enable them to distinguish between the various aspects of their environment. Birds, sheep, and other organisms seek shelter in a storm. Their ancestral and individual percepts have elaborated instinctive recepts which mould their conduct. Aquatic-fowl alight upon land and ice in a way quite different to their descent into water. The recepts of man and other animals cause them to act differently, when moving over solid ground, than when travelling in a liquid medium. But when the recepts of solid and liquid substances reach the realm of cognition, the names "solid" and "fluid" become possible, and general concepts of these two dissimilar states of matter are at our service. The named recepts, solid and fluid, form the foundation of ascending orders of abstraction, and some of the most subtle refinements of modern physical science are based on our simplest concepts of hard and soft bodies. Language does not usher reasoning into a world in which it was previously unknown. What it really does is to combine rudimentary notions into ideas of increasing complexity. The power of the word is immense, but

> it does not come upon the scene of its creative power to find only that which is without form and void; rather does it find a fair structure of no mean order of system, shaped by prior influences, and, so far as thus shaped, a veritable cosmos.

Wherever the etymology of any abstract word can be traced it is found to rest finally upon a simple recept. In the course of involved linguistic evolution, the original words have frequently been lost. But the historical development of many terms is known. The highly abstract word "virtue" can be traced back to the Sanscrit, *vira*, "a man." The complex term government, again, is derived from the Latin, *guberno*, to steer a ship, yet when we survey the mass of men, virtue is seldom suggested, while, unless we remember the Navy, the word Government is rarely associated in normal times with the great shipping industry in any of its innumerable departments.

The term language, as ordinarily understood, is restricted to written and spoken words. But any system of signs which serves to convey ideas is really a language. "Thus," states Professor Broca, "speech, gesture, dactyology, writing both hieroglyphic and phonetic are all so many kinds of language."

The germs of the sign-making faculty are present in ants, bees, and wasps. The Ecitons, which form powerfully organized ant communities, in which division of labour is maintained on a military scale, when on their plundering expeditions, show by their complex actions their faculty of inter-communication. Belt and Bates, both reliable observers, testify to this. Ingenious experiments, prosecuted by the late Lord Avebury, proved incontestably that ants are able to communicate, and that they possess a receptual capacity to realize number. Other competent observers have proved that the sign-making powers in ants and bees mainly consist in gestures produced by the insects' antennæ, although other bodily movements are also employed.

Among mammals and birds capacity for communication is common. There exists a wide difference between the hen's cluck of contentment and her alarm note, and Houzeau concluded that the fowl utters at least a dozen significant sounds. Blackbirds, thrushes, and other feathered bipeds, reveal to the interested inquirer various mental and emotional states in their calls and cries. All our domesticated animals present in their actions, attitudes, and vocal displays their ability to convey their feelings to others. The famous naturalist, Forbes, furnishes a striking instance of a male monkey's use of gesture language when begging for the body of a female just shot dead. "The animal," he states,

> came to the door of the tent, and finding threats of no avail, began a lamentable moaning, and by the most expressive gestures seemed to beg for the dead body. It was given him; he took it sorrowfully in his arms and bore it away to his expecting companions. They who were witnesses of this extraordinary scene resolved never again to fire on one of the monkey race.

Other and even more remarkable cases are recorded by trustworthy witnesses concerning monkeys, while Lord Avebury taught an intelligent dog the correct use of written signs. This animal would carry a card with such words as "water," "bone," "pet me," etc., written upon it, when he wished to inform his master of his wants. Thus was established an association of ideas in the dog's mind between "the appearance of a certain number and form of written signs, and the meaning which they severally betokened."

Noises of numerous kinds are employed by animals to express their feelings, and these sounds are frequently accompanied by gestures. Even the human infant shows marked progress in tone and gesture prior to its acquisition of the faculty of speech. Among imbecile children, whose powers of articulation are permanently limited, experience proves that a fair amount of information may be acquired through the use of signs. These signs they utilize as a means of expression. Savages also employ gestures, grimaces, and intonation in conversation to a much greater degree than civilized races. So poorly developed are primitive powers of speech that tone and gesture seem necessary to supplement them. Tylor, the great anthropologist, in his *Early History of Mankind*, declares that "the array of

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evidence in favour of the existence of tribes whose language is incomplete, even for things of ordinary import, is very remarkable." And this, he claims, lends strong support to the view that gesture language formed the original utterance of man, from which the later speech faculty has been imperfectly evolved among savage peoples. Burton, the linguist and traveller, states that savages, such as the Arapahos, so imperfectly pronounce the very few words of their language, that they fail to understand each other in the dark.

Children of the most advanced races, long after they are able to speak, continue to watch the gestures and facial expressions of their elders when they are anxious to fully understand their meaning. And Colonel Mallery, in his valuable *Sign Language among the North American Indians*, shows that the use of signs enables Indians of different tribes to carry on a long and detailed conversation by gesture alone. In this system of signs a cup was formed by the right hand, which, when carried to the mouth, indicated drinking. Eye-glasses were simulated by forming rings before the eyes with the thumb and index finger, while, when both palms were pressed to the temple, and the head swung from side to side, a drunken head-ache was represented. And so on through an animated conversation which covers sixteen paragraphs.

It is to be observed that primitive gesture language, in common with that of deaf mutes everywhere, is restricted to the conveyance of concrete ideas. More conventional and abstract concepts require a more developed system of articulate expression. All these facts point to the derivation of the most evolved tongues from rudimentary forms of tone and gesture. As Mallery notes:—

> The insane understand and obey gestures when they have no knowledge whatever of words.....Sufferers from aphasia continue to use appropriate gestures. A stammerer, too, works his arms and features as if determined to get his thoughts out, in a manner not only suggestive of the physical struggle, but of the use of gestures as an hereditary expedient.

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

Correspondence.

ADULT SCHOOLS AND FREETHINKERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Under the above heading, a few months ago, a letter appeared in your columns, signed "Fred Hobday." Mr. Hobday strongly advocated that we, as Freethinkers, should make use of the Adult Schools, owing to the freedom in the Adult School Movement for expression of opinion. I was interested in the letter at the time because it was the Adult School Movement that brought a new line of thought into my life. I had been brought up in the narrow school of Nonconformity and belief in all the old orthodox ideas, when the Adult School started me to unthink all I thought.

The question has appealed to me with considerable force of late. Being in the Army, I miss the local Free Library and my little stock of books at home; so I troubled to take a stroll a few days ago to the nearest newsagent. I said "newsagent." When I arrived at the shop, I looked at the something about five feet ten inches behind the counter, and said, "I want something to read"; to which he invited me round his varied stock of books. I asked for William Morris, Thomas Paine, G. J. Holyoake, Shelley, Spencer, amongst others; and the reply in every case was "No." And when I ventured to ask for Omar Khayyam, he asked if I was trying to pull his leg? I smiled, and assured him I really was in earnest about my business. At last I said: "Have you a book of poems?" He said: "Sorry to disappoint you, but I have not a book of poems in the place, and you are the very first to ask for such a thing."

Now, Sir, down here there are some thousands—nay, thousands of thousands—passed through this camp since the War commenced, and to think that I am the first to inquire at the local bookstall for a book of poems is to my mind remarkable. And to think that the best of the world's writers are never asked for! I sympathize with the crowd; and had it not been for the Adult School Movement, I might have been travelling in that narrow school of sophistry to-day instead of the Freethought Movement. I hope this humble epistle will be of some mild interest to at least one Freethinker, and that they will make use of the Adult School for the expansion of Freethought.

Bovingdon Camp, Dorset. ERNEST POYRDON.

Acid Drops.

After the angels of Mons we have now angels at Grays. Angels have been seen in the sky carrying banners on which were inscribed "Peace," and scores of people have travelled from London to see them. We see that a local clergyman has written that there are no angels at Grays—none of the heavenly kind, and few of the earthly variety. Certainly, he ought to know. But what a revelation of the state of intelligence amongst large numbers of the people! And they possess a vote with all the other privileges of a civilized human being. No wonder Bottomley came to believe in God.

Rev. Joseph Hocking writes in the *Sunday Companion* that we are not yet fit for peace because we are not spiritualized enough. One fault appears to be that of placing faith in men and guns instead of in God. We do not know whether Mr. Hocking means that we ought not to trust to men and guns and leave it to God alone. That would suit the German Army quite well. Or does he mean that God is keeping the War going until we are "spiritualized"? But as we shall only keep the War going with men and guns, and as we cannot get spiritualized until we cease depending upon them, and as the War will not stop until we are fit for peace—that is, spiritualized—it looks as though we are in a pretty bad kind of a tangle. Unless it is Mr. Hocking that is in a muddle. And, as he is writing for the *Sunday Companion*, perhaps the latter is the correct solution.

Writing on the third anniversary of the War, Mr. Horatio Bottomley says we have "tasted hellish horrors." Was he thinking of War bread?

Dr. T. R. Glover is a Baptist divine who has published several books on theology, and who occasionally preaches. A few Sundays ago he occupied a London pulpit, and, as reported in the *Christian World* for August 23, stated that "the Christian religion is not good conduct, nor escape from hell, but Jesus Christ." Dr. Glover was perfectly justified in supplying his hearers with that definition of Christianity. It is historically incontrovertible that Christians have never been noted for good conduct as members of society, while amongst them have been found the most notorious scoundrels that ever lived. Not a few of the Popes, God's highest representatives on earth, have led shockingly bad lives, and we shudder with shame as we read their history.

Emphatically, then, the Christian religion neither is, nor produces, good conduct. A truer statement was never made. But when Dr. Glover declares that it is not "escape from hell," he flatly contradicts the Gospel Jesus, and particularly his apostles John and Paul. John says many times over that faith in Christ delivers from perdition, and Paul regards it as escape from the wrath of God. We agree with Dr. Glover that Jesus and his apostles were vain dreamers, and that Christianity means Jesus Christ—something vague, mystical, which no one can explain, but which produces pleasant sensations in those who believe it, a sort of spiritual intoxication called religious experience. For this species of inebriation genuine believers develop an irresistible craving, a form of disease from which they seldom recover.

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Christ is a purely mystical being, of whom there are as many different descriptions as describers. To many he is the Christ that was, to others, the Christ that is, and to others still, the Christ that is to be, of whom Tennyson so sweetly sings. To some he is a Divine, to others, human, and to others, both in one. In reality, nobody knows who or what he is. Everything about supernatural religion is mystical, remote, obscure, inexplicable, and that is why the ignorant and superstitious revel in it. Theologians are all mystics, dreamers, despisers of reason, scorners of common sense; and there is no escape from the conclusion that they are more or less mad, and do many mad things. In Southern India a young man felt a great call to some mystic mission, and he prayed: "Lord, here am I; send me, but for goodness sake don't." That prayer Dr. Glover calls "the honestest prayer I have ever heard." The man was mad; but into the midst of his madness there penetrated one pale gleam of sanity.

The *Daily Mirror* published the other day a picture of the Bishop of London seated on an old brass cannon. That is quite a safe position, although we suppose the position is meant to convey the idea that the Bishop is doing his bit towards winning the War. And one may trust Winnington Ingram for getting all the advertisement possible.

The *Globe* has been advocating the utilization of cathedrals as places for storing the reserves of wheat. This would certainly be the best function they have ever discharged, although some correspondents of the paper fear that in the case of air-raids there would be more chance of these storehouses being destroyed. That, decidedly, says little for the belief of people in the efficacy of prayer.

A Scotch clergyman, the Rev. James Wishart, just home from France, has some wonderful stories to tell about the men. For instance, when the weather interfered with the operations of the British forces, some of the men would ask him "if God was not, after all, a German God?" We should imagine the soldiers were pulling Mr. Wishart's leg. It is hard to imagine soldiers as stupid as Mr. Wishart paints them. But some of our warlike parsons seem to think they are at liberty to picture the men as quite foolish, provided they talk of their being good fighters.

We would like to know how the Salvation Army manages its communications with Germany. According to the *War Cry* of May 12, 1917:—

> Our leader, Lieut.-Colonel Treite, has been able to complete his journey through Saxony, which embraced meetings in four different towns and the inspection of a corresponding number of social institutions.
>
> In Leipzig, the first of the towns to be visited, the meeting was held on the Saturday night, and finished up with six souls at the penitent form. On Sunday the Colonel led the Holiness Meeting at Plauen, the afternoon meeting at Zurckan, and the night meeting at Chemitz. In the last-named town, *where God has blessed our work in quite a special manner*, twelve soldiers and recruits were publicly received.

The italics are ours, and are intended for those stalwart Christians in Britain who are always saying that Germany is wholly given over to Atheism. But the whole paragraph has a bad odour in the nostrils of any decent Britisher. Who is this Treite, "our leader," if you please? The Salvation Army is first of all a business organization. The word "International" is printed on the front page of the *War Cry*, and we suggest that the Salvation Army is a trading organization—trading in Germany—and trading with enemy aliens. How the devil the "news" above quoted can be got through here with such apparently smooth facility, we confess, amazes us! We do not like the flavour of it, and we think the matter might well be considered—and pondered—by the British authorities.

Under the heading "Atheists in the Camps," this *War Cry* says: "Twelve men knelt at the penitent form, among them being two drink slaves and a professed atheist." And this is what the "atheist" was reported to have said after his conversion: "Well, in all my twenty years of atheism, I never came across anything with half the happiness in it that you show to be in salvation. You people always seem to be happy." It is also stated that he asked the officer to write to his wife, who was converted, and had been praying for his conversion for many years. Of course, we have heard again and again of these "professed atheists" who suddenly find salvation in the manner described in this story. But when the cases are probed, the Atheism of the Atheists disappears like thin smoke. And names and addresses are never given.

A writer in the *Daily Express* points out that navy chaplains are known as "Sky-pilots," "Devil-dodgers," "Mouldy Men," and other "ungodly names." Surely, men who invite such derision are like "*Chaplins*" of the Forces.

The calm assumption by nearly all the War Offices that God is on their side, is rivalled by the dutiful newspaper editors. Perhaps one of the most amusing is that of the *Sunday Herald*, which states in leaded type, "Germany began the war of hell against heaven." This means that Messrs. Lloyd George, Winston Churchill & Co. are archangels, which, as old Euclid would say, is absurd.

The *Age* (Melbourne) in its issue for May 23, reports a rather interesting discussion before the Methodist Conference on education in Fiji. The Government had offered a monetary grant on the usual condition that there should be a conscience clause for native and Indian scholars. This was opposed by a Rev. Dr. Gault, who said that the Methodists ought not to co-operate with the Government of Fiji in any educational scheme in which religion was not compulsory. He was supported by the Rev. J. W. Burton, who said that the "religious atmosphere" in a school with a conscience clause was all "moonshine." For nine years he had not made a single convert attending his Indian day-school, and his predecessor had for five years a similar experience. Eventually the Goverutment offer was accepted, but it is quite true that where religious instruction is not compulsory few people want it.

All the same, we confess that our sympathy lies with Dr. Gault and Mr. Burton, and not with his opportunist brother clergymen. If religious instruction is really essential to individual and national welfare—and all the clergy profess to believe this is so—then every reason that holds good for compulsory education in secular subjects holds good for compulsion in religious subjects also. And, in that case, these parsons are simply selling a principle purely for a cash consideration. If, on the other hand, it is admitted that religious instruction is no more than the gratification of a desire having no more than a personal application, the case for religious instruction is gone. You can have religion if you please, you can do without it if you please It is of no consequence to anyone but yourself. A religious instruction from which children are permitted to withdraw kills the case for it, and provides a complete justification for the State limiting its educational curriculum to secular subjects alone.

A young Zulu chief, who served as a private in a labour battalion, and who died of wounds, left three wives and eighteen children. His ideas of the sacredness of marriage are paralleled in the earlier pages of the Bible.

The Bishop of Liverpool is undergoing a surgical operation at his house, says a newspaper paragraph. In an age of faith, prayer alone would have been sufficient to cure "all the ills that flesh is heir to."

According to the *Daily Chronicle*, "the first woman cathedral organist has been appointed at Rochester Cathedral." The Christian Church of England is in no violent hurry to recognize women as human beings.

The grille in the ladies' gallery of the House of Commons, a barbaric relic of sex distinction, has been removed after

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an agitation extending over half-a-century. The grille should be relegated as a curiosity to St. Paul's Cathedral, for the Christian Church has ever been a most determined opponent of sex-equality.

"Ours is the heroic age," says the Mayor of Maidstone. Yet tens of thousands of parsons are "too proud to fight," although they do not object to "christening" battleships and consecrating regimental colours.

Some time since a London newspaper editor wrote "King George reigns over an educated people." What this education consists of may be estimated by reading the reports of the Public Libraries. At Westminster Free Library, for instance, of the 348,960 volumes issued, 116,550 were novels, and 1,611 were classed as "philosophical."

The *Daily Chronicle* comments on the youthfulness of church organists, and mentions several instances of boys from twelve to fifteen years of age who are filling the position. It seems appropriate to employ boys as organists in the second childhood of religion.

In view of the Papal claim to infallibility, it is interesting to note that most critics agree as to the "Austrian inspiration" of the Peace note. The note itself, however, is couched in the usual pious form calculated to deceive the ignorant and credulous.

From a handbill sent us by a correspondent, we see that the "Yorkshire Wonder" is, at present, visiting the Congregational chapel and Salvation Army barracks at Goldthorpe. The "Yorkshire Wonder" is an ex-burglar who—so runs the handbill—was an associate of Charles Peace, spent twenty-eight years in prison, and three-and-a-half years in chains and dark cells. The "Wonder" will appear in convict uniform and chains, and we can faintly picture the admiring glance of many of the younger ones who will attend his meetings. If they will not long to emulate him—prison, chains, and cell—we shall be greatly surprised. For the "Wonder's" claims is not what he *is* but what he *was*. And, really, we prefer him as he was. Then he was at least an *honest* burglar. The chances are that he is now a sanctimonious scarecrow—more pious, but, probably, less straightforward. And the people who advertise *him* talk about the demoralizing tendency of picture shows!

The *Daily Chronicle* points out that Westminster Abbey possesses ancient rights, being a "Royal Peculiar," and enjoys complete independence of episcopal control. This partially explains why eminent deceased "intellectuals" are refused burial in this English pantheon, and room is always found for the friends of the Church.

Old newspapers make very interesting reading, and sometimes there is a topical touch about these remote paragraphs. A copy of the *Sunday Times*, issued ninety years ago, contains a caustic allusion concerning a lady and an officer, and concludes: "Oh, these red coats! We are half convinced that the Old Serpent seduced Eve in a suit of regimentals."

General Smuts is a smart general, but his theology is not above criticism. He says that "the world is out of joint, and only a kindly Providence can set it right again." It looks as if Providence is killing us with "kindness," for thirty million Christians are doing their best to murder each other.

That genial humourist, Mr. Jerome K. Jerome, admits that he is "fed-up with copy-book sentiment of irreproachable character, concerning the eternal principles of right and justice," and adds: "I want to know what it all means, translated into terms of practical politics." "Aye, there's the rub!"

In these days when obscure individuals are prosecuted for profanity, it is interesting to find that a Biblical parody is published amid a chorus of acclamation from the press. The work is entitled, *The Book of Artemas*, and contains some pointed political skits, couched in a smart imitation of ecclesiastical English.

Leopards do not readily shed their spots, and it is not surprising that the Canadian clergy have secured exemption from military service. The Senate, however, is not so complacent as the British Houses of Parliament, and divinity students were excluded.

A new publication bears the arresting title, *Madame Adam*. It does not refer to Mother Eve, but to a famous French woman.

A Conference is to be held on the Reform of the House of Lords, under the chairmanship of Viscount Bryce. We hope that due attention will be paid to the position of the Bishops of the Established Church in the Second Chamber. If they cannot be eliminated, their number should be greatly reduced.

The *Daily News* complains that "a human, not to say slangy, touch" seems to be creeping into Mr. Lloyd George's speeches. The criticism is well founded. Not only is the Prime Minister's vocabulary vulgar, but his ideas are commonplace. In a recent speech he referred, with unction, to the "Great Artist" who had made Serbia and Wales. It was as touching as the memorable invocation of "Great Architect of the Universe" made by the lamented Dr. Crippen.

Profanity is becoming popular. The Inns of Court Officers' Training Corps, better known as the "Devil's Own," has published a periodical with the alluring title, the *Gehenna Gazette*. It is said that a soldier, seeing a copy on the bookstall, said, "Where the h—ll is Gehenna?"

The Paper Shortage.

THERE are many aspects of the paper shortage, but we are specially concerned with the fact of the large number of cases in which people are going short of *this* paper. Worse still, they do not even know of what it is they are short. There are many thousands of people to whom a knowledge of this journal is the only thing needed to make them regular subscribers. How to bring these potential readers and the *Freethinker* into actual contact is the problem always before us.

The majority of our readers have always been gained through the method of personal introduction. That is a method of doing service to the *Freethinker* and to the Freethought Cause which comes well within the range of everybody's power. Once the introduction is effected we will attend to the rest. You find, we keep. That is an assured programme. During the three years of war, we are glad to say that the enthusiasm of our readers has enabled us to enrol a large number of strangers as regular subscribers. But the more we get, the more we want. There is only one *Freethinker*. Its place can be supplied by no other paper. Whether a man reads the *Daily Tweedledum* or the *Daily Tweedledee* is a matter of indifference. But there is a vital difference between taking and not taking the *Freethinker* regularly.

That is why we are asking readers to do all they can to see that their friends know all about the *Freethinker* and its purpose. If they had not helped so effectively during the past three years we should not be asking for more help now. But we believe they have as much pleasure in increasing the demand for this paper as we have in supplying it. Editor, contributors, readers, are all fellow-workers in a common cause. And every new reader represents a potential soldier in the great and even conquering army of Freethought.

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To Correspondents.

P. V. MORRIS (France).—Pleased to receive your letter and to know that your experience bears out that of our other correspondents as to the amount of freethinking among the men at the Front. It is good to know that the War has determined you to take a more active and more militant part in the fight against superstition. That is a greater war than even the present one, and the need for good fighters in that war will continue when the present one is ended.

W. THOMAS.—An article on "Omar Khayyam," by "Mimnermus," appeared in the *Freethinker* for December 12, 1915, and one on Edward Fitzgerald, the translator of Omar, in our issue of August 12 last. An article on the same topic also appeared on January 9, 1916.

R. CRAUS.—The real test of liberality of thought is claiming liberty of expression for opinions with which we disagree. There is no sure liberality in claiming freedom for one's self. Our opinion may be wrong, but suppression does not prove it so. It proves only that our enemies are afraid to let it have a hearing.

C. R.—We do not consider it our business to expose every blackguard Christians feel inclined to encourage on their platform. Circumstances sometimes render exposure necessary, and in that case we should not *hesitate*.

A. E. MANDER.—Your congratulations are somewhat cryptic, but if you are proud of Mr. Mann's articles, we should be the last to dissent.

H. T. HUMPIDGE.—Paper is being sent. The War has delayed publication of that book, and of others. Thanks for good wishes, which we warmly reciprocate.

G. E. QUIRK.—Thanks for list of addresses. We are sending specimen copies, which is an excellent method of introducing the *Freethinker*. Pleased to know you think the paper gets better each week.

H. HIND.—Glad to hear from still another *Freethinker* reader at the Front. We should say it would not be a matter of very great difficulty to start a Branch of the N. S. S. there. We hope to see you and all other Freethinkers safely back whenever the War comes to an end.

H. ROBSON.—We do not think that the alteration of title would be any real gain. It is the purpose of a journal that arouses hostility or receives support, and we must be prepared for the one and welcome the other. Thanks for excerpts, which will prove useful.

T. C.—We have not yet had an opportunity of reading Dr. Figgins' book on Nietzsche, but judging from the reviews, it appears to be a more honest and able work than many that have appeared. Of course, the ordinary newspaper writer on Nietzsche neither reads nor understands him.

J. BREESE.—We are sending a small parcel of *Freethinkers* for distribution to the address given, also the paper for six months.

H. A.—See "Acid Drops."

T. RAWLINSON.—There have been many essays on Bruno in English. The two most complete works are *Giordano Bruno*, by McIntyre, published in 1903; and a *Life*, by Frith, in 1887. A complete edition of Bruno's works was published, in Italian, in 1891 (3 vols.). A translation of one of his works, under the title of *The Heroic Enthusiasts*, was published about thirty years ago.

S. W. WHITFIELD.—We cannot say whether there are other Freethinkers in your battalion. From all we hear, it will be strange if you do not come across some intellectual chums sooner or later.

A. MILLAR.—Don't forget to call when you are in London. We shall be pleased to have a chat with you. If you drop a card advising us, it will be the better.

M. B. R.—We have no other knowledge on the matter than that contained in the article you enclose. We are inclined to think the visit and the conversation are both imaginary.

J. FLAHERTY.—We have no hesitation in saying that no such person as the Jesus portrayed in the New Testament ever existed. Your other question is more difficult to answer—say, about fifty years later.

J. EFFEL.—Papers received. Will attend to other matter next week. Thanks.

"KERIDON."—We *do* intend republishing Mr. Mann's articles, but we must wait until he concludes, and even then publishing may be delayed awhile for obvious reasons. Still, we shall not wait longer than is inevitable. We are obliged for your efforts. Will attend to the matter as you suggest.

J. A. REID.—We hope your activity will bear good results, although editors have usually pretty thick hides.

A. H. WORTMAN.—MSS. received. Thanks.

DORRINGTON (Wigan).—No objection whatever to doing what you ask. But what are the "old, old stories" to which you refer?

WARWICKSHIRE MINER.—We should say that a parson who can quote "The Lord is mindful of his own" after a bomb has been dropped on a school deserves a good sized one all to himself.

H. ROBSON.—To "hope" is to have a desire with an expectation that the desire will be gratified. There is, therefore, justification for the language used. The hope will be stronger as the expectation of realization is greater.

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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.

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

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.

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Sugar Plums

We were sorry to hear from Mr. E. Egerton Stafford, an occasional contributor to these columns, that he has been the recipient of a German decoration in the shape of a wound from a bursting shell. Fortunately, the wound was a slight one, and Mr. Stafford is getting all right again. We have in hand a lengthy article by Mr. Stafford, which we hope to soon publish.

Mr. H. B. Price writes:—

> I was pleased to see Mr. T. Shore's article, entitled "Shameless Inconsistency!" in your issue of August 19: but the old idea of advertising joint appointments for "married couples without encumbrances" is fast disappearing.
>
> I remember on one occasion the Chairman of a Board of Guardians asking a married couple if they had any encumbrances, and the husband replied, "No, sir; no encumbrances, but two children."
>
> On another occasion an officer applying for a position was a "Freethinker," and the Chairman asked him his "religion." He said, "I am a retired Christian, sir."
>
> We want more Freethinkers on public bodies, especially on Boards of Guardians, for vast sums of money are wasted at present in paying chaplains of all sects, which could very well go in extending the material comfort of the inmates.

There are evidently a large number of Freethinkers in Cape Town, and other parts of South Africa, who only need a little pushing to form themselves into an organization. We have had several letters of late from Africa on this topic, and here is one just to hand from Mr. L. Smith, of Glengariff Road, 3 Anchor Bay, Cape Town. Mr. Smith says:—

> To quote your words: "The present is a golden opportunity for the Freethought movement."
>
> I am unaware of any Secular Society existing in this country, and, as I am sure there must be many Freethinkers who would welcome such a society being formed, would you be kind enough to insert a par. in your paper suggesting a meeting of all interested here in Cape Town.
>
> Although I am not clever enough to organize this movement, my name and address may be given as above to which names may be sent just to start the ball rolling.
>
> Of course I am willing to help in any way, but it will need men and women of ability to make it a success.
>
> Perhaps Freethinkers in Johannesburg and other towns would also like to send in their names.

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> I may mention that your paper is only obtainable at one bookstall (to my knowledge) here in Cape Town, and whether it is due to the large number of readers or the few copies imported, they are very quickly sold out. The *Freethinker* is never by any chance placed on the stalls to the public view, but kept under the counter.

We insert Mr. Smith's letter in the hope that it will lead to the desired end. If a meeting can be arranged between a few enthusiastic spirits, we feel sure good results will follow.

From another South African reader comes the following, which has some bearing on the foregoing :—

> I am a native of South Africa, and Dutch on my mother s side, and, naturally, have fuller acquaintance with the psychology of the Boer than a home-born colonial, and am convinced that a fuller knowledge of the trend of modern thought on the part of my more ignorant countrymen, would foster that spirit of "sweet reasonableness" so necessary to the peace and development of this country. We need here a courageous Dutchman to tell his illiterate fellows the *truth* about things, and lift from their shoulders the burdens of superstition and ignorance which has made them the hinds that they are for so many decades; but in place of that our public men mouth pious phrases with hypocritical dissimilation for the sake of pelf and power! In our towns and cities we are more enlightened, but they count as nothing beside the menace of the Calvinistic backvelders! I wish my health and resources permitted of my doing more for the "Cause." I sometimes feel, as one of the obscure and hidden, how feeble and ineffective my little attempts must be, and yet my zeal and desire to do things amounts almost to a nervous passion.

It will be noted that both correspondents are as one as to the need for Freethought work in South Africa. And the tone of both letters shows them to be written by men far above the average in intelligence.

Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

VII.

(Continued from p. 534.)

> One of Sir William Jenner's favourite maxims was "Never believe what your patient tells you his doctor said."....And if it is unsafe to depend on second-hand testimony for what Dr. Brown said to his patient, what reliance can we place on what Sir Oliver Lodge says Mrs. Piper says the ghost of Rector says the ghost of Dr. Hodgson says? We have Sir Oliver Lodge's word for it that Mrs. Piper does not always speak distinctly; we have Mrs. Piper's word that (the spirit of) Rector does not always speak distinctly; we have Rector's word that (the spirit of) Dr. Hodgson does not always speak distinctly. What their several powers of hearing may be, we do not know. We know that Dr. Phinuit at any rate is not always an honest witness. What guarantee have we for Rector's and Dr. Hodgson's honesty? What guarantee have we of Mrs. Piper's honesty? Would any man of ordinary prudence buy a box of matches, or believe that it is raining, on the strength of such evidence? Sir Oliver Lodge founds a religion upon it, and believes in miracles on the strength of it; and he asks the world to adopt his religion and to believe in his miracles. The English language is a language of extraordinary force and vigour, but it does not contain words strong enough to express my opinion of Sir Oliver Lodge's attempt, or of his powers of estimating the worth of testimony and of interpreting evidence.—*Dr. Charles Mercier, "Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*, p. 130.

In the year following her visit to Dr. Cocke, Mrs. Piper first came under the observation of the Society for Psychical Research. She was then under the supposed control of a French physician named Dr. Phinuit. Now, Dr. Cocke's spirit control was claimed to be the spirit of a French physician named Finne or Finnett. Podmore remarks of this control :—

> Phinuit appears to be a creation of the same order as Simandini and Leopold—Balsamo—Cagliostro. He was transferred, as we have seen, from a professional medium to Mrs Piper. We first make his acquaintance in the questionable company of Chlorine and Mrs. Siddons. He claims to have been a doctor, but does not know the names of the Latin or French drugs which he prescribes, and cannot recognize common medicinal herbs when shown to him. He claims to have been a Frenchman, though his knowledge of French is apparently limited to a few common phrases and a slight accent, which frequently proved serviceable in the old days in disguising a bad shot at a proper name. His ignorance of French he has explained as being due to his having passed the later years of his life at Metz, where there were many English residents. He has given his full name, with particulars of his life at Paris, but no trace of any person of his name can be found. On being more closely questioned he betrayed some uncertainty whether he had been born at Metz or Marseilles, and finally came to the conclusion that his name was not Phinuit at all, but Jean Alaen Scliville, and that he had never had any connection with Dr. Cocke.[1]

This popular spirit exercised almost exclusive control of Mrs. Piper for eleven years, until 1896, when he retired in favour of a band of superior spirits under the guidance of Imperator. The plain English of which appears to be, that when the character of Phinuit began to grow thin under the ordeal of persistent questioning, he was, to use a vulgar term, "outed," and his job given to Imperator—a more nebulous character, if possible, whose previous earth-life is altogether unknown, and of which we may be sure Mrs. Piper, taught by experience, will make no disclosures. This Imperator was one of the controls of the late Stainton Moses, who died in 1892, and, being thus left unemployed, was no doubt glad to take service under Mrs. Piper.

"Now," as Podmore points out, "Stainton Moses, as we have already seen, was a physical medium, and as Imperator and his company can hardly be acquitted of connivance with their medium's doings, the admission of their claims to substantiality would still further complicate Mrs. Piper's case by involving it with the whole question of these presumably deceptive phenomena."[2] Professor W. James, himself a believer in these occult phenomena, is of opinion that these controls "are all probably dream creations of Mrs. Piper."[3] Sir Oliver Lodge says: "Whether such a man as Dr. Phinuit ever existed I do not know, nor from the evidential point of view do I greatly care."[4] Well, he is easily satisfied. As to Phinuit's often-remarked tendency to fish for information, Sir Oliver admits: "At times Dr. Phinuit does fish; occasionally he guesses; and sometimes he ekes out the scantiness of his information from the resources of a lively imagination."[5]

What is Mrs. Piper's own explanation of these things? According to Sir Oliver Lodge: "Mrs. Piper pretends to no knowledge as to her own powers, and I believe her assertion that she is absolutely ignorant of what she has said in the trance state. She appears to be anxious to get the phenomena elucidated, and hopes by sitting to scientific investigators to have light thrown on her abnormal condition, about which she expresses herself as not quite comfortable."[6] On the other hand, says Sir Oliver, "She herself when in the trance state asserts that she gets it by conversing with the deceased friends and relatives of people present."[7]

Mr. Edward Clodd says: "Mrs. Piper, in October, 1901, made a confession denying that she had had any communications from the departed when she was in the trance-state. She afterwards recanted, and a defender of the faith explained that her 'statement represented

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 282-283.
[2] Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 284.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 284, note.
[4] Sir Oliver Lodge, *The Survival of Man*, p. 203.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

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simply a transient mood.' But the fact of the confession remains, and the transient, probably, was the true. Let Sir Oliver and the rest of the credulous explain it as they may or can; ingenuity will never fail them."[1] The quality of Dr. Phinuit's communications through Mrs. Piper may be judged by the verdict of Professor James, who declared, "I was too disgusted with Phinuit's tiresome twaddle to even note it down," and of Professor Shaler, who, after a seance in 1894, calls him a "preposterous scoundrel."[2] And yet Sir Oliver Lodge declares, with regard to Mrs. Piper, that the time for "suspicion" and "detective work" is over.[3] No doubt it is with Sir Oliver Lodge, but not with us.

The spirits communicating through Mrs. Piper are no more successful at prophecy than they are at giving correct astronomical knowledge. For instance, the spirit named Rector informs Dr. Hodgson—through the medium of Mrs. Piper—that Mrs. Piper will pass over to the spirit-world (the cant phrase for dying) before him, and also tells Hodgson, "Thy life is only in its beginning."[4] Seven years later—in 1905—Hodgson died. Mrs. Piper has not "passed over" yet.

Again, in the year 1899, the spirit of Moses—the mythical hero of the Old Testament—also through the medium of Mrs. Piper, prophesied the great world-war that was about to take place—a thing, by the way, which most people were prepared to witness, and which was being prophesied nearly every day by journalists, novelists, and political writers. Dr. Hodgson inquired whether he would live to see it, and the spirit of Moses replied, "Thou shalt live in flesh to know all."[5] Dr. Hodgson died nine years before the great War broke out. In the only details the old prophet gives of the coming conflict, he is hopelessly wide of the mark. He declares that Germany will take no serious part in the War, which will be carried on by Russia in league with France on the one side, against England in league with America on the other!

We have given some instances of the spirits' ignorance of astronomy, and, as Mrs. Henry Sidgwick remarks, we should hardly expect the exalted spirits to use "scientific terms" in a way that shows total want of understanding of what they are talking about." She continues:—

> And the ignorance is not confined to science. Mrs. Piper might easily have given little attention to Old Testament history or the history of Christianity, but that Imperator, if the great spirit he professes to be, should undertake to instruct Hodgson in the true inwardness of these things, and contrive even while confining himself to vague generalities to talk so much nonsense about them, is difficult to conceive. Again, Mrs. Piper might well have erroneous notions concerning Adam Bede and imagine him to be a real person whom she might meet in the other world, but it is hardly possible that (the spirit of) George Eliot should make a similar mistake and report having met him without expressing any surprise.[6]

Of course, as everyone knows, Adam Bede is an imaginary character—the title-character of George Eliot's well-known novel.

But it was Dr. Stanley Hall who applied the decisive test to Mrs. Piper's spirits. In 1909 he had a sitting with Mrs. Piper, who was supposed to be under the control of the spirit of Dr. Hodgson, who had then been dead four years. We quote from Mrs. Henry Sidgwick's account:—

> Dr. Stanley Hall in 1909 took a short cut to positive evidence by deceiving the control Hodgson, and asking for a niece, Bessie Beals, who had never existed, but who was nevertheless produced at several sittings, and connected specific memories with the sitter—mainly, though not entirely, such as might be suggested by his statements and questions. When in the end Dr. Hall told Hodgson that he (Hall) had been deceiving him, and that there was no such person as Bessie Beals, Hodgson maintained her reality. The following is the report of the conversation (Miss Annie Tanner, *Studies in Spiritism*, p. 254):—
>
> "Dr. Hall: Well, what do you say to this, Hodgson? I asked you to call Bessie Beals, and there is no such person. How do you explain that?
>
> "Hodgson: Bessie Beale is here, and not the ——"
>
> (Note by Miss Tanner.)
>
> [At this point we laughed and I made some remark to the effect that that was just what we had said Hodgson would do, and the hand continued (writing) thus.]
>
> "Hodgson: I know a Bessie Beals. Her mother asked about her before. Mother asked about her before.
>
> "Dr. Hall: I don't know about that, Hodgson. Bessie Beals is a pure fiction.
>
> "Hodgson: I refer to a lady who asked me the same thing and the same name.
>
> "Dr. Hall: Guess you are wrong about that, Hodgson.
>
> "Hodgson: Yes, I am mistaken in her. I am mistaken. Her name was not Bessie, but Jessie Beale."

Mrs. Sidgwick remarks on this: "We can only say about this explanation that it is not plausible.....Dr. Hall might accidentally have hit on the name of a previous communicator, but it is very unlikely that this communicator would have had *memories appropriate to Dr. Hall's fictions and have admitted him as her uncle*."[1] For our part, we believe that Mrs. Piper would put you into communication with the spirit of anyone asked for, whether they ever existed or not. This exposure so upset Mrs. Piper that she gave up her trance-sittings for a time.

(To be continued.) W. Mann.

Socialism and Freethought.

The name "Socialism" appears in the most bewildering connections. Its Red Flag flies over the palace of the Tsar; its apostles occupy in various parts of the world, with seeming impartiality, the Ministry of State and the prison cell—they endure with equal fortitude the rank of a colonel and the firing platoon (after court-martial). Rumour has it that the German Socialist may appear at any moment at the barricades to secure liberty by force and arms; in the British House of Commons, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, in the name of Socialism, calls upon the Churches to "follow Christ" and lead the way to peace.

The Freethinker may well be puzzled, and even a little alarmed.

The question for the Freethinker is this: What will Socialism do in the day of its triumph for (*a*) the right of Freethought, speech, and discussion; and (*b*) with the established Churches? Otherwise stated: What is Socialism doing, and what will it do, to disestablish religion, dissipate superstition, and make universal the recognition of Science as the only Providence of mankind?

At first glance it would seem that the aim of Socialism is wholly secular, its method rational and critical, and its theory based upon the material facts of human society as a developing organism.

[1] Edward Clodd, "Is Sir Oliver Lodge Right?" *Strand Magazine*, July, 1917.
[2] Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, pp. 200-257.
[3] *Survival of Man*, p. 278.
[4] *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 1915; part lxxi., vol. xxviii., p. 332.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 316.
[1] *Ibid.*, p. 178. The italics are ours.

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So much is this the case that orthodox opponents of Socialism have always treated it as hostile to religion and the Churches. More than this: the supposed identity of Atheism and Socialism has led to the supposition that all leading Atheists—Charles Bradlaugh, for instance—were necessarily Socialists.

By contrast we have the "Socialist leader" (dozens of him) on the P.S.A. platform claiming Christ as a "comrade" and the Gospels as his inspiration, the Christian Socialist parson, and ("*et tu Brute*") the Marxist who hurls at Freethought the desolating epithet of "bourgeois"! It would appear that even if organized Socialism is Atheist, it is not friendly to Freethought.

* * * * *

The writer wishes to clear the issue of misconceptions, so that the problem may be accurately understood.

Modern Socialism begins with Karl Marx (1818-1883). His writings are translated into every civilized tongue. His grave is a point of pilgrimage, his portrait hangs in a million homes scattered all round the globe, and his disciples pay to his name a reverence which is not much caricatured when classed as "divine." The sentimental devotion with which he is regarded by his disciples—the present writer among them—has provoked the scoffs of the un-sentimental. Marxism has been likened to Christism. In an early essay on the "Illusions of Socialism," Bernard Shaw jeered at the Socialist "Bible of the Working Classes" (Marx's *Capital*), and likened the hoped-for "Revolution" to the "Second Advent." But when all allowance is made for the excesses of the enthusiasts, Marx remains vast and titanic, and his work and that of his "apostolic succession" the foundation and inspiration of the Socialist International. In the *National Reformer* for March 25, 1883, "D" says:—

> The death of Karl Marx—which will be regretted by economists of all shades of opinion—removes from the world's stage the ablest of the Socialist writers; but the theme on which he wrote will long disturb the thoughts of men and the slumber of statesmen.

The special feature of the Marxian system is its concept of social development, usually styled by Marxists "*The* Materialist Conception of History." If it deserve the name, it must be thoroughly Atheist; and whether sound or not, at any rate, it deserves its name. It is, in fact, a magnificent attempt (the first attempt, except that of Buckle) to reduce the phenomena of history from a Vitalistic chaos to a Mechanist intelligibility.

It is best to give Marx's own words:—

> The general result at which I arrived and which once obtained served as a guide for my subsequent studies can be briefly formulated as follows:—In making their livelihood together men enter into certain necessary involuntary relations with each other, industrial relations which correspond to whatever stage society has reached in the development of its material productive forces. The totality of these industrial relations constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis upon which the legal and political superstructure is built and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. The method of producing the material livelihood determines the social, political, and intellectual life-process in general. It is not men's [individual] consciousness which determines their life; on the contrary, it is their social life which determines their consciousness (*Critique of Political Economy*; 1857).

Marx, be it remembered, was a Communist, who had reached Communism *via* the Atheist-Humanism of the Hegelian Left—the school which produced Schleiermacher, F. C. Baur, D. F. Strauss (author of the *Life of Jesus*), and Feuerbach (author of *The Essence of Christianity*). He came to the study of sociology, therefore, an Atheist, a Materialist, and an Evolutionist. His practical preoccupation was the "Revolution" for which, in 1848, all Free-spirits hoped, and of which the faith and hope has lasted with varying fortunes to this day. His aim was to find a rational explanation of past revolutions and a positive base for belief in a future Communist Revolution. As a Materialist, it was necessary to interpret social development by material facts. That the God of all religions was man-made, and that the Christ of Christianity was a projection of human consciousness, was a foregone conclusion. Feuerbach had demonstrated so much. There remained only to show why beliefs changed and why political society was periodically revolutionized. The current Communist speculations (Robert Owen, St. Simon, Fourier) had shown how potent were the reactions upon social conduct and social experience of the institutions of "property" and "the family." It was but a step to rise to the generalization that the play of ideas culminating in revolution was the "ideologic" aspect of man's desires, which, in turn, begotten by their needs, were determined by their "property relations." "All (written) history is the history of class-struggles." But on what depend property relations? As a Materialist, Marx could give only one answer. The idea of property must originate somewhere in human experience; it must be begotten of some need; and of all possible needs of mankind, the greatest need is to keep alive. Feuerbach had already said "Man *is* what he eats"; and as for the individual man, so for society: its basic need is to feed and reproduce. Man must battle against Nature—his victory depends upon his weapons and his strategy. Throughout history "ownership" follows upon *use*.

A brief summary will make the idea clear. Primitive man is found living in groups. Drawn into association by his needs (of sex and defence), he remains grouped because the group has a greater survival value than isolation. Natural Selection eliminates the isolated.

The primitive group, when it has invented the weapons, is able to live by the collective hunt. In the hunt, those who "beat up" the game are as necessary as those who slay; hence the product of the tribal hunt is communally consumed. When animals have been domesticated, the need of pasture and sustained attention compelled the break-up of the tribe into the pastoral household—family property has appeared.

When men have learned to till the land they, in the long run, settle down to a territory. As inventions multiply, trades are specialized. This "division of labour" makes man more than ever interdependent. The history of man becomes more and more the history of "the Tool; its origin and outcome."

When, as in the "Middle Ages," the tool is such that one man alone can use it, one man owns the tool, uses it, and enjoys the product. At this stage arises the philosophy of the individual and his rights.

By the progress of invention—the introduction of steam, electrical and other mechanical power—the tool becomes such that only an army can set it in motion. Labour is subdivided more, and with specialization grows greater interdependence. Nations grow interdependent. Britain depends upon America for corn, cattle, and cotton; America upon Britain for cloth and textiles. The tool of production requires for its full and free exercise the consent and co-operation of society as a whole. Here arises a demand for the Social Ownership of the Tool, *i.e.*, Socialism. This demand is resisted by the private proprietor class now politically dominant. Hence the struggle for the idea of Social Ownership becomes the practical struggle of the propertyless or wage-receiving class for political mastery. If analogy can be drawn from history, the victory of the propertyless and the triumph of Socialism are inevitable.

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Such being the Materialist concept, we are in a position to answer the question with which we commenced.

Marxism, so far as it develops the thought of its founder, must more and more become identical with scientific sociology. As evidence of the Socialist recognition of this, we need but cite the fact that the list of books published by the various Socialist Parties all give prominence to the works of Darwin, Haeckel, and Buchner. From the prominence given in these same lists (see, for example, that of the Socialist Labour Press, 50 Renfrew Street, Glasgow) to Lecky, Draper, Buckle, etc., it is clear that Marxism for its adherents presupposes the triumph of Freethought. It is as complete a negation of Christian theology and ethics as can be conceived. And it is not without significance that the country wherein Marx is repudiated by the majority is also the land wherein "Socialism" is theoretically inchoate and morally flabbiest—the happy land of "Jesus the Socialist"—Britain.

Why, then, is "Freethought" scorned by some Marxists? On the Continent and in America the Socialist parties have put forth a whole library of works dealing with Socialism and its implications. The works of Marx, Engels, Bebel, Kautsky, Lafargue, Dietzgen, Untermann, Boudin, and De Leon constitute a library of large and closely reasoned volumes to which justice could only be done by the omnivorous diligence and inspired shears of our own W. Mann. It stands to reason that of the thousands of working men attracted to Socialism, only a minority have the money to buy or the leisure to master the science in all its details. When added to that is the fact these works can, in this country, only be obtained in imported American editions—supplies dependent upon the War and the Censor—a tendency to "narrowness" and "dogmatism" is inevitable. Then, too, the exigencies of political polemics lead to over-statement, and polemic literature exiled from its land of origin becomes liable to grave misconception.

It will be common knowledge to readers of the *Freethinker* that, in France, Freethought is a much more "fashionable" thing than here. Many, if not most, of the French *bourgeois* are Freethinkers (more or less Voltairean).

Paul Lafargue (son-in-law of Marx), a brilliant satirist and the leading *litterateur* among French Socialists, was never so happy as when taunting the Voltairean *bourgeois* with their political alliances with "*l'infame*." His words, taken literally in the English translation, have led some Marxists to suppose that the "correct position" is to treat Freethought always and everywhere with contempt. This is the reverse of the truth.

Lafargue's view is developed at length in his essay, *Causes of Belief in God*, and his argument—developed in terms of the "class struggle"—may thus be summarized: "God is an illusion invented by savages because of their ignorance. It is indispensable to the *bourgeois* as a ruling class. If it did not exist, 'it would be necessary for them to invent it.' The only class whose position and experience enables it to free itself from the 'God illusion' is the *proletariat*. They alone are, and can be, the real Freethinkers, and they alone, by their triumph, can win the battle of Freethought." That is to say, Lafargue's complaint is not that the *bourgeois* are Freethinkers, but that they are not. Which means, not that Socialism is indifferent or hostile to Freethought, but that the fight for Freethought is an integral part of the battle for Socialism.

. . . . .

This opinion the present writer shares. No Freethinker can afford to be ignorant of Socialism. Every genuine Socialist *must* be a Freethinker.

THOS. A. JACKSON.

Babies, Bunkum, and Biology.

> Psychology is inseparably linked with physiology, and the phases of social life exhibited by animals other than man, which sometimes curiously foreshadowed human policy, fall strictly within the province of the biologist.
>
> —*Huxley, Encl. Britt.*

BABY week and baby talk have recently had a good airing, and the papers and magazines have been well flooded with articles thereon, revealing another important national oversight, *i.e.*, that babies are the greatest asset of the nation—a statement which runs some risk of being mistaken for a stupid truism. The distinguishing feature, however, in nearly all that has been written, is the poor knowledge displayed of vital statistics and of biology. Early man was not much concerned about the infantile mortality rate. Endowed by natural selection with a full measure of the reproductive power, he could not be blamed if he followed blindly this instinct, while his members were kept down by the constant struggle against nature. Later on, with dawning civilization, and, finally, when he "conceived God," the brutish instinct of "blind reproduction" held its ground, and even received divine support under the spiritual injunction to be "fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth"—the one injunction to which man has responded more nobly than any other in the Bible. On the other hand, it is not quite so clear that the high infantile mortality rate—at present existing, and which has existed much too long—was originally one of the Almighty's intentions, although it is clear that Nature is not at all particular about a high infantile, or any other kind of mortality, for we find her producing in all forms of life enormous numbers of progeny, of which a very small percentage survive. It is estimated that of British infants which die prematurely 100,000 could easily be saved, and their loss is considered a national disgrace. How big a disgrace will be better understood from the following statistics covering so short a period as only five years, 1901-1905. In that time the chief European nations lost by infantile mortality alone the following:—

Russia	3,900,000
Bulgaria	114,800
Roumania	257,400
Serbia	16,500
Belgium	137,200
Hungary	738,150
Austria	955,500
Spain	504,000
Germany	2,040,000
Italy...	950,000
Sweden	65,000
United Kingdom	746,000
France	573,000
Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland	227,000
	11,225,650

So much for Europe; now for Asia's contribution:—

Ceylon	129,200
Japan	1,177,600
India	15,750,000
China	20,000,000
	37,056,800

The actual statistics of China are not available, but they may safely be taken as the same as India, viz., a birth-rate of forty per thousand, and an infantile death-rate of twenty-five per cent. Our grand total of the chief countries of Europe and the most heavily populated of Asia, for five years, reaches the interesting figures of 48,282,450! We can, therefore, safely say that the

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disgrace is "international" rather than "national"; a rank Materialist might even call it a "Universe-al" disgrace. Such unpleasant figures and fact belong to the category which afforded Huxley the excuse for saying: "Of moral purpose I see no trace in nature"; and moved Tennyson to write:—

> Are God and Nature then at strife,
> That Nature lends such evil dreams?
> So careful of the type she seems—
> So careless of the single life.

In conceiving God, and losing sight of nature, man has been, and still is, under the delusion that he can produce and *raise* an unlimited quantity of beings of high quality—high physically, mentally, morally. He has not been very successful yet, and even the super-scientific German materialists, to whom an unlimited supply of cheap labour and cannon fodder is the greatest asset, have failed to get their infantile mortality rate much below twenty per cent., losing two million odd in the years 1901-5. In short, a little study of the *Diagrams of Vital Statistics*, by Dr. C. V. Drysdale, the greatest living authority on population questions, shows that, at any rate during part of the nineteenth century for which the figures are available, no country with a high unrestricted birth-rate has been able to avoid a high general and infantile death-rate. This is not a matter of opinion, but one of verifiable statistics—one of nature's unpleasant truths, and, in the meantime, there is only one humane way of dealing with it, that is, to leave these millions of superfluous infants in the great never-never land until such time as we are more certain than we are now of being able to rear them. Already all the better-informed people in Europe and America have found that by limiting their families to numbers, which they can adequately provide for, they greatly benefit themselves and their children; but, on the other hand, the poor and more ignorant, who nearly always have larger families than they can bring up, and amongst whom the high infantile mortality is most marked, are now being helped by the State to bring into being as many children as they can—a policy of deliberate dysgenics as opposed to the eugenic one of encouraging them to have the smaller families, and encouraging the better-off people to have the larger. The excuse offered being that the nation must "make up for the losses of ths War," and that we are committing "race suicide." We can, however, easily reassure ourselves on this score by the perusal of an article in the *Malthusian* for February, 1916, which shows that if every married couple capable of bearing children averaged a family of no more than three, not only would infantile mortality be enormously reduced, but the nation would easily maintain its pre-War rate of increase of from three to four hundred thousand a year. Nor need we despair, if we really do need more in order to fill up the colonies. Hitherto the "policy" has been to let as many young men who wish to, emigrate to various ends of the earth, leaving their sisters behind to become old maids, whereas a little common sense and organization, together with any needful alteration of the marriage laws, might easily result in another half million marriages in the colonies where babies have a far better chance of surviving than in the slums of our great cities, as is seen by the low infantile mortality of Australia and New Zealand, which is only about eight or ten per cent. The question is a *vital* one, and needs to be looked at from the biological standpoint rather than from the sentimental and religious.

Y. C.

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Views and Opinions.

Mr. Clodd and Atheists.

Some Christian apologists have a convenient way of dealing with Atheists. First of all they prove they are a bad lot, and then, if that fails in its purpose, they declare that Atheism is a myth, and Atheists are non-existent. One is used to this mixture of stupidity and impertinence from Christians—the poor devils must do the best they can with a bad case—but one hardly expects Freethinkers to condescend to the use of weapons borrowed from the Christian armoury. We are consequently surprised to find Mr. Edward Clodd informing readers of the *Literary Guide* that, while he does know Agnostics, "I don't know any Atheists; I thought that that type was extinct." Of course, if Mr. Clodd says he doesn't know any Atheists, one must take his word for it; but one cannot help wondering what kind of world it is in which he has been dwelling. For even as Chairman of the Rationalist Press Association, he must have come into contact with some of the leading associates of that body who *are* Atheists. If he did not meet them, it is surprising to find that he does not know what their opinions are. And, if I may be pardoned mentioning it, there is the *Freethinker*. Its late editor was an Atheist, as was Charles Bradlaugh, as is the present writer. And really we could, were it necessary, fill a large hall with metropolitan Atheists who would be very much alive. All of which goes to prove that a man may be very much at home when writing about primitive folk, and very much at sea when he is dealing with the living people around him.

* * *

Are Atheists Extinct?

Now, it would be absurd on our part to object to Mr. Clodd calling himself an Agnostic if he prefers that nebulous term. All we object to is his declaring extinct those who disagree with him. No one likes to be killed in this summary fashion, banished existence without rhyme or reason; and, worst of all, remaining conscious of one's non-existence. To be dead on the word of Mr. Clodd, and yet feel alive on the irrefutable testimony of one's own consciousness! That is the consideration that gives us pause, and makes us wonder whether it is we who are dreaming or Mr. Clodd who is wholly at sea about what he writes? And we are really curious to know in what way Mr. Clodd differentiates the Agnostics he knows—and is even proud of knowing—from the Atheists he does not know, and declares to be extinct. We are, of course, paying no regard here to labels, but attending only to opinions. What is it that differentiates a logical Agnosticism from Atheism as stated by all who may profess to some authority in stating it? We will not quote here Holyoake, or Bradlaugh, or Foote; they are dead, but we hope not, in the higher sense, extinct. We will not cite many who are living, because Mr. Clodd may reply he knows them not. We simply take the following:—

> The best argument for the use of the name Agnostic is simply that the word Atheist has been so long covered with all manner of ignorant calumny that it is expedient to use a new term which, though in some respects faulty, has a fair start, and will in time have a recognized meaning. The case, so stated, is reasonable; but there is the *per contra* that, whatever the motive with which the name is used, it is now tacked to half a dozen conflicting forms of doctrine, varying loosely between Theism and Pantheism. The name of Atheist escapes that drawback. Its unpopularity has saved it from half-hearted and half-minded patronage.

We select that expression of opinion because it belongs to Mr. J. M. Robertson, an associate of the body of which Mr. Clodd was the chairman. And no one will be more surprised than Mr. Robertson to learn that he is extinct.

* * *

The Use of Compromise.

For our part we have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Robertson is absolutely in the right. There may be many excuses for using "Agnostic" rather than "Atheist"; but there is only one argument, and that is a poor one. This is, that "Atheist" is misunderstood; to which the Atheist might retort that, by itself, "Agnostic" cannot be understood at all. It may mean philosophic Agnosticism, *i.e.*, a statement of ignorance concerning what lies beyond our cognizance; and that does not really concern "God" at all. Or it may mean want of belief in God; and in that case it *is* Atheism under another name, and Mr. Clodd is himself a living specimen of what he declares to be an extinct type. You have, thus, to add an explanation of a term which is selected as in itself explanatory, while rejecting one which is clean cut and self-explanatory—save to such as are interested in misrepresenting it. For as a Theist is one with a "Theos," or a belief in God, so an Atheist is one without a "Theos" or a belief in God. And when one looks at the matter historically, one realizes that the very currency of the word Agnostic is itself proof of the prevalence of Atheism. Atheism has an historical connotation of evil due to the prevalence and the intoler-

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ance of religious belief. And quite naturally in this country, where moral courage in connection with intellectual affairs is so often lacking, it followed that as Atheism became the dominant characteristic of a growing number of minds, there should be an attempt to find a name of a more "respectable" kind. This relieves people from the pains of a strict conformity without exposing them to the penalties of an uncompromising nonconformity. But this is, after all, a blessing in disguise. It has, in Mr. Robertson's words, saved it "from half-hearted and half-minded patronage." And we may direct Mr. Clodd's attention to the fact that, on the Continent, there is not the same hesitation amongst public men in avowing themselves Atheists. One can imagine the amusement at an International Freethought Conference if one of the speakers described Atheists as extinct.

* * *

Can We Suspend Judgment?

An attempt is often made to justify the use of "Agnostic" by representing it as connoting a suspension of judgment as against the decisive rejection of Atheism. But a suspension about what? We properly suspend judgment when we understand the proposition before us, and where the evidence on either side is indecisive. But is that the case here? Is Mr. Clodd in a state of mental suspense concerning the "gods" of anthropology, that series of magnified non-natural men about which he has himself written? Does he not know as well as anyone that the god of modern religion is no more than a refinement of these savage gods, of whose non-existence he has no doubt whatever? And if we leave out that class of gods, what other god have we? "God," by itself, means nothing; and we cannot suspend judgment on a proposition that is not understood. Or if "God" is used in the sense of "supreme mind," it is surely the height of folly to call a thing mind while denying it all the qualities by which mind is known. "Mind," that does not possess the peculiar qualities of the only mind with which we are acquainted, is not mind at all, but something quite different. Really, between the statement that A does not exist, and the statement that A does exist, but differs in every particular from all the other A's, there is no difference whatever. Statements of this kind do not demand a suspensory state of mind, they deserve and should receive a decisive negative.

* * *

Atheism the Logical Issue.

The only genuine plea for Agnosticism is the one indicated above. It has protected some from the bitterness of the attack on Atheism, and, so far, it may be said, for those who needed it, to have justified its existence. In any other direction it is a decided failure. On the other hand, it has given birth to a "religious Agnosticism" and a "reverent Agnosticism," both of which work hard to prove that they are "truly religious," if only we properly understand that very ambiguous word; and on the other hand, it has provided splendid material for demolition by keen philosophic minds of a religious type, to which attack the only reply of the Agnostic is to use the arguments of a just discarded Atheism. It is not, therefore, the case that the Atheist is extinct. The number of avowed Atheists has always been comparatively small, as was only natural with a word which had to bear the full weight of religious intolerance. But to-day they are more numerous than ever before—more numerous in the sense of those who openly avow their Atheism, and more numerous still in the case of those who prefer to use another, if more misleading, term to describe their position. If these will have it so, they must; but it is strange for a parent to be told that his family is extinct when he sees around him so numerous a progeny.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Bible and Foreign Missions.

RELIGION, in its more primitive form, may be defined as a belief in a supernatural being or beings, on whom man regarded himself as dependent for all he was and had, and to whom he deemed himself responsible for all he did, together with the feelings and practices to which such a belief inevitably gave rise. Originally, no doubt, deities were simply superhuman powers, invisible and impersonal, but conceived of as resembling man's second-self or spirit. Such powers, or beings, personal or impersonal, it must be borne in mind, were never objects of knowledge, the belief in them being the outcome of ignorance and fear. As Professor Gilbert Murray well says, religion owes its origin to a primitive "Age of Ignorance," and one is tempted to regard "Primal Stupidity as the normal beginning of all religion, or almost as the normal raw material out of which religion is made (*Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 16). With this "normal beginning" in mind, we are enabled to appreciate the history of religion, its evolution from stage to stage until it attains to its highest forms in Buddhism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism—from Polydæmonism to Christian Theism. Of the three universalistic religions, Buddhism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism, not one of them really answers to the name. Buddhism has about five hundred millions of adherents; Christianity, some three hundred and a half millions; and Mohammedanism, nearly two hundred and thirty millions. Buddhists, Christians, and Mohammedans number approximately 1,048,000,000, whilst the population of the world is estimated at 1,623,000,000.

It is but fair to mention that Bishop Boyd Carpenter, in an article entitled "The Christian Church," in the tenth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, supplies a table according to which the number of Christians in the year 1896 was 500,000,000, while in statistics found in *Whitaker's Almanac* for 1916, Buddhists number only 138,031,000. In reality, it is wholly immaterial whether Christians or Buddhists are the more numerous, the most important point being that Christianity triumphed over Paganism in the West by forcibly crushing it, while Buddhism won India by means of moral suasion. The disciples of the Prince of Peace went everywhere with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other, while the followers of the Buddha made converts by the simple preaching of the Gospel of Truth and Love. And this brings us to the most vital of all religious facts, namely, that the value of a religion is determined not by the number of its adherents, but by its effect upon character. Both Christians and Mohammedans have always been lovers of war; they have both gained converts at the point of the sword; whereas Buddhism denounces war in all its forms, forbids blood-sacrifice, abolishes slavery, and founds hospitals for man and beast. And yet Christianity pronounces Buddhism a false and dangerous religion, and does its utmost to supplant it, regarding itself as the only true and Divinely revealed way of salvation for a lost and ruined world. It claims to be the only universal or world-religion, and seeks to destroy all other cults in the name of God. The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of the Lord, in which alone is the Divine Will concerning man fully and finally revealed. It was in this belief that the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded upwards of a hundred years ago; and all the great Missionary Societies came into existence because of the conviction firmly held that all non-Christians are under God's wrath and go to hell when they die. The Bible is God's love-gift to a perishing race, the sole true Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to all who hear and believe it.

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Such was the creed of our forefathers a hundred years ago, who did all within their power to make it known to the Heathen World. To-day, however, that theology is held by comparatively very few, with the result that Foreign Missions are no longer looked upon in the light in which they were initiated. To the *Christian Commonwealth* for August 29, the Rev. W. Garrett Horder, of Ealing, contributes a leading article, entitled "The One Standard for Missions," in which he declares that the whole Bible should not be given to the Heathen. The Old Testament, for example, should "be treated as only the early morning, and not the noonday, of the Divine revealings to men." Missionaries ought to realize that the Old Testament is so defective a book that it is not "their duty to translate and present it alongside of the New Testament to those they seek to convert to the Christian faith."

> It is therefore to the last degree important that Christianity should be presented to Heathendom only through its own distinctive message without the shadow cast over its Gospel of grace by some parts of the former Scriptures. Is it not time, therefore, boldly to face the situation and resolve to send to non-Christian peoples the New Testament, or that Testament with only those parts of the Old Testament which are fully in accord with it, such as selected parts of the Psalter from which all imprecatory notes have been excluded, and those passages of the Prophets which run along the line of and are filled with the Gospel spirit?.....For example, it cannot be good for the adherents of other faiths to have presented to them the war-like stories contained in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, which even in Christendom have done much to justify and excite warlike doings. Such stories cannot be brought into harmony with the essential teaching of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Horder is perfectly right and fully justified in calling attention to the impropriety of treating the whole Bible as Divinely inspired and infallible. He assures us that there is no "need to present as infallibly true and therefore to be accepted the Cosmogony presented in the Book of Genesis." As a matter of fact the Mosaic Cosmogony has been scientifically proved to be utterly false; and Canon Driver did not hesitate to admit that the first ten chapters in the Book of Genesis are unhistorical. Mr. Horder proceeds thus:—

> Beyond this there is surely much in the account of the sacrificial worship, described in the Old Testament, which must be repellent, say, to the Buddhist, who recoils from the slaughter of any form of animal life. To him the sacrifice of bulls and goats must seem quite shocking. And since such sacrifice of animal life forms no part of the Christian faith, it is quite needless to bring it before him in a book which is not one of the Christian Scriptures.

Mr. Horder forgets, however, that the sacrificial worship described in the Old Testament is represented as being, not only in complete harmony with the Divine Will, but ordained and enjoined by Jehovah. The reverend gentleman does not condemn the Jewish sacrificial system as absolutely futile as well as horribly cruel, but merely points out that to a Buddhist it would seem quite shocking. But is it not, and should it not seem quite so to all alike? Mr. Horder says that "such sacrifice of animal life forms no part of the Christian faith"; but is he not aware that the Christian faith is utterly discredited in the eyes of thoughtful people by its account of the more than shocking sacrifice of the innocent Son of God? The Jews offered not only peace-offerings, but holocausts, unto God to get rid of their sins, and that practice was discontinued only because the sinless God-man was immolated on Heaven's altar in order that he might become the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, without which reconciliation with the angry Sovereign of the Universe would have been eternally impossible. In this sacrifice Mr. Horder sees nothing shocking or immoral. The Gospel message which he wants Heathendom to hear and believe is that God accepted the sacrificial offering on Calvary as the external ground on which he could receive into his favour and fully pardon the rebels of the fall. Why, the New Testament is an infinitely more dangerous document than the Old, and should never be sent to Heathen lands. Dr. T. R. Glover recently said with pride that Christianity is not good conduct, nor escape from hell, but "Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ nailed to the cross." "The cross of Christ," he added, "is the great central fact of our religion. To Paul it was the centre of all his preaching, as well as of his philosophy and theology, and personal religion." That is entirely true. In Christianity there are but two plain facts, namely, the historical Jesus, and the historical Cross; and without the latter the former is of no significance. Christians are dependent upon no vague, nebulous, ethical principle, but upon a slain, buried, and risen Saviour-God. Our loving Heavenly Father could not have accepted and forgiven one of us had not his only begotten and beloved Son offered himself a ransom for us all. Such is Christianity, and to ask an honest Buddhist to substitute it for his own religion is to inflict upon him the worst possible insult.

There are true and beautiful passages in the Old Testament in both poetry and prose; but its central conception of Jehovah is cruel, and wicked, and degrading. In the New Testament there are extremely few paragraphs which charm us, while the central story in both Gospels and Epistles is fundamentally incredible, being an outrage upon reason, an insufferable affront to the moral sense, and an unpardonable offence against God, if he exists.

The Bible, the whole Bible, must be put in the same category as all other Sacred Books, and Christianity must be looked upon as one of many similar religions, as mythical in its nature, and as destined to pass away, discredited, as the others.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Ineffable Mr. Wells.

> It is not only our enemies, those desperate characters, it is we ourselves who know not what we do; thence springs the glimmering hope that perhaps we do better than we think.
> —*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

> Thou art a worthy man, notwithstanding that there be some do call thee the Ratter.—*The Chronicles of Artemas.*

Clothed in motley, and banging a bladder, Mr. H. G Wells has for years frequented the camp of the Army of Human Liberation. A licensed jester, his quips and cranks often amused the soldiers of progress. Latterly, however, his jibes have taken a bitter tone, especially since he has "found God"; or, perhaps, "God" has found him. Maybe, they have found each other. And the mutual recognition of two such distinguished personalities has been an event of newspaper importance. For, like so many worthy folk in similar condition, Mr. Wells has proceeded to make himself a public nuisance. One of his pastimes, since his conversion, has been the hurling of insults at his former associates; and, curiously, his jibes have taken the familiar form of the stock arguments of those polite patterers, the Christian Evidence Society lecturers. Presumably, Mr. Wells' conversion has depressed his levity, for the process reminds us of how Edward Gibbon, the historian, learnt Greek "at the cost of many tears and not a little blood."

As a popular novelist, Mr. Wells has a numerous following, not so large as that of Miss Ethel Dell or Mr. Charles Garvice, but still respectable in point of numbers. Therefore it would be unwise to ignore him

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altogether. What needs comment is his rehashing of the stale objections which have done so much service on so many Christian pulpits and platforms, particularly when he says, in *God the Invisible King*, that "without God the service of man is no better than a hobby or a sentimentalism or an hypocrisy in the undisciplined prison of the mortal life." Since this fatuous utterance, Mr. Wells has gone out of his way to taunt Freethinkers with their lack of philanthropic work, and with having no charitable and educational institutions in connection with their movement. He adds, further, that the "professed Atheists and Agnostics" he has known "have been careful and comfortable people—and just a little self-righteous."

Such remarks show that Mr. Wells knows very little of the movement with which he was for a few months associated. Freethought is a poor, struggling cause, its members are comparatively few and scattered; and it has no wealthy endowments to lessen the current cost of a national propaganda. Still, the Freethought Party does manage to relieve its necessitous members; and the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund is well supported, and is probably the only fund which is administered without a single farthing of expense. Until a short time ago it was not possible to bequeath money for Freethought purposes with any real prospect of the trust being carried into effect, as it was in the power of the next-of-kin to invalidate the legacy on the ground that it was illegal. The recent Bowman Case has altered this; but Freethought was robbed of thousands of pounds before this memorable legal victory.

Let Mr. Wells ponder the case of Stephen Girard, the famous American Freethinker. At his death, this large-hearted man left large bequests to charities, the principal being a munificent endowment of an orphanage. By express provision in his will, no ecclesiastic, or minister of religion, was to hold any connection with the college, or even to be admitted as a visitor: but the staff of the institution were required to instruct the pupils in secular morality and leave them to adopt their own religious opinions. This will has been most shamefully perverted, for the officials are all Christians, and, in order to keep within the letter of the law, only laymen are so employed.

Does Mr. Wells know that Florence Nightingale, "the lady with the lamp," who ministered to the poor soldiers in the Crimea, was a heretic? Has this one-time Fabian and former Rationalist never heard of Walt Whitman, who spent four years of his life in attending the war-hospitals during the American Civil War, and who wrecked his superb constitution by his untiring devotion to his suffering fellows? And what of Robert Owen, who not only built the first infant schools, and improved the dwellings of his workpeople, but sought to construct the ideal society of the future? Mr. Wells ought to have heard of University College School, which was founded by Freethinkers to further the principles of Secular Education. Even the activities of the Humanitarian League, which has done such magnificent work in so many humanistic directions for a quarter of a century, should be sufficient to silence Mr. Wells in his campaign of insult and calumny.

Other names leap to the memory. Thomas Paine pleaded for the abolition of slavery; advocated the freedom of the press, the extension of the suffrage to the people, the provision of old-age pensions for the poor. He besought the French Republic not to imitate the bad example of Monarchy, and not to stain itself with blood. Was it "sentimentalism" or "hypocrisy" that caused Paine to nearly lose his own life by pleading for humanity? Shelley, the Atheist poet, was a thorough humanitarian. To help the needy and to relieve the sick seemed to him a simple duty, which he carried out cheerfully. He inquired personally into the circumstances of his charities, visited the sick in their homes, and kept a list of poor persons whom he assisted. At Marlow he suffered from acute ophthalmia, contracted whilst visiting the afflicted lace-makers in their cottages. So practical was Shelley that he even went to the length of attending a London hospital in order to acquire medical knowledge that should prove of service to the sick he visited. Is this a further example of Freethought "hypocrisy?"

Mr. Wells is guilty of the worst form of cant. As a Socialist, he ought to know that charity is very good in its way, but what the world wants is justice. If the world were run on fair and reasonable lines there would be no occasion for philanthropy to exist. If, however, belief in God is necessary to make a man a humanitarian, how comes it that the votes of the bishops in the House of Lords is a shameful record? Scores of measures for the bettering of the conditions of the working-classes have been opposed by these God-believing ecclesiastics. Nothing but self-interest excites their action. None even voted for the abolition of the flogging of women in prison, or for the abolition of the whip in the Army and Navy. Since Mr. Wells himself has "found God" his manners have worsened. Perhaps he remembers the legal advice, "no case, abuse the plaintiff's attorney." By attempting to discredit Freethought, he shields, in a measure, his newly-found "god" from the searchlights of rational criticism.

Like Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Wells has a taste for taking things easily. He likes to patronize new ideas without losing the advantages arising from friendliness towards the old ones. He prefers to enter the arena when the fighting is nearly over, and to share in the victories that were won by better men than himself. Kid-glove reformers, like Mr. Wells, have never been wanting when all danger is over. Their function is to rebuke and insult the pioneers, and to enjoy the social, political, and financial profits of this ingenious policy. It is said that Mr. Wells receives handsome cheques from his publishers for his writings. We do not grudge him his thirty pieces of silver, which should be the rate for his attacks on his Freethought friends, many of whom have grown grey in the service of humanity.

MIMNERMUS.

In the Clouds.

THE dreamer, the idealist, poet, reformer, etc., is often accused of having his mental habitation in the clouds, and the accusation is often quite justified. Such is one extreme. There is the other, as Burns expressed it in "The Bard's Epitaph":—

> Reader attend, whether thy soul
> Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
> Or, darkling, grubs this earthly hole
> In low pursuit;
> Know, prudent cautious self-control
> Is wisdom's root.

Ruskin was an intensely practical man, but the artist in him was for ever finding fresh beauties in the skies, and he spoke reprovingly of the many who were so dull and indifferent to the mutable majesty of that inverted dome. Shade and shape and hue, the gleams of morning and the glow of eve, the noon's triumphal splendours, were to him a perpetual delight; he speculated on the "Beyond," but did not let it disturb the philosophical tranquillity of his mind; sufficient for him was the order

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and artistry of Nature's magnificent and spacial interior. Shelley did justice to the cloud, Byron to the moon, Shakespeare to the stars. But what poet of any eminence has not soared mentally in all the regions of space, and returned to earth bringing with him the music of the spheres. Lesser writers have smaller horizons, but such, in their degree, at times, may rest and luxuriate, and survey with quiet pride their house beautiful. Others, again, are more hard to please, and seek out inventions such as those of whom a mordant rhymer said:—

> We must please the pious crowd
> With mansions in a cloud
> And a kingdom in the far-off Milky Way.

The present writer awoke the other moment from a deep dream of peace—a noonday snooze, in fact—and behold! the beauty of the clouds and azure made him sigh with delight.

> Wonderful, wonderful, and more wonderful!

There was a prowling wind, and the sound of an intermittent pressure on the window-sash. It was what in summer is called "broken weather"—local showers, sunshine, and a soft, far-seen purity of atmosphere. Great white cumulous clouds moved slowly apart on a serene expanse of deepest blue, or came together, diffused, and were leaden grey again even as one looked. Elsewhere were lesser strips of azure and seeming plateaus, sunlit, in the celestial Alps, and innumerable azure lakes with light brown and golden shores, or darkening and lightening in varied shades; and now and then the white sunlight flashed, fanlike, as the great panorama moved and changed. What regions consecrate, what undiscovered country, shadowland, fairyland, never-never land, illusion land, and dreamland; yet land of rest and true and natural delight! One looks, and looks again; fresh and sweet and eternally young, the largesse of that gracious dome refreshes eye and heart and mind; one feels young, refreshed, renewed; one is happy; even external lines of care are smoothed away; one thinks of Wordsworth's line:—

> And beauty born of murmuring sound
> Shall pass into her face.

Some sea-washed rampart hills bound the western view, a mere mass of granite and heather, with tall central peaks piercing the cloud and perusing the azure skies, a rough and rocky isle, yet clad in soft aerial-tinted robe, reclining in slumberous adolescence, or chaste and wistful like awakening womanhood in a maiden's eyes. In the moist, clear twilight, also, new and nameless investitures are seen. In their dim chamber of the West the hills seem sinking into rest, and white "blanket" clouds, with kindly stealth, have stolen from behind to wrap them for repose; or, pausing midway, permit the view of royalty while the light remains. Light detached vapours here and there float and cling around the sleeping hills. But it requires an Anatole France to do justice to such a scene. For instance, in a Neapolitan passage in *Sylvestre Bonnard*, he says: "A single lamp burned in the niche of a Madonna. The purity and transparency of the air gave a celestial softness and clearness to the very darkness itself, and one could find one's way without difficulty under such a limpid night." Such I had been trying—vainly—to say; but there it is in the easy touch of "the master's hand."

There are "white-caps" on the waves suggesting Tennyson's Greek fire in his cosmic lines:—

> The moanings of the homeless sea,
> The sound of streams that swift or slow,
> Draw down the hard Aonian hills,
> And sow the dust of continents to be.

One by one the lights are extinguished round the couch of beauty in the West; shapes dissolve and colours fade; but we can still, with Keats,—

> .....Behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
> Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance.

Anon to sleep till wakes the smiling morn of a world diurnally renewed.

A. Millar.

Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

VIII.

(Continued from p. 555.)

In 1837 the French Academy appointed a commission to examine the marvels presented by blindfold subjects who had been submitted to what was called animal magnetism. All their pretensions were dissipated; there was neither magnetism nor any power of second sight. This report was disputed. Dr. Buden then offered a prize of 3,000 francs to any person, somnambulist or otherwise, who could read without the use of his eyes. Six candidates from different parts of France presented themselves, for animal magnetism and somnambulism were then epidemic. A new commission was appointed; new failures occurred. Trials went on until October, 1840, when at the close of a series of ignominious failures, in which the tricks of each pretender in succession were unmasked, the Academy decided that it would no longer take notice of any communication relative to the imposture and folly, miscalled animal magnetism and clairvoyance. The same thing occurred with Sir James Simpson, who twenty years afterwards, when similar pretences were rife in the United Kingdom, and somnambulists and clairvoyants and thought-readers were again taking the field, offered to present a £50 note, which he had locked in a box and placed in a bank, to anyone who could read the number as the note lay in the box. It was never claimed. Mr. Labouchere's similar experiment with the so-called thought-reader Bishop is of quite recent date, but was performed under much less rigid conditions, and by a person whose pretensions, although they excited a great deal of attention, were more than usually absurd.—*Dr. Ernest Hart*, "*The New Witchcraft*," pp. 23-24.

Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, who has made a careful analysis of Mrs. Piper's trance phenomena, running to a volume of 650 pages, comes to the conclusion that "however true it may be that there is really communication between the living and the dead, the intelligence communicating directly through Mrs. Piper's organism is Mrs. Piper."[1] And she cites the testimony of Professor William James, who favoured the idea of the spirits communicating through Mrs. Piper—"all being dream creations of Mrs. Piper, probably having no existence except when she is in a trance, but consolidated by repetition into personalities consistent enough to play their several roles'."[2]

How, then, can we account for Mrs. Piper's success as a medium for so many years, and for the unbounded confidence reposed in her by men like Sir Oliver Lodge? Upon what facts is this confidence based?

As we have seen, Mrs. Piper has made no revelations in science; her efforts in astronomy were utterly childish and puerile. Her attempts at prophecy have turned out to be ridiculously wide of the mark. She has never revealed a scrap of useful knowledge in all the years of her mediumship.

Mr. Podmore, who made a long and exhaustive examination of Mrs. Piper's trance utterances, observes that "her real strength lies in describing the diseases, personal idiosyncrasies, thoughts, feelings, and character of the sitter and his friends; their loves, hates, quarrels, sympathies, and mutual relationships in general; trivial but insignificant incidents in their past histories, and the like. Not only is information on such points as these more difficult to acquire by normal means, but it

[1] *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, part lxxi., vol. xxviii., p. 5.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 5.

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is much more difficult to retain in the memory."[1] Well, if we grant that though difficult, it was not impossible, to acquire the information sought in a natural way, and credit Mrs. Piper with a very capable memory, there is no need for any supernormal explanation, especially if we consider her method of imparting her trance revelations. For, as Podmore further points out:—

> Her trance personality does not commonly deal in precise and categorical statements of fact; names are frequently uttered or written piecemeal and in tentative form; diseases are diagnosed by symptons often by no means distinctive; persons are indicated by descriptions of a dubious kind; incidents and relationships are shadowed forth by obscure and inadequate hints. In a word, the information given is very generally incomplete or of uncertain meaning, and needs expert interpretation.[2]

Yes, and it is "expert interpretation" that can always be relied upon from the believers in Mrs. Piper.

Podmore, in stating his difference of opinion with Professor Hyslop in regard to Mrs. Piper, concludes: "I cannot point to a single instance in which a precise and unambiguous piece of information has been furnished of a kind which could not have proceeded from the medium's own mind, working upon the materials provided and the hints let drop by the sitter. I agree with Professor Hyslop in rejecting telepathy as the explanation of these latest revelations, not, however, as being inadequate, but as being superfluous. I do not ask the reader to accept my judgment on the case. The point of the illustration is that a subject in which it is possible for two honest and fairly competent investigators from the same set of facts to deduce such divergent conclusions is clearly not yet sufficiently advanced to serve as a basis for any but the most modest generalizations."[3]

We have given instances of the uniform failure of mediums to answer test questions, notably in the case of Mrs. Verrall's and Myers' test letter; and, as Podmore observes:—

> A weighty objection to accepting Mrs. Piper's trance personalities at their own valuation is that they have again and again failed to answer the test questions put to them, and that the manner of their failure has often proved more fatal to their claim than the failure itself. Thus, the *soi-disant* (spirit of) Hannah Wild on several occasions dictated (through Mrs. Piper) what professed to be a copy of the contents of a sealed letter written by the real Hannah Wild before her death, for the express purpose of the test; and all these versions were entirely wide of the mark.[4]

In conclusion, Podmore declares: "It is impossible to believe that in these trance utterances (of Mrs. Piper) we are listening to authentic and unembarrassed messages from the dead." But Sir Oliver Lodge finds no difficulty in believing it and in trying to foist his belief on everybody else.

Sir Oliver Lodge tells us that Mrs. Piper has revealed things while in a state of trance that she had no knowledge of during her ordinary state. For instance, he claims that the spirit of Dr. Phinuit—through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper—recognized a ring worn by Lady Lodge as having been given to Sir Oliver Lodge for her by an aunt shortly before her death. He also called for a locket that Lady Lodge sometimes wears, but was not wearing at the time, which had belonged to her father forty years ago, and many similar insignificant and useless facts. Sir Oliver Lodge declares that Mrs. Piper did not know, and could not have known, the facts concerning these articles. "But," as Dr. Mercier very pertinently points out, "what opportunity had Dr. Phinuit of knowing these things? We have no evidence except Mrs. Piper's assertion that Dr. Phinuit ever existed even in the spirit; and we have no evidence at all that he ever existed in the flesh.....Now it is significant that though we do not know what opportunities Dr. Phinuit had of studying the Lodge family, we do know something of the opportunities that Mrs. Piper had of studying it. Mrs. Piper seems to have been a frequent visitor of the Lodges. She stayed in their house, on one visit for nine days, and on another for five days, at a time; and *neither Mrs. Piper nor Sir Oliver Lodge has ever been cross-examined with respect to these visits.*"[1]

As Dr. Mercier further remarks, when ladies stay in the same house on intimate terms they sometimes visit one another in their respective bedrooms, and then it is usual for the visitor to admire her hostess's possessions, and to go into little raptures over them; and upon this encouragement the hostess may relate how the trinket that is so sweet came into her possession, or what its history is. Or Mrs. Piper may have gained the knowledge from the daughter of the house, who may have been wearing the trinkets for the time being. Or she may have picked up the information during the course of ordinary conversation. All sorts of topics turn up in conversation when a guest is staying in the house, and it would be quite possible for Mrs. Piper to turn the conversation on to the subject of trinkets such as these, for the express purpose of using the information during her trance sittings.

This is borne out by the fact, noticed by Dr. Mercier, that: "As Phinuit, or Mrs. Piper, I think we may as well give him his proper name, becomes more and more intimate with the Lodge family, the skilful guesses and well-directed shots either become fewer, or they become better directed, for mistakes are better avoided, and 'fishing' becomes less conspicuous."

Dr. Mercier asks Sir Oliver to point out "where the necessity is for the performance of a miracle?" and proceeds:—

> For let there be no mistake, no misunderstanding. What you assert is the occurrence of the miraculous. You may call Dr. Phinuit a "discarnate intelligence" and his knowledge supernormal, but I submit to you that a discarnate intelligence is another name for a ghost or spook; and supernormal is another name for supernatural or miraculous. Can you deny it? Do you deny it? If so, please point out the difference between a discarnate intelligence and a spook, between what is merely supernormal and what is supernatural and miraculous. I suggest that you avoid the old and well-known and well-established words because they are discredited, and you as "a scientific" man are ashamed to use them; and I suggest that you use the terms discarnate intelligence and supernormal to soften down the shock that your readers would receive from the use of ghost or spook, or supernatural or miraculous, and to make them suppose that what you ask them to believe is something less than a ghost, and something less than a miracle.[2]

In his latest book, *Raymond* (named after Sir Oliver Lodge's youngest son, who was killed at the Front in 1915), Sir Oliver Lodge claims that he was forewarned by the spirits of the impending death of his son, the spirits also informing him of the existence of a photograph of Raymond, in a group, taken while serving in France, and of which the family were previously quite unaware.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

[1] Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 341-342.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 344.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. ii., pp. 346-346.
[4] *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 346.

[1] Dr. Charles A. Mercier, *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge* (1917), pp. 114-115. The italics are Dr. Mercier's.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 118-119.

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Acid Drops.

We seriously call the attention of the House of Convocation, Upper and Lower, the Free Church Council, and the clergy generally, to the spell of wet weather we have experienced. It is a matter that calls for explanation. The effect on the home-grown food supply is disastrous, and to produce food is now an urgent necessity of the nation. We are fighting "God's fight," says the Bishop of London, and it is only fair that he should do his share. But to attack our food supply is to help Germany—there is no doubt about that. And whether our food is diminished by Germans in submarines, or by Providence through incessant rain, the result is the same. Providence, in blasting the English harvest, is helping Germany. That is the plain logic of the situation. We know what would be thought of Haig if he destroyed the ammunition needed for the Army. What will the clergy say of God, who is destroying the food of the British people?

We cannot, of course, acquit God of responsibility for the weather. That would be quite atheistic. And as not a sparrow falls to the ground without God's cognizance, there must be some "providential message" in so many hundred tons of water being sent at the wrong time. So we can quite sympathize with a writer in the *Church Times* for August 31: "When military operations of the first order are frustrated by rain in July, and a harvest of phenomenal promise and importance is threatened with ruin by rain in August, we must ask what gentler warning God could give us of the helplessness of independent human effort?" God is anxious to show us that we must not do without him—not because we cannot, for obviously, if he had left the weather alone, we might have gone on all right, but because we must not. And if we won't take notice of him, then he sends us a gentle warning, with, presumably, worse things to follow.

And that is just the trouble with gods. They demand so much attention, and if they don't get it immediately start upsetting things. One must be always telling them they are great, and good, and holy, and wise, not because one knows they are anything of the kind, but just because we think it pleases them, and they will get "riled" if we act otherwise. And there is one thing about gods, you can't pile the flattery on too thickly. Lord Beaconsfield said that all people were open to flattery, and when you got to the throne you could put it on with a trowel. When you get above the throne you can discard even the trowel, and when flattering the gods can pile on by the hogshead. What the world needs is a God who will attend to his own business, and not need eternally reminding of little things here and there, or getting into a temper and upsetting the weather because we haven't paid sufficient attention to him.

Another letter on the same subject appears, also in the *Church Times*, above the signature, "Francis M. Downton, Temple Balsall." We are convinced that Mr. Downton is a clergyman, or holds a brief for the clergy. The gist of his communication may be expressed in the following terms: God has made us for himself, and yet our practical contempt of him is notorious; his worship is the purpose of our existence, but we deliberately neglect his worship and live exclusively for ourselves. Indeed, our defiance of God and the ordinances of his house is our greatest sin. We spend his holy day for our own pleasure, abandoning the Church which he himself has founded, and in which his glory dwells. Well, the truth is that nothing we do can prosper without God's blessing, and that blessing will be withheld until we repent. *The harvest is now seriously menaced by wind and rain because of our national apostacy from Divine worship.* Therefore, if he wish to save the harvest, let us forthwith return to our God, *realizing "that there can be no work of national importance to compare with the offering of the Holy Eucharist on Sunday and obedience to the laws which are bound up with it."* And this is the twentieth century!

The Bishop of Peterborough has been holding services in Leicestershire, and has been walking from village to village. This form of locomotion is so unusual for a bishop that the press has been publishing paragraphs concerning the right reverend Father-in-God's heroism.

The week ended with a burst of fierce fighting in Flanders. At home the clergy are still busy at their old pastime of fierce talking.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley says that Demos is a "new god." Has Mr. Wells' deity been put on the shelf already?

The story of the three angels who were seen in the sky with the word "Peace" written across them appears to have impressed many pious people. It seems a pity that the celestial advertisement did not add the date on which peace will be ushered in.

The Bishop of London has been visiting some of the naval bases. We thought he was paid to attend to the foundations of belief.

A contemporary asks why Freethought is banned by the press. The answer is that newspapers are money-making enterprises, and have no concern with truth. As Lowell says, the pious editor does not believe in principle, but has great concern in interest.

A contemporary points out a schoolboy's howler from a scholar's story: "The parson sat writing his sermon in his sanctumonium." When that boy grows up he will learn that the dear clergy often buy their sermons ready for use.

Following the lead of the Bishop of St. Asaph, some of the more influential Church members of North Wales are still resisting as far as possible the movement to erect new science buildings at Bangor College as a memorial to the soldiers of North Wales. The Hon. Alice Pennant, whilst admitting in a press letter that this object is an "excellent" one, prefers "a military school for sons and brothers of men killed in the war, with facilities for religious education." She does not support Mr. R. J. Thomas's scheme, because "Whereas it has been proved by military statistics that between 60 and 70 per cent. of Welshmen in the Army are Churchmen, it is therefore impossible to feel it can be a suitable memorial to them to send a subscription to that institution in North Wales, which hopes and intends (at the end of the war) to profit by a share in the plunder of the Church to which they belonged." And so an "excellent" object fails to enlist her sympathy because it will inadvertently receive from the State a small portion of what the Church previously considered it consistent with its dignity to accept. The lady's action is easy to understand, but difficult to appreciate.

Even if the military statistics are accepted, the hon. lady is forgetting the 30 per cent. who, it is more than possible, would have some very pointed comments to make on the scheme launched by the 70 per cent. loyal Churchmen. Now, Mr. Thomas's scheme is not only admittedly "excellent"—it is *unsectarian*. We submit that this is its very fault. But to return to the figures. In pre-War days it is well known that the Established Church recruits always bulked in statistics handsomely by means of methods known to anyone who took the trouble to inquire. Now that we have a conscript Army, such statistics must bear a reasonable relation to the actual figures of membership of the various religious bodies. Now, does anyone believe that the Established Church members number from 60 to 70 per cent. of the population of Wales? The Army statisticians have, in fact, got themselves into a very laughable quandary—so laughable, indeed, that we think there is very little likelihood of the religious returns of the Army ever being made public.

It is astonishing what a difference, in the estimation of Christian writers, it makes when a nation goes to war—on the right side. A writer in the *Christian World* dealing with China's declaration of war against Germany, says that China "with her wide tolerance, her intellect, her industry, her

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democratic tendencies, her sweet reasonableness and love of peace," etc. We are not disputing the possession of these qualities by the Chinese; on the contrary, it is only what we ourselves have said years ago. Only the statement reads curiously in view of our missionary activity in China, and the way in which the Western Powers have treated her. Does it look as though the people possessing the national characteristics indicated above have anything to learn worth learning, in morals or sociology, from that Western world which is offering us the present spectacle?

A writer in the *Sunday Herald* says "the approbation of celibacy as the highest spiritual condition still lingers among the clergy." This reminds us of Horace Smith's caustic definition of celibacy as "a vow a man takes that he will enjoy none but other men's wives."

A firm of London laundrymen advertise that they are "launderers to the House of Lords." Does this firm wash the fine lawn sleeves of the lordly followers of the poor Carpenter of Nazareth?

The *Newspaper World* reports that 563 papers have increased their price owing to war conditions. Many of these periodicals are seen in the service of religion, which is supposed to be "without money and without price."

Professional defenders of the Christian superstition are endeavouring to impress people that the War is helping, and not retarding, religion. Referring to the religious opinions of soldiers, Mr. A. K. Yapp, the National Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, made the following remark: "You can't always judge Tommy by his language, and I believe there is more religion in his blasphemy than in the Kaiser's pious utterances." If profanity be a proof of piety, the Young Men's Christian Association had better help in repealing the Blasphemy Laws.

The United States has put an embargo on the export of sulphur. So far, it has not reduced the amount of brimstone in sermons and Sunday-school addresses.

We are not opposed to the celebration of the 400th anniversary of Luther's defiance of the Pope, because we regard the Protestant Reformation as marking one of the earliest stages in the disintegration of the Christian religion, which has been going on more or less steadily ever since. "A Scottish Churchman," however, objects to the proposed celebration on the ground that "Luther's German God is our Devil." But "A Scottish Churchman" forgets, surely, that prior to the outbreak of the War the German God was our British God as well. Was not Luther's martial hymn often sung in our places of worship? Writing as recently as 1908, did not the late Right Rev. Dr. Wilkinson, Bishop of North and Central Europe, hold up the Germans as a people whose Christian piety was of a superior order to our own? Did he not also find the source of Germany's greatness as a world-power in the fact that she had adopted "religious education in all her primary and secondary schools"? "A Scottish Churchman's" judgment is evidently blinded by prejudice and bigotry, as is admitted even by the *Christian World*, though our contemporary itself suffers more or less from the same affliction.

The Rev. Rhondda Williams relates how a bankrupt fishmonger, whose deficiency was £1,000, excused himself on the plea "that he had been unable to give proper attention to business because of his devotion to theological studies." Such a scoundrel deserves severest castigation; but Mr. Williams is radically wrong when he says that if Paul had been the official receiver he would have condemned his conduct in the most scathing terms. Probably; but then the man could have sheltered behind the apostle's exhortation in Colossians iii. 1-4, and thus break the force of his rule in Romans xii. 11. If a man's mind is fixed upon the things that are above, he is bound to be slothful in relation to the things which are on the earth. A wonderful storehouse of practical contradictions is the Bible, and it would be passing strange if among them all any man failed to find "a present help" in trouble.

The Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A., of Marylebone Presbyterian Church, London, claimed, in a recent interview, which appears in the *Christian World* for August 30, that "the general outlook for the Churches is not so discouraging"; that "the Churches show a steadfastness which is surprising," though it is true that "some people have left us since the War, men and women of vague beliefs and sentimental attachments," whom the Church can perhaps "afford to lose." Bear in mind that those are the words of a man of God who is love, of a minister of Christ who died for the ungodly in order to save them. Evidently, Mr. Gillie's heart is empty of that saving love of which his Master's heart is said to be full to overflowing.

How shallow and illusory is Mr. Gillie's optimism. This is what he said:—

> Of course, I do not forget the discouraging fact that Anglican Free Churches alike appeal to only a limited minority of the general population.

If that sentence is not a virtual confession that the Church, in the character of a God-filled institution, is the most dismal failure in history, what on earth is it? Christianity has been at work in this land for fifteen or sixteen hundred years, and yet in this twentieth century it "appeals to only a limited minority of the general population." The wonder of wonders is that, with that undoubted fact staring them in the face, men like Mr. Gillie, have the timerity to affirm that "the general outlook for the Churches is not so discouraging."

Criticizing the Archbishop of Canterbury's attitude on the question of reprisals in war, the *Globe* indulges in some hard hitting, and concludes: "Stand out of our way and leave us to protect the children your prayers are powerless to save."

For sixty-three years vicar of the City Church of St. Mary, Aldermanbury, the Rev. C. C. Collins has resigned at the age of ninety-one. Interviewed by a London journalist, Mr. Collins said that the resident population of his parish was about 97, and the congregation "pitiably small—mostly caretakers." Such is religion in the heart of the capital of the Empire.

The *Daily Telegraph* has unearthed some pre-war sermons (June, 1914), of the German Chancellor, Dr. Michaelis, which prove that there is no doubt of his Christianity. In one of these sermons he is reported as saying, in view of the great struggle that lay before the German people:—

> If we go into this fight by ourselves, with our selfish nature, relying on our own strength, we shall suffer shipwreck. There is only possibility, but that is a perfect one. There was One who renounced everything. Who from self-less love gave up His life for others, and Who has told us, "I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you." That is a mighty struggle which goes on within us. Let it be laid to all who have not fought it out to the end. It needs more courage than all the things of which people think that they demand bravery from us. It needs more courage to place oneself decisively on the side of Jesus, and to vow and render Him unconditional obedience, come what may, than it does to fight one's first Mensur (students' duel), or to confront an excited Parliament, or to approach a refined and noble woman, and ask her to be one's own, or to do any of the other things which are regarded in our life as signs of pluck. All that is nothing in comparison with the decision in our life for Christ with all its consequences. But this course we must attain, and only those who have this courage, and then obediently tread the path which God shows them, are the men of whom God can make use.

Presumably, the *Daily Telegraph* has some hazy notion that these utterances prove the hypocrisy of Dr. Michaelis. We see in them nothing of the kind. All we see is that Christianity will lend itself to the dominant passion, whether of a man or of a nation. That is one of its greatest evils. Whether one desires to murder a fellow human being or help him, either can be done in the name of Christianity. And this is not hypocrisy. It is evidence only that in matters of conduct there is no more misleading guide possible than Christianity.

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A "Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

AT the opening of the fourth year of war circumstances again compel me to invite contributions towards a *Freethinker* Sustentation Fund.

It has fallen to my lot to control this paper during three of the most difficult years it has ever experienced. During the first year, my chief concern was to guard it against adverse circumstances, such as caused many papers to disappear altogether. The second year brought with it a great and rapid increase in the cost of production. As was stated last year, this extra cost amounted to about £6 per week, but in spite of that, the deficit on the year was only £175. This was quickly made good through the generosity of the paper's readers, and a balance left in hand. As for some years the *Freethinker* had barely met, by sales, the cost of production, the amount of the deficit indicated a distinct advance.

I was then hoping that affairs had reached their worst, even if no improvement occurred. During the past year, however, there has been a still further all-round rise in cost, the most serious item being that of paper, which now stands at about four times the pre-war figure. The result is that, instead of the deficit being lower than last year, it has been increased to just over £250, which I am seeking to make good by means of a Special Fund.

Two things should be borne in mind in connection with this deficit. First, the increase represents only a portion of the added cost of production during the past year. Part of it has been met by a rising circulation. We are thus advancing in spite of all obstacles. Second, the old Honorarium Fund (which was really a Sustentation Fund) and realized £300 per year, has been dropped since I assumed the Editorship. Thus the call upon the friends of the paper is still less than was necessary in the pre-war period.

I believe that all who appreciate the difficulties of the situation will agree that the deficit is smaller than might have been anticipated. Even to exist in these times is an achievement, and I feel proud of the fact that during the three years of war the *Freethinker* has maintained both its size and price unchanged. What that means in the shape of worry and watchfulness will be recognized by all who have observed the plans adopted by the whole of the newspaper press. Scores of papers have gone under in the struggle, and there is scarcely a propagandist organ that has not either raised its price or appealed for financial help—some have done both. Thus, so well established a paper as the *Clarion* has found it necessary to raise a fund of between £2,000 and £3,000, and the *Christian Commonwealth* has raised nearly £2,000 in addition to doubling the price of the journal. It is possible that the paper shortage may necessitate some economy in the size of the *Freethinker* in the future, but any alteration will be delayed until the last moment.

With regard to the deficit, it should be stated that the whole of the sum is represented by a debt owing to me. The *Freethinker* has no reserve capital—nor, for that matter, have I. The modest amount I agreed to take as Editor and contributor has remained unpaid since October last, and this, together with money borrowed on my personal security for the use of the paper, represents the whole of the deficit. Otherwise the *Freethinker* is free of debt. All demands, including payments to contributors, have been met as they became due. This, I think, is the better way of conducting business.

Of course, the loss on the paper might have been met by a rise in price, say from twopence to threepence. This, had I consulted my personal convenience only, would have saved me a lot of anxiety, and also spared me the unwelcome task of making this appeal. But I thought, and still think, that the interests of the Cause which the *Freethinker* represents are best served by keeping the price unchanged. So far, this policy has been quite justified by results. The circulation of the *Freethinker* is to-day larger than it has been for some years, and, I think, it is exerting a wider and deeper influence. Its contents, week after week, show what a large and able staff of writers the paper has at its service; in this direction the *Freethinker* still maintains its reputation for what its late editor called "fundamental brain work." Newsagents show a greater readiness to display the paper for sale, and the wholesale agents handle it with greater freedom. But for the tremendous increase in the cost of production, the *Freethinker* would now be paying its way, and a Special Fund unnecessary. When normal conditions return I have hopes of placing the paper on a self-supporting basis. That is the end I set myself when I assumed editorial and financial responsibility, and that ambition will not be lightly surrendered. At any rate, to find the *Freethinker* in its present position after three years of war is an achievement that carries great promise for the future.

It is only proper to say that the present position of the paper is largely due to the number of its readers who have done gallant service in securing new subscribers. Many have worked with a will in this direction, and I take this opportunity of once more thanking them most heartily for all they have done.

Hard as the fight has been, and is, I am not at all discouraged; quite the contrary. The difficulties have been greater than were anticipated, but they have been met with a success that is striking in view of the prevailing circumstances. It is, therefore, with the utmost confidence in the paper and in the loyalty of its readers, that I am asking the help of all who appreciate the value of the *Freethinker* to the "best of causes." It has kept the flag flying during these three disastrous years, and has served as a rallying point for Freethinkers at home, and with the Army and Navy in every part of the war area. It has made new friends and many converts; and what it has done in the face of conditions that made many of its friends dubious of its power to survive, is a promise of better things under more favourable circumstances. But the *Freethinker* has not only survived, it is stronger than ever; and I feel, therefore, it may be safely said that it has a legitimate claim upon all who believe in and appreciate the work it is doing.

Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to me, and addressed Editor, *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4. Full acknowledgment of all subscriptions received will be made in the *Freethinker*, the accounts of which are under the supervision of an official accountant.

The first list of subscriptions to date will appear next week, and I have every confidence that it will be one that will give increased confidence to all who have at heart the welfare of the great Cause which this paper represents.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The vicar was away, and the *locum tenens*, on his arrival in the vestry on the first Sunday, found the organ blower—a regular character—awaiting him.

"Well, what is your exact position here, my man?" asked the clergyman.

"Well, sir," was the reply, "some folk calls me a sextant, some says as I'm a beetle, but the vicar 'e always calls me a virgin."—*Raymond Blathwayt, "Through Life and Round the World."*

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To Correspondents.

J. BURRELL.—Thanks for your nine new readers. These added to your previous recruits makes your record a good one. So far as a difficult task can be made easier by cheerful help, it is being done by friends like yourself. Will attend to the other matter.

G. BEDBOROUGH.—Many thanks for the charmingly bound copies of your booklets. If we say they are a pleasure to the eye, we hope it will not be taken as an implied depreciation of the works themselves. As usual, these are stimulative, and no reader should ask for more.

A. H. FISHER.—The group to which you refer is now quite extinct. Want of funds had something, but not all, to do with it.

VERRES.—The idea is a pretty one, but verse not quite up to standard. Thanks for sending.

H. HIND.—The exhumed prophecy is most probably "fake." Thanks for your trouble in copying and sending.

R. M.—You may be right, but we would stake our head on it that you are absolutely wrong.

H. IRVING.—Have noted your reminder and acted on it.

R. COMPTON.—Thanks for birthday greetings, but how did you know the date? You are wrong, however, in one thing. We have not completed our first half century—not until next year.

J. MCGHEE.—Sorry to have to hold over your reply to "Y. C." until next week.

A. BRENTON.—Many thanks for picture. We quite agree with your estimate of the subject. Curiously, the only *unrational* figure is the one devoted to religion.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Louis Brandes, £2 2s.

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

The National Secular Socicty'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.

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

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.

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 Pioneer Press is now offering for sale copies of Guyau's *Non-Religion of the Future* at just under one-fourth of the published price. Marie Jean Guyau was one of the most brilliant of French Freethinkers, and his death, at the early age of 34, robbed the world of a striking personality. He was the author of a number of philanthropic works; his two direct contributions to Freethought being *Morality Independent of Obligation or Sanction*, translated in 1898, and *Non-Religion of the Future* in 1897. Both are important works, although the high price of the latter, 17s. net, kept it from a good many who would have liked to possess a copy. It is now being offered at 4s., postage 6d. Those who wish for a copy should write at once.

The Report of the House of Lords Judgment in the Bowman Case is now in the hands of the printers, and will be issued as early as possible. It is a verbatim report of the judgments, and will have as preface a brief history of the case written by Mr. Cohen. The price is not yet fixed, but it will, probably, be one shilling. The price will be kept low in order to ensure as wide a circulation as possible.

The following is part of a letter written "somewhere" in the theatre of war:—

> It is rather refreshing to observe the rebellious spirit prevalent in the bosoms of the youthful officers, and also surprising to see what unanimity there is among people from far removed domiciles.
>
> Last night in the smoke-room there were two canny Scots in the —— (a Highland regiment); a Rhodesian farmer in the —— Artillery; a three-parts Dutch fellow in the ——; a Portuguese —— going to Central Africa; and myself. The opinion was found to be unanimous that the writing on the wall must have appeared some years ago now, and that the end of the War will find the Churches nearly defunct.
>
> You would have screamed to hear the Portuguese tackling a padre on board; his main argument appeared to be that seeing the Roman Catholics and Protestants are large enough bodies to include at least a percentage of clever men, the mere fact of them differing so vitally in a religion based on the same book is proof that neither can be correct; and that as the said religion is admittedly based on mysteries, it cannot be logically accepted as a standard of truth. So what was a poor fellow to do but go his own way.
>
> The old padre nearly burst, and seemed to regret having graciously given the Portuguese (a Roman Catholic) *permission to discuss* the matter with him. It is funny!

The writer of the above has two brothers officers abroad, and his father has completed a year's service with the Forces. All are readers of the *Freethinker*.

Members of Newcastle Branch are requested to note a meeting will be held on Sunday at 6.30 in the Collingwood Hall, Clayton Street, to elect officers, etc.

We have received letters replying to articles in our last issue by Mr. T. A. Jackson and "Y. C.," which we are obliged to hold over until next week. Kant said space and time were categories of the understanding. When it comes to finding space for articles and time to deal with all that comes along, we are tempted to use much stronger language.

A correspondence upon "Sabbatarianism" is running in the *National Weekly*, in which the Freethought position is well sustained by "Pagan" and "Wide-awake," and the other side by "Christian." "Wide-awake" writes on the position of the Bishop of London, and says: "The time has gone by when any sane man can consider any 'message' from so inconsistent a prelate." We wonder if "Christian" will continue the discussion.

This is not an esperantist journal, but we cheerfully pass on the information that one of our readers, Mr. W. Banner, of 16 Spring Street, Paddington, W., is trying to form an esperantist class for the winter. Those of our readers who are interested will take the hint.

A Soliloquy.

WINDS sigh and blow, tides ebb and flow,
Leaves fall and wither;
Life comes and goes, who is there knows
Its whence, or whither?

Yet parsons tell us there's a hell
That endeth never;
Where those who sin, when once they are in,
Will roast for ever.

While they at rest among the blest,
Their bliss eternal;
Ne'er think, nor heed all those who feed
The fire infernal.

And thus they prove that God is love,
A defamation;
'Tis time that they had in their day
A reformation.

Life's problem still remains, and will,
A mystery;
When all is well, and parson's hell
But history.

W. H. SMITH (Hareloch, New Zealand).

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New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

IV.—DEMONS CONQUERED AND DISCIPLES WON.

THOUSANDS of people stood on the beach of white pebbles, and all were very still and silent as they fixed their eyes upon a fisherman's boat that lay moored on the lake. The voice of Jesus, the preacher, rang out across the water. He sat in the boat and talked of the kingdom. It seemed so different from the solemn Rabbis who sat in pulpits in synagogues.

When the last word was spoken, the peasants, camel-drivers, muleteers, masons, fish-picklers, and the rest, scattered homewards, talking of the new teacher as they went. Then Jesus turned to the man who had politely lent him the seat in the boat.

"Push your boat out, Simon Peter, and drop your nets," he said.

"No good will that be, sir," replied the fisherman. "We set the net all last night and got nothing. But I will do it to oblige you."

Huge was his surprise when the net was so heavy with fresh-water fish—carp, barbel, bolty, etc.—that the net started to burst, and he shouted to his mates in a neighbouring boat to come to his aid. Presently the whole boat was full of fish, and Simon Peter fell on his knees and stammered—

"Oh, my lord, you are too great a man to be in such a humble ship as mine, and I am but a common fellow and a sinner."

"Have no fear," said the preacher, "leave your fish-catching business and follow me. I will teach you to catch men."

Simon Peter, James, and John—three fishers of the Galilean lake—were the preacher's first comrades, and learners, or disciples. They were to learn how to throw demons out of sick and unhappy people, and to teach men the way of the kingdom.

The lessons began at once. A leper, with horrible and discoloured skin, bent in lowly salaam before Jesus, and asked to be cured.

"Be healed," said Jesus; and straightway the leper rose up, fresh, clean, and wholesome; and the Wonder-worker told him to go with a gift of thankfulness to the priests at the Temple. Two birds—sparrows would do—might be the gifts.

Another lesson. Jesus sat in the centre court of a house with a big mob of hearers all about him. All of a sudden a cracking was heard above; the roof seemed to open; hands were seen tearing a hole in the plaster and woodwork; and, amid falling dust, down came a mattress hung by ropes, and on this lay a poor creature with palsied and helpless limbs. His friends had got to the roof by the stairway which rose by one of the walls. Not being able to push through the crowd, this was their singular plan.

"Man," said Jesus, "the sins you have done are pardoned."

"Strange talk!" murmured a group of Pharisees.

The Pharisees were men well-off, well-learned in reading and writing, and mighty and noisy in their prayers to heaven.

"Well," said Jesus, "if you doubt my power to pardon sins, what think you of this?"

He uttered a short, quick command, and the man, a miserable invalid the moment before, leaped up, shouldered his mattress, ropes and all, and strode out with joyful cries; and the place echoed with the people's shouts: "Wondrous! Strange! We never saw the like!"

A new disciple was Levi—a tax-collector; one of those officers who went to houses, and farms, and bazaars, demanding money dues for the Roman Government. Such men met sour and disagreeable looks wherever they went, though, after all, somebody must needs collect the rates and taxes, and these collectors, or "publicans," were often honest fellows, and they never put on airs with noisy praying and pious upturning of the eyes.

Levi made a great feast, and had open house, and scores of people, peasants, camel-drivers, fish-picklers, sweepers, and the rest, swarmed to his tables, and sat in company with Jesus and the three fishers.

"Scandalous!" sneered the Pharisees and gentle-folk. "Fancy this man calling himself a teacher, and he eats and drinks with the riff-raff of the towns and villages."

"Yes, I do," said Jesus. "My business is to lead the riff-raff and sinners to repentance, and to the Kingdom. You good folk—you righteous souls—don't need a healer. Only the sick need a physician."

The gentle-folk somehow felt there was a sting in his quiet words. He was sarcastic.

He appeared quite too free and easy for these smug persons, the Pharisees. It annoyed them very much one Saturday, that is, one Sabbath, when they saw him and his followers crossing a field of corn and gathering wheat-ears, and briskly rubbing them till they worked the grains out, blew the chaff away, and chewed the raw wheat.

Shocking! To go to all this labour on the sacred day, the seventh day, the Lord's day, the day on which respectable Jews would not plough, would not sow, would not reap, would not weave, would not tie knots, would not light fires, would not carry parcels, would not ride horses, would not clap hands, would not bind up a sprained wrist. And now these vulgar cads were eating raw wheat!

On another Sabbath day, when Jesus met a man whose withered hand hung useless at his side, the Pharisees grimly watched.

"Come this way," bade the Wonder-worker, and the man approached, and hundreds of eyes gazed eagerly.

"Now, I put it to you men," said Jesus, "is it right to do a kind act on the Seventh Day? Is it right to save life on the Sabbath?"

Nobody replied.

"Stretch out your hand," commanded the Master of Demons.

The man did so, and a roar of delight rose from the crowd, while the Pharisees hurried away, expressing their disgust at such horrid things being done on the holy day of God.

One night the preacher spent the hours of darkness on a mountain alone in the wilderness of rocks. He was a pioneer, a path-finder, a leader in a new road; and he was lonely, but he was brave. The night was passed in prayer to heaven.

Next day, he invited twelve men to form his band of Apostles, or Missionaries; or, as some would say, Delegates. We have already heard of the three fishers, and the tax-gatherer; others were Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, James (not the fisherman), Simon the Zealot, Judas, and another Judas called Iscariot. This committee of Twelve he chose on the mountain; and then, followed by his Delegates, he walked down the rugged path to the plain. A large company of people had assembled, and many were lame, sick, and feeble-minded.

The Twelve Apostles carefully noted all he did. They hoped soon to throw out the demons of disease and madness as easily as the Master of the Jinn did.

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The Master healed every invalid, every cripple, every lunatic, every idiot.

When most of the crowd had gone homeward, his Apostles and many who were glad to hear his teachings formed a circle of listeners, and waited for his words. He looked round upon the audience,—no rich folk were they; they knew what it was to have scant meals; they often suffered bitter sorrows, and wept bitter tears; and they had been scorned and cursed. So he said:—

"Blessings on you poor people; yours is the kingdom. Blessings on you hungry people; you shall have your fill of food. Blessings on you who shed tears; you shall laugh for joy. Blessings on you who are hated for being my comrades. Leap for gladness; you will have reward in heaven. The rich men shall have woe; the bloated men shall be hungry; the laughing men shall cry. But you, my friends, I ask you to love your enemies. If a man strikes one side of your face, turn to him the other. Lend your money, and claim it not back. Heaven will pay you. You shall be children of the Highest One in heaven. Be not hard in judging others. Why make a fuss about a speck in your brother's eye, while your own has a great beam in it? You hypocrites! get rid of your beam before you worry about his mote! Every tree is known by its fruit, good or bad. You are trees. Bear honest and wholesome fruit. Don't gabble 'Lord, Lord' to me. Act right. If a man does true and good deeds, his house stands firm on a rock, and no storm will shake it. But if a man talks, and does not act, his wretched hut is thrown down when the storm comes to test it, and the ruin of it is great."

* * * *

From such stories it is plain to see that the people of the Gospel age were sufferers from many diseases and troubles, and that they were very ready to believe in men with magical power to conquer the disease demons, worry demons, and weakness demons. Such a man Jesus was supposed to be. Not very much then was known about the human body, the way its organs worked, and how sickness was caused. To-day, we have a science, or exact knowledge, of the human body, and the doctor, the surgeon, and the sanitarian (or health-teacher) are our helpers and healers; and neither they nor we think that demons cause illness or accident. To-day, the Masters of the Jinn are men like Ronald Ross, who found that malaria is caused by mosquitoes, and so helped to trace yellow fever to mosquitoes. Other Masters have found ways to kill off the tse-tse fly which causes the terrible sleeping-sickness of Africa. We get rid of flies and other such troubles, instead of trying to cast out demons.

As to the Pharisees. The Gospel makes very ugly pictures of them, and they remind us of the unpleasant persons in Charles Dickens's novels, whom he calls Chadband and Stiggins. But we learn from the history of the Jews, that some Pharisees were men of noble life and high thought. Such a man was the scribe, or teacher, Hillel, who, on being asked for the meaning of true religion, answered, "Do not do to others that which you would not like done to yourself; this is the whole extent of the Law."

One of the Twelve Apostles, as you saw, was Simon Peter. Some people think his story is a kind of shadow of the story of the Roman God Janus. This God had two faces, one looking east, the other west, as if at the sunrise and sunset, the opening day and the closing day. He had a key in his hand for opening and shutting great doors. In his honour the Romans offered gifts on twelve altars; and they called him the leader, or First God, of the twelve months; hence the first month was named Janus-month, January. He was God of all that travel to and fro on land and sea; and one of his symbols, or signs, was a ship, meaning the passage over waters. Now, in the Gospels, Peter is a ship-master; he is the first of the Twelve Apostles; and Jesus gives him the keys of heaven and earth.[1] Later on, we shall hear of his escape through the open door of a prison.

Our poet Milton, in his beautiful lines to his friend Edward King (*Lycidas*), pictures Peter, the "Pilot of the Galilean Lake," holding two keys, a golden one to open gates, and an iron one to shut.

F. J. GOULD.

The Rise and Progress of Mental Power.

VI.

(*Continued from p. 550.*)

DEAF-MUTES who, in the nature of the case, have never heard a word spoken, are yet capable of uttering vocal sounds which, to them, possess a definite meaning. In idiots, also, rudimentary articulation appears to serve their feeble requirements. From normal infants, mammals, and talking birds, various sounds proceed to which they attach a meaning. Harsh tones and menacing gestures are understood by all the higher animals, and when we discover that mammals appreciate the sinister significance of the word "stick," it is apparent that a marked mental advance has been made. In company with the mentally deranged and infants, certain of the birds and mammals grasp the import of words which they are themselves unable to articulate. Doubtless, the appreciation of tones enters into the understanding of words to some extent, but careful tests disclose the fact that words alone convey a distinct meaning to some superior animals. Babes, a few weeks from birth, distinguish the difference between tones and gestures, but the comprehension of words alone does not dawn until the second year.

> A terrier, possessed by Prof. Gerald Yeo, was trained to keep a morsel of food on its snout till it received the verbal signal "Paid for"; and it was of no consequence in what tones these words were uttered. For even if they were introduced in an ordinary stream of conversation, the dog distinguished them, and immediately tossed the food into his mouth. Seeing this, I thought it worth while to try whether the animal would be able to distinguish the words "Paid for" from others presenting a close similarity of sound; and, therefore, while he was expecting the signal, I said, "Pinafore"; the dog gave a start, and very nearly threw the food off his nose; but immediately arrested the movement, evidently perceiving his mistake (Romanes, *Mental Evolution in Man*, p. 125).

This trial was repeated on various later occasions, and invariably with the same result. A second dog was then taught to perform in a similar way and responded just like the first. Numerous shepherds, sportsmen, gamekeepers, poachers, and others have already furnished, and could further supply most incontestable evidences of the association in the mind of the dog of certain words with certain objects or acts. Sally, the chimpanzee in Regent's Park, learnt from her keeper not merely the meaning of words and phrases but of short sentences as well.

Were the lower creatures capable of speech, it is a fair inference that they would employ simple words to signify simple ideas. Clearly, there is no greater mental capacity requisite to utter the word "open" than is necessary to cause a cat to bump a window, scratch at a door, or rattle a handle when desiring admission. Two

[1] Matthew xvii., 19.

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of these animals constantly under the writer's observation perform all these acts without receiving any instruction whatever.

The power of articulation exists in several birds, but clever as these animals are, their mental capacities are poor when compared with those of the higher mammalia. Were these animals also in possession of the anatomical structures essential to articulation, they would completely eclipse the birds. Yet, although on a lower mental level than monkeys, dogs, elephants, etc., birds, unquestionably, do associate certain words with certain persons or things. It is utterly futile to allege the contrary. The late Sir Samuel Wilks, F.R.S., when referring to a parrot of his own, stated :—

> If the servants enter the room Poll will be ready with one of their expressions, and in their own tone of voice. It is clear that there is a close association in the bird's mind between certain phrases and certain persons or objects, for their presence or voice at once suggests some special word. For instance, my coachman, when coming for orders, has so often been told half-past two, that no sooner does he come to the door than Poll exclaims "Half-past two."……Some noises that she utters have been obtained from the objects themselves, as that of a cork screw at the sight of a bottle of wine……The passage of a servant down the hall to open the front door suggests a noise of moving hinges, followed by a loud whistle for a cab.

To what degree the language of signs would have developed is an open question had not superior means of communication been available. But the sense of hearing, even more advantageous in some respects than the sense of sight, admirably responded to vocal display. Simple gestures are so realistic that they are everywhere understood, but as ideas grow more abstract, the signs essential to their expression tend to assume an arbitrary and conventionalized form. It is true that elaborated signs may convey with even greater rapidity than spoken language our ideas on familiar topics, but only with the sacrifice of the simple signs universally understood.

Gesture language likewise labours under the grave disadvantage of being cumbersome, as well as possessing little utility in aiding us in the conception and expression of abstract ideas. Uttered words are not necessarily restricted to concrete things; they also serve to signalize our concepts of abstractions of whatever order that have been evolved from our percepts and recepts of concrete bodies. Therefore, while they render excellent service in conveying information of our ordinary experiences, gestures are entirely eclipsed by the power of the word in the realms of abstract thought. It would, for example, prove practically impossible to translate into sign language a paragraph of Mansel or Spinoza.

For these and other important reasons the voice has emerged the victor in the evolution of language. As Prof. Whitney, the eminent philologist points out, this triumph of speech is a case of the survival of the fittest :—

> The advantages of the voice are numerous and obvious. There is first its economy, as employing a mechanism that is available for little else, and leaving free for other purposes those indispensable instruments, the hands.

Again, the various tones of the voice can be easily heard at a distance at which gestures become indistinct. Vocal utterance is not hindered by intervening objects, while it permits the eyes as well as the hands of the speaker full liberty to occupy themselves in other ways. It is as useful in the dark as in the day, and a call or shout will command attention where all other devices prove unsuccessful.

Curiously enough, inquiry revealed the circumstance that uneducated deaf-mutes think in pictures only. Abstract ideas seem to them impossible, and Romanes was unable to discover a single deaf-mute who possessed any notions of the supernatural before such conceptions were conveyed to him by means of signs. Persistently proclaimed as intuitive by theologians, it seems singular that the religious sense should be entirely absent in deaf-mutes born in civilized society, and that, prior to education, it is difficult to make them realize the religious fancies their friends and relatives endeavour to impart. "For instance," writes Romanes,

> the Rev. S. Smith tells me that one of his pupils, previous to education, supposed the Bible to have been printed by a printing press in the sky, which was worked by printers of enormous strength—this being the only interpretation the deaf-mute could assign to the gestures whereby his parents had sought to make him understand that they believed the Bible to contain a revelation from a God of power who lives in heaven. Similarly, Mr. Graham Bell informs me of another, though similar case, in which the deaf-mute supposed the object of going to church to be that of doing obeisance to the clergy.

Much as an excited man betrays by his brogue or foreign accent his alien origin, so do the more impulsive races retain various of those primitive gestures no longer requisite for the expression of their thoughts. For although grimaces, shrugs, and gestures are now unnecessary to the possessors of a well-developed language, they continue to employ the signs so essential to our children, and to the uncivilized in making known their desires. These and other facts plainly indicate the truth that all tongues, even the most elaborated, have arisen from primitive languages of tone and gesture.

A long and largely barren controversy has raged over the problem of self-consciousness. It is conceded that the human infant and the lower animals not only realize the objective existence of bodies around them, but also realize their relations one to another. But it is sometimes objected that, although brutes are fully conscious of the objects which comprise surrounding nature, they entirely lack that individual or self-consciousness ever present in the human race. If this point be granted, it is essential to the evolutionist to show that man's peculiar self-awareness is derived from the less-developed consciousness of animals.

Considerable insight concerning this problem may be obtained through a discriminating study of the more intelligent animals, while, in the human child, we possess cogent evidence of the transition from the one stage of mental progress to the other. In early infancy the child is much less developed mentally than numerous adult animal forms.

The self-conscious condition has its basis in animals so organized that they are compelled to realize that all the various organs which constitute their bodies form a common whole. All such a creature's sensations of pleasure and pain, it perceptually and receptually relates to its own structure. The animal easily distinguishes its own body and the parts that compose it from foreign objects. It learns to seek satisfactory conditions, and to shun unsatisfactory conditions of life. These and various other causes serve to provide the firm basis of a unified feeling of individual existence. Moreover, higher animals are conscious of the mental states of other organisms, as they conclusively prove by their complex conduct when at play, in difficulty and danger, or when by means of wiles and stratagems they circumvent or overthrow their foes or competitors in the conflict of existence.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

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National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 30.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Brandes, Eager, Leat, Neate, Neary, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Thurlow, and Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Mrs. Rolfe, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the last meeting read and confirmed. Monthly cash statement presented and adopted.

New members were received for Battersea, Manchester, Regent's Park, and Swansea Branches, and the Parent Society.

An application for the formation of a new Branch at Battersea was received, and, the Executive's requirements having been fulfilled, permission was granted.

The Secretary reported that the Protest Committee against the Prohibition of Sales of Literature in L.C.C. Parks had now to meet five summonses issued against sellers of literature, three of these being against members of the N.S.S. Two summonses had been adjourned pending the hearing of the mandamus in the High Court, and the remainder were yet to be heard. In the meantime, the Committee were appealing urgently for funds to carry on the defence.

The difficulty of securing halls for winter meetings in London and the suburbs was discussed, and as all arrangements for a winter campaign were at a deadlock until this could be somewhat overcome, the members present undertook to make local inquiries.

Resolution XII. *re* an interim conference, passed at the Annual Conference on Whit-Sunday, was then dealt with, and it was finally agreed that as the present unprecedented circumstances made it imperative that it should be held in London, it should take place on October 28, to be followed by a public meeting in the evening.

The Secretary reported receipt of a grant of £10 from Mr. Cohen's Propaganda Fund.

Various items of routine business were disposed of and the meeting closed.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Obituary.

Mr. Robert and Mrs. Mary Lewins, who have for many years been earnest members of the Newcastle Branch of the N.S.S., will have in readers of the *Freethinker* many sympathetic friends in their great sorrow, owing to the sad loss of their dear son, Lance-Corporal George S. Lewins, aged nineteen years, who died in France from wounds received in action on August 25. A quiet, unassuming youth with a wide knowledge of books, and one of whom much was hoped. One more innocent victim robbed of the happiness of a useful life.

J. G. B.

It is with regret I have to record the death, on August 30 of Thomas Cooke, of Hyde. He had reached his seventy-third year. Mr. Cooke was an old Freethinker of thirty-five years standing. His politics were advanced. He was an anti-vaccinationist of a most pronounced type. His household goods had often been taken by the authorities to pay fines. He was also a strong temperance advocate, being a life teetotaler, and his father and grandfather were also temperance men—the three between them accounting for considerably more than one hundred years of advocacy. A Secular Service was held at the Manchester Crematorium on Monday last, whither his remains were conveyed, at which a number of friends attended, the organ being brought into use in the course of the ceremony.

T. SANDERS.

The poor are at times curiously callous. I well remember once saying good-bye to a dying man. He was as conscious as I am now at the present moment. As I let go of his hand, his old wife said quite casually: "What day'll suit you for the funeral, sir?"

"Ain't she in a 'urry, sir?" whispered the poor fellow, with a smile.—*Raymond Blathwayt, "Through Life and Round the World."*

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.

BATTERSEA PARK BRANCH N.S.S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.15, a Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N.S.S.: 11.15, Percy S. Wilde, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, Mr. Thurlow, "Bible and Creation *v.* Science."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Parliament Hill): 6 30, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N.S.S.: 3.30, R. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3, E. Burke, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Miller, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Kells; 6.30, Messrs. Saphin, Swasey, and Hyatt.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

SHEFFIELD N.S.S. (Poole Square): 7.15, T. Dennis, "The Christian Scarecrow; or, The Fallacy of the Judgment Day."

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Views and Opinions.

Crusading at Woolwich.

From a newspaper paragraph we learn that Woolwich is to be made the theatre of a special spiritual crusade. War work has brought a large number of people—male and female—into the Woolwich area, and the crusade is being organized under the patronage of the Archbishop of Canterbury and a number of bishops, together with the help of visitors, "Pilgrims of Prayer," etc. Subscriptions are, of course, invited, the purpose of the crusade being "to raise the whole moral tone of the social and industrial life as a first step in the reconstruction of modern conditions, in the belief that such reconstruction can only be effectively achieved on a Christian foundation." What exactly is meant by a Christian foundation is not stated, but judging from experience it will resolve itself into the acceptance of certain doctrines which will have about as much influence in improving social conditions as a knowledge of astronomy has in altering the price of margarine. And if the clergymen engaged in this crusade really believe that it will lead to a reconstruction of social conditions, one can only admire their simplicity. *If* they believe it! One suspects the expression is a mere formula, and that the real purpose of the crusade is, as usual, to "keep the people in order."

* * *

A One-sided Conversion.

Now we do not deny that if the "whole moral tone" of the people of Woolwich could be raised it would be a good thing. Let us raise the moral tone of everybody, everywhere, and as soon as possible. What puzzles us is why the efforts of the clergy are restricted to Woolwich or Whitechapel. Why not give Park Lane or Mayfair a chance of salvation? Why not raise the whole moral tone of people in these districts? Why not initiate a crusade to raise the moral tone of those who, even during a time of war, cannot resist the opportunity of plundering the community in all directions? Why is it assumed that these missions are only necessary to the working-class? Or, if the assumption is justifiable, and the absence of a settled income and a good house really make a difference of "moral tone," would it not seem that the right way to go to work to remedy the matter is not to organize a "spiritual crusade," but to see that settled incomes and good homes are commoner? Could any body of clergymen be found who would storm Mayfair with the avowed object of raising the "moral tone" of its inhabitants? We doubt it. And imagine the indignation that would be evoked if it were attempted, or even suggested! Think of what would happen if the homes of the "upper classes" were entered, in the way that the homes of the "lower classes" are invaded, by district visitors and the like, with the avowed purpose of improving their moral tone? No, it is the working-class that are subject to this kind of thing. And while we do not marvel at the policy, we do marvel that the working-class (we stick to the conventional phraseology) do not more generally resent the impertinence of the pose and the insult of the inquisition. And if the insult is not more generally recognized by both the working-class and the clergy, we can only attribute this to the inherited servility of the one and to the ingrained arrogance of the other. At any rate, we suggest to the working-people in the Woolwich area that as an indication that they are not lacking in self-respect, they give these crusaders their marching orders in plain set terms. The man who submits to this kind of impertinent patronage may indicate his need for improvement, but he quite demonstrates the impossibility of his achieving it.

* * *

Conversion with a Purpose.

But it would be a mistake to imagine that these "spiritual crusades" were without some definite purpose, even though many engaged in it are blind to its real object. These missions to the "masses" serve a dual purpose. They salve the conscience of the "upper class"; they hold the lower class in check, and keep them properly thankful for the inestimable blessings of a "Christian society." The past two centuries have seen a gradual shifting of the obligation of the landed classes on to the back of the nation at large. There has been during the last hundred and fifty years the development of a commercial system that has gone far towards destroying all *human* connection between employer and employed, and of a financial system that recognizes no obligation save keeping within the letter of a law largely made in its own interests. Innumerable social and economic evils have developed, and *in not a single instance* has Christianity offered any opposition to their growth. Neither landowner, nor manufacturer, nor financier has ever found a fervent profession of Christianity inconsistent with an exaction of all that commercial and financial rules permitted. The rich have spent freely on "the Lord," as our churches and missions show, but they have wrung all they could from the labourer. One hundred years ago, the factory-owner who was keeping children of six years of age at work in his mills, was most anxious they should be taught the Catechism and the truths of Christianity. To-day our governing classes

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are equally zealous in the same direction. An anodyne for the conscience of one class, a narcotic for the potential activities of another class. In neither direction can Christianity be excelled. A slave code is naturally beloved by the slaveowner; and if the slave comes to hug his chains, that, too, is no new phenomenon in the history of the world.

* * *

The First Step.

Think of it! The Bishops of Southwark, London, Oxford, Rochester, Lichfield, Edinburgh, Woolwich, Kingston, Kensington, and Dover, headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and followed by a number of the minor clergy, all organized to raise the moral tone of Woolwich! What a desperate place Woolwich must be! And how much better will it be when the crusade is all over? Will they say anything about the real problems that affect Woolwich? We are afraid not. They *will* talk of the beauty of the religious life, and the greatness of Christianity in keeping so many men and women engaged in making guns and shells; but will they say anything of the real questions that lie at the root of social reorganization? We know they will not do so, because they are not there to do so. They are there to keep the people in order. Their work is to perpetuate the Christian ideal of a society formed of a multitude dependent for existence upon the charity or interested philanthropy of a few. We are not, we repeat, surprised at these missions to the working classes; we are only saddened that so many thousands lack the courage and foresight to resent the insult, and send these missioning busybodies packing. And we are quite certain that until the working classes develop enough self-respect to do this, they will not have taken the first solid step towards genuine social reform.

* * *

The Slave Creed.

In sober truth, Christianity has always lived by mental, moral, and political pauperization. Independence of mind and character it neither desired nor permitted—save under protest. It preached submission and humility to the poor, it encouraged an interested almsgiving with the rich, and so bred servility on the one side and supercilious self-righteousness on the other. To suffer in silence was a virtue, to revolt against established authority a sin. The late Czar in Russia, the Kaiser in Germany, the tyrant everywhere, has found it one of his most useful allies. Under its shadow the civic independence of the Roman world withered and died. It did teach the spiritual equality of men before God, but it emphasized the social inequality of men on earth as the condition of its realization. Habits engendered by so many generations of growth, and customs sanctified by centuries of rule, are not discarded or destroyed in a day. It is never the moral condition of such large numbers of our population that surprise us so much as their patience and their submission. It is really wonderful that so many should be content under prevailing conditions, but it would be more wonderful still if, with a religion such as Christianity enthroned for so many centuries, social conditions were better than they are.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

MISSIONARIES.

Again, I have to put on record that I have absolutely no sympathy with missionaries. I cannot see the necessity for missions to the heathen; as yet, there should be no crumbs to fall from the children's table, while the children of Europe are in such a shameful state, as many of them are, far worse than any heathen I have ever seen in Africa.—*Mary Gaunt, "Alone in West Africa."*

Humanism Caricatured.

THE Rev. Father Figgis is a distinguished member of the Catholic party in the Church of England, and he exhibits outstanding peculiarities. He is at once broad and narrow, liberal and conservative, a man of the world, and an ardent ecclesiastic. As preacher he is plain-spoken, powerful, and popular, and in almost every discourse his characteristics are in full evidence. During the month of August he delivered four sermons, under the general title of "Hopes for English Religion," at Grosvenor Chapel, Mayfair, which were published weekly in the *Church Times*. In the issue for August 31 the last appeared, in which Father Figgis's peculiarities are all seen in the highest degree of manifestation. The subject is Humanism, the treatment of which is both inaccurate and absurd. Basing his address upon words attributed to the Gospel Jesus, namely, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John x. 10), Father Figgis opens thus:—

> The most dangerous notion that modern Christianity has to combat is that it means a shrinking from life, that by its moral system it closes the avenues of human experience, and that in that it is wedded to the tradition which starves the mind.

As a matter of fact, Christianity itself is rooted and grounded in that "most dangerous notion," and has, of course, never even attempted to combat it. On the contrary, it has always done its utmost to encourage and promote it. The Gospel Jesus lays it down as a fundamental principle that no man can be his disciple without hating "his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also" (Luke xiv. 26). St. Paul expresses the same sentiment thus: "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 2). St. John, also, commits himself to the same ascetic rule: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). Now that New Testament disparagement of the world and its life has been strictly insisted upon by the Church in all periods of its history. The assertion that "the Church is the true home of the soul and the body" is utterly false. Lecky informs us that for many centuries the orthodox saints "all regarded the body as an unmingled evil, its passions and its beauty as the most deadly of temptations" (*The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. i., p. 230).

Father Figgis claims that "in the Christian Church each man in the degree and measure of his capacity can have not less but more of the love of beauty as shown in art, letters, and music"; but is he not aware that from the sixth century to the twelfth, "the ascetic ideal of ugliness was most supreme in art?" Has he forgotten how terribly hideous Roman mosaics were during that long period, and that the love of beauty was practically asleep in Christendom until it was gradually reawakened and enthroned by the revival of learning? Christianity, as such, has never been the friend of art for its own sake. Indeed, those who were children fifty and sixty years ago remember well how sharply they were rebuked whenever they displayed in looks and speech any keen enjoyment of beautiful things. The conclusion from which there is no honourable escape is that it was as the result of the secularization of art that beauty began to regain the position it had occupied in Greek and Roman art. More than that, as Lecky well points out, "the sense of beauty gradually encroached upon and absorbed the feeling of reverence," which was "a

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form of religious decay very far from being confined to the history of art" (*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 260).

The same thing is true of the love of beauty as shown in letters. The Church has always frowned upon what it called profane literature. Mommsen assures us that "it is a mistaken opinion that antiquity was materially inferior to our own times in the general diffusion of elementary attainments. Even among the lower classes and slaves there was considerable knowledge of reading, writing, and counting; in the case of a slave steward, for instance, Cato, following the example of Mago, takes for granted the ability to read and write" (*The History of Rome*, vol. ii., p. 391). But so soon as Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, a blow was dealt to education from which it has not yet fully recovered. Within a century all the Pagan schools were closed, and both clergy and laity sank into a state of almost total illiteracy. It is well known how Theodosius II. put a stop to all public lecturing by men of learning, and with what ferocity Justinian burned Pagan books, imprisoned and tortured Pagan professors, and plundered and suppressed the schools of Athens which had been in existence for nine hundred years. Even in the fifteenth century enthusiasts for classical studies were denounced as Pagans. Is it not on record that Pope Gregory the Great showed his hatred of everything that bore the stamp of Paganism by attacking the temples and mutilating the statues of Rome, by anathematizing classical poets and philosophers, by reducing to ashes the Palatine library. Throughout the Middle Ages science was under ecclesiastical ban, and scientists were imprisoned, tortured, and, in cases, put to death. Father Figgis is, doubtless, a lover of beauty, as shown in letters, but he is radically mistaken when he declares that Christianity either produces or sanctions the purest literary culture. He cannot be ignorant of the fact that the chief fault of Leo X. was, not that he disregarded the moral law, or indulged in vulgar vices, but that he was a man of the world devoted to the pleasures of the chase, with a passion for amusements, and a lively interest in classical art and literature, and that St. Bernard is held in highest esteem because he despised the world and lived alone for heaven. Yes, it is true that there is a gulf between the Church and culture even to-day, and there is no way of getting rid of this gulf except at the expense of completely changing the character of the Church.

Curiously enough, Father Figgis has the hardihood to affirm that religion and culture ministered to the whole life of the people "in the great age of the thirteenth century." He says:—

> Bishop Creighton was right in saying that the greatest age yet known was the thirteenth century. There we find the high water-mark of achievement in the greatest Gothic, like the Sainte Chapelle and all the subsidiaries. Poetry never surpassed the *Divine Comedy* of Dante; and the intellectual activity of the universities of those days put ours to shame, and it was not the possession merely of a class. Every part of life was claimed for God.

It must be admitted that in some respects the thirteenth century was a truly great age. Father Figgis mentions three aspects of its greatness, namely, architecture, poetry, and scholarship. It is easy, he says, to sneer at its barbarism; but we must not forget that it was then the beautiful church in Paris known as Sainte Chapelle was built, and Dante's famous poem composed. It is to this age, too, that we owe the magnificent cathedrals of Amiens and Chartres, and it was during this century that the wonderful preachers, St. Francis, St. Antony, and St. Dominic arose. It was in truth an age of many saints; but it was not an age of moral elevation and social purity. Cotter Morison describes it as "an age of violence, fraud, and impurity, such as can hardly be conceived now" (*The Service of Man*, p. 64). Has Father Figgis never read Archbishop Rigaud's *Regestrum Visitationum*, which covers the years 1248 to 1269, Cardinal Peter Damiani's *Liber Gomorheanus*, or even Dean Milman's *History of Latin Christianity?* If he has not, he is guilty of trifling with his subject and of grossly insulting his congregation; but if he has, it is difficult to believe in his honesty. Morally and socially, the thirteenth century was one of the lowest and worst ages known to us. Rigaud and Amiani portray it in the darkest colours. We learn from Pope Honorius III. that the Scotch clergy were addicted to "shameless licentiousness"; and we also read that a ship sailed from pious France carrying three hundred prostitutes for the French soldiers who were fighting for the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre from the Saracens.

With such facts before us, it is nothing but sheer mockery to assert that Christianity is "the sanction of Humanism in its best sense." It is well known that modern Humanism is a system of thinking in which, as J. A. Symonds observes, the study of man, in the totality of his being, is made central and dominant, and that it began to manifest itself as a determined revolt against the scholasticism, or metaphysical theology, of the Middle Ages. In Italy, it very nearly supplanted Christianity altogether. For upwards of seventy years the Christian religion was of very little account, some eminent ecclesiastics going the length of mocking at it, and treating Christ as a profitable myth, as Leo X. is said to have done. In Italy, however, Humanism, as a movement, had exhausted itself before the end of the first half of the sixteenth century. The truth is that Christianity and Humanism cannot exist and prosper together, and that in proportion as the one flourishes the other of necessity languishes. Father Figgis, for all his profession to the contrary, is not a Humanist. He holds the view that it is not worth while to live, to seek after truth, or to go on "with laborious toil unless we believe ourselves to have permanent value," or unless "we think we are immortal beings." We maintain, on the contrary, that virtue, morality, or social service is not dependent for its value upon the duration of individual existence. Though the individual's span of life may be but short, the race endures. Personally we are mortal, but whatever service we render our fellow-beings is immortal; and surely it is worth while to do our utmost to improve the race of which we are members, though the night may soon close in upon us and put an end to our existence. Humanism does not include the hope of immortality, which is nothing but a perversion of the natural love of life.

J. T. Lloyd.

A Living Master of Literature.

> In our fat England the gardener, Time, is playing all sorts of delicate freaks in the hues and traceries of the flower of life, and shall we not note them.—*George Meredith.*
>
> I love life which is earthy life, life as it is—In this well of life I feel further from death.—*Anatole France.*

Among modern English writers whose fame would seem to be assured, Mr. Thomas Hardy occupies the foremost place, and it is pleasant to reflect that he is an "intellectual." In his works there is the welcome brilliancy and spirit of the modern school united with lasting elements of excellence. The precise place Mr. Hardy will ultimately occupy among the Olympians we cannot venture to anticipate the judgment of Time by deciding. But that he has gained a true and lasting success, the magnificent works he has given us bear very sufficient

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testimony. Mr. Hardy has won his present enviable position after years of labour. His first published novel, *Desperate Remedies*, bears date as far back as the "seventies" of the last century. Since that time, his reputation has been steadily on the increase, until at the present he is paying the penalty of popularity in the attacks of a herd of imitators.

From *Far from the Madding Crowd* to *Jude the Obscure*—what a splendid range of novels. The characters, too, from Bathsheba to Sue Bridehead, seem taken from real life. The heroine, as in *Two on a Tower*, who wooes a lover younger than herself, is frequent in these novels and in real experience. She is almost ignored by the circulating library writers, whose many books proclaim their industry rather than their ability. The women in Mr. Hardy's pages are not invariably charming, but they are entirely feminine, and their moods and whims are depicted by a master-hand. In his knowledge of "the concrete Unknowable," he is as wide and as true as Shakespeare; as modern as Meredith. He is no less successful with his male characters; witness Gabriel Oak in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Dr. Fitzpiers in *The Woodlanders*, Michael Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Angel Clare in *Tess*, or the unfortunate hero in *Jude the Obscure*.

When, like many others, one knew Mr. Hardy's novels without knowing the Wessex peasantry, the type seemed exaggerated; but a sojourn in the West Country redeems them from the reproach of caricature. Closer knowledge reveals his photographic power of reproducing life, for Mr. Hardy writes of these sons and daughters of the soil without sentiment, and, rarer still, without patronage; with the manlier tone of kinship with the least of these that, whined as it may be by specious hypocrites, is yet the noblest truth of our common life.

More than that, Mr. Hardy has sown broadcast over his work the most delightful, ironical humour. Not one of his rustics, of his working-class folk, but has a special originality, a native pleasantry—jovial or sly—and a cast of drollery. Few novelists have strewed over their work such abundant irony. He is, indeed, a master of the lash—as fertile as Heine, as pitiless as Gibbon, as acidulated as Renan.

Mr. Hardy has been called pessimist, but there is no lack of comedy in his novels. *The Hand of Ethelberta*, that most whimsical story, is as full of wondrous comedy as an egg is full of meat. *The Laodicean* is somewhat more eccentric. In each a far-fetched idea is worked out with earnestness, and in the true spirit of the highest comedy. *Far from the Madding Crowd*, written in his sunniest mood, is still his most popular work. From the opening description of Gabriel Oak's smile to the ringing down of the curtain, it is a joy to anyone who possesses taste and perception enough to discriminate between a Molieresque humour and a riotous Charlie Chaplin farce.

One can hardly recall a modern writer who cares less for poetic justice and virtue rewarded. Nemesis, indeed, dogs the guilty in his novels, as in the immortal Greek tragedies. As his characters fulfil their doom, they drag the innocent to misery with them, as though they were actual people in real life. In *The Woodlanders*, *Tess*, and *Jude the Obscure* tragedies "too deep for tears" grow out of trivial courses, true to the course of mundane things. *Life's Little Ironies*, a volume of short stories, as perfect as anything of Daudet or Maupassant, revealing some of the most delicate and faultless work of this great artist, is full of the same lesson.

Ordinary life attracts him. His favourite heroes are farmers, artisans, labourers, and middle-class characters. From these externally prosaic existences, this great magician makes us behold the eternal comedy and tragedy of the human heart. We meet in his pages once more the failure of will, the calculations of egoism, pride, coquetry, passion, hatred, love, all our foibles, all our littleness, and all our errors. Small wonder that the smile on his face is often near tears.

The constant value in fiction is the manifestation of human nature. Viewed from this point of view, Mr. Hardy's work stands fair and full above that of all contemporary literature. What shapes arise as you recall it! Not sawdust dolls, not shadows, but full-blooded creations, moving in a living world, instinct with the fire of life. Where in all contemporary fiction is there nobler work than the more poignant scenes in *Tess*, or that other showing the dying Jude and the choristers, or the quiet figure of the bereaved girl in the closing scene of *The Woodlanders*, as wonderful in its way as Millet's picture of "The Angelus." In these is struck the consummate tragic note, as in the pages of Æschylus and our own Shakespeare. They wring the heart as keenly as actual, individual experience. For they are life sublimed by passing through an imagination of singular capacity and a nature of uncommon force.

The attentive reader cannot fail to notice the essential Secularism embedded in these admirable novels and stories. Even in the earlier books, amid their picturesque colour, their delightful atmosphere, their delicious pastoral scents and sounds, we find a frank Paganism. As the author advances in reputation and grows in intellectual power, the note deepens, until, in *Tess*, it grows into a cry of defiance, and, finally, in *Jude the Obscure*, a great sob of pain. *Jude* is a masterpiece among masterpieces. It is a noble and significant work, worthy in every way of the greatest living English novelist. It is an arraignment of Providence, and as we read we recall the biting words of the blinded Gloster in the greatest of all tragedies:—

> As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods:
> They kill us for their sport.

It is a further proof of Mr. Hardy's genius that he has achieved success in poetry no less than in prose, and as he gets older he turns more and more readily to the Muses, and writes with all the zest and enthusiasm of a young poet beginning his career instead of a veteran who has enriched the literature of Europe with masterpieces for two generations. To open *The Dynasts* is to be confronted with a book of singular dramatic power, and one full of the pure stuff of poetry. Another volume of verse, *Satires of Circumstances, Lyrics and Reveries*, shows his keen vision and understanding. Take, for example, that fine and imaginative poem, "God's Funeral." The author pictures a slow procession moving across a plain at twilight, and bearing a strange form. He listens to the lament of the mourners for the being they have themselves created, and whom they cannot any longer keep alive:—

> Framing him jealous, fierce, at first,
> We gave him justice as the ages rolled.
> Will to bless those by circumstance accurst,
> And long suffering and mercies manifold.

"Sadlier than those who wept in Babylon" follow the mourners, and some of them refuse to believe that all is over; and "dazed and puzzled 'twixt the gleam and gloom," the scene closes. It is a daring piece of work, comparable to Heine's vision of a dying God having the last sacraments of the Church administered to him, albeit there is none of the terrible irony of the Continental poet.

Contemporary literature is so sugary, so full of romantic imaginings, that such writing brings a sense of largeness; a reminder of the great winds and waters and wide horizons of the West Country, where men and women know how to live and how to die, not submissively but

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fiercely. Modern drawing-room renders are ill-prepared for Mr. Hardy's virile verse, and primly straighten themselves as his muse passes. But others there are who perceive the distinction conferred on literature by the writings of a bright and particular genius. Mr. Hardy's advice to us is to face the facts of life and to trust humanity:—

> The fact of life with dependence placed
> On the human heart's resource alone,
> In brotherhood bonded close, and graced
> With loving-kindness fully blown,
> And visioned help unsought, unknown.

Not to know and to exult in Mr. Hardy's finest work is to be dead to literature, or ignorant of the great effects of modern English speech. It is impossible to read his pages without feeling ourselves won by his intense sympathy, which covers everything as the arch of heaven. He has enlarged our ideas of life and the world. We feel, as we put his books back in their places, that we are more at peace with ourselves, calmer in face of the problems of destiny. And not for an instant does he cease to be an artist. By his genius he had added a wondrous chamber to the house beautiful of art.

Mimnermus.

Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

IX.

(Continued from p. 566.)

When we are banished from the earthly body, are we to join the wordy rabble which speaks by the mouth or the pen of the mediums? These wild utterances do not seem as a rule like revelations of the secrets of the prison-house, but rather like gibberings from a lunatic asylum, peopled by inmates of vulgar behaviour and the lowest morals; creatures that lie and cheat, give false names and unverifiable addresses. But the fact that things are unpleasant is no evidence that they are untrue; besides in some cases the "personalities" talk very good sense, quote Plotinus, and write really charming poetry. So much depends on whose ghost it is; but still more, on whose lips or hands it is by which it communicates. That is the main difficulty about the spirit hypothesis; the unmistakable colour which the communications get through the medium. The late Mr. Frederick Myers cites Homer and Plato in the original through Mrs. Verrall, who is a lecturer at Cambridge; through Mrs. Holland, whose culture is not classical, he quotes nothing more abstruse than Tennyson and Rossetti; whereas, through Mrs. Piper, the postmaster's wife, he can only ejaculate bluntly, "Browning."—*The "Times" Literary Supplement*, July 9, 1908.

It should be stated that Sir Oliver Lodge's son Raymond was killed in the trenches at the Front on September 14, 1915, a circumstance that I am quite sure every Freethinker wholeheartedly deplores. Everyone who came in contact with Raymond testifies to his sterling qualities. His letters home reveal a lovable and charming personality, which is reflected in the portrait given in the book. The heart aches to realize that this fine young fellow, carefully educated, trained, and cultured to perfection, in the morning of life, should be thus, in a moment, shattered and broken, cast as rubbish to the void, in this savage and brutish War.

On August 8, 1915, a few weeks before Raymond's death, a Miss Robbins was having a sitting with Mrs. Piper, then in America, when a message was received from the spirit of Myers, communicated to Mrs. Piper by the spirit of Richard Hodgson. Miss Alta Piper (Mrs. Piper's daughter) sent the message on to Sir Oliver Lodge. It runs as follows:—

> Hodgson: "Now, Lodge, while we are not here as of old, *i.e.*, not quite, we are here enough to take and give messages. Myers says you take the part of the poet, and he will act as Faunus. Faunus!"
>
> Miss Robbins: "Faunus?"
>
> Hodgson: "Yes, Myers. *Protect.* He (Lodge) will understand.
>
> "What have you to say, Lodge? Good work. Ask Verrall, she will also understand. Arthur says so." [This "Arthur" means Dr. Arthur Verrall, the deceased husband of Mrs. Verrall.]
>
> Miss Robbins: "Do you mean Arthur Tennyson?"
>
> Hodgson: "No. Myers knows. So does ——. You got mixed (to Miss R.). But Myers is straight about poet and Faunus."[1]

Sir Oliver Lodge promptly communicated the message to Mrs. Verrall, as the spirits advised. Mrs. Verrall referred him to Horace's Ode (*Carm.*, ii., xvii., 27-30), where Horace describes himself as nearly killed by a falling tree, the impending blow being lightened by Faunus, the guardian of the poets. "Sir Oliver, naturally enough, could not make head or tail of the message, but was inclined to think that it referred to some possibly approaching financial loss to himself which Myers might propose to avert—an instance of, at any rate, the 'futility' of spiritualistic messages or warnings."[2]

Sir Oliver did not connect the message with Raymond until after his death in action on September 14, 1915. He then wrote to the Rev. M. A. Bayfield about the matter, complaining that Myers "had not been able to ward off the blow." This clerical gentleman rose to the occasion, and interpreted the oracle as follows (it is astonishing how many different interpretations these spirit messages may be made to assume; the spirits seem to make a point of being as vague and ambiguous as possible). The Rev. Bayfield explains that the "lightening of the blow" referred, not to Raymond, but to Sir Oliver himself, and that the "warning" was intended to "protect" Sir Oliver from being overwhelmed by the news of the death of his son. Major Cook observes:—

> This somewhat far-fetched interpretation Sir Oliver accepts as final and convincing. It probably explains in great measure Sir Oliver's acceptance, on equally slight grounds, of all the other "evidences" regarding Raymond's "communications" to him and to his family which followed.
>
> To the writer, at any rate, the following explanation of the "message" appears at least equally probable and, indeed, in all the circumstances of the case, at any rate less far-fetched, than that of the Rev. Bayfield:
>
> Mrs. Piper being, through her daughter, Miss Alta, in frequent correspondence with Sir Oliver, may well have been, and in all probability (as indicated above) was, aware that he had a son at the front, like many other people, with several sons, at the time in England. The "message," if it means anything at all, much more closely resembles an intimation of (and a counting by Mrs. Piper on) the extreme probability that this son of Sir Oliver's at the front would be wounded, but, through the spirit-intervention of Myers, *like Horace the Poet*, not killed.[3]

Major Cook further points out that Raymond Lodge was born in the year of Mrs. Piper's first visit to England, in 1889; and being a boy of seventeen, and possibly away at school at the time of Mrs. Piper's second visit in 1906, may not have been known to her at all. "It is much more probable that Mrs. Piper had Raymond's eldest brother Oliver in her mind as, probably, the son of Sir Oliver at the front. Moreover, Oliver is the 'poet' of the family, and has written and published a volume of his poems. The allusion to the 'poet,' therefore, in the message, and the implied happening to *him* of some *physical* injury ('Myers is straight about poet and Faunus'), are natural enough in Mrs. Piper's own

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge, *Raymond*, pp. 90-91.
[2] W. Cook, *Reflections on Raymond*, p. 46.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

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mouth, writing, or normal consciousness, and do not appear to call for any 'supernormal' or other explanation than a desire on Mrs. Piper's part to supply material, through Sir Oliver Lodge, for the investigations of the Society for Psychical Research, which she habitually does."[1]

On the other hand, as the same writer points out, if the message really came from the spirit calling itself "Myers," then, "on the plain interpretation of the message, 'Myers' is not a spirit of Truth, but—as Oliver Cromwell described a similarly reported 'communicator'—a 'lying devil'; for 'Myers' predicted what did not happen, and undertook what he did not perform."

To sum up the matter, the message, as a prophecy, was false; for Raymond was not "protected" by Myers, but was killed. As a warning it was a dead failure, for Sir Oliver Lodge did not connect the message with Raymond at all until after his death, but inclined to think that it referred to some financial loss to himself which Myers might avert.

If Myers could see what was coming, and wished to warn Sir Oliver, surely he would have sent a plain and straightforward message which anyone could understand, and not this vague and ambiguous rigmarole, capable of several meanings and of application to several different persons.

The plain fact is, that Mrs. Piper made a shot at a venture. She knew that one of Sir Oliver's sons was at the Front, and speculated on the chance of his being wounded, but purposely made the message so vague that, in the event of nothing happening, it could not be cited as a false prophecy, and, in fact, could be applied to any misfortune that might happen to any of Sir Oliver's family, or to Sir Oliver himself.

We now come to the photograph incident, which Sir Oliver Lodge describes as "a peculiarly good piece of evidence," "a first-class case," and as "one of the best pieces of evidence." Major Cook has analyzed this first-class piece of evidence in his little book, *Reflections on "Raymond."* Let us, in his company, see what Sir Oliver considers good evidence.

On August 24, 1915, a "group photograph" of twenty-one officers, with Second-Lieutenant Raymond Lodge among them, was taken in France. Three negatives were made, and these, with proofs only, were submitted by the photographer to Captain Boast, a brother officer of Raymond's. As the photographer had not enough printing-paper to supply all the officers with copies, Captain Boast purchased the negatives and sent them for printing to Messrs. Gale and Polden, in England, who received them on October 15, 1915. A large number of photographs appear to have been printed from these negatives, for Mrs. B. P. Cheves—the mother of the Medical Officer attached to Raymond's regiment—alone had, on November 28, 1915, half a dozen copies in her possession (with a key to the names). On this date Mrs. Cheves wrote to Lady Lodge, offering her one of the photographs; to which, naturally, Lady Lodge promptly replied, asking it to be sent. There was some unexplained delay in forwarding the photograph, and, in reply to a letter of inquiry by Lady Lodge regarding this, another note was received from Mrs. Cheves on December 7, stating that the photograph was being sent off. So there was at least a nine days' interval between the reception of the news of the existence of the photograph in Sir Oliver's household and the reception of the photograph itself. It is important to bear this in mind, as we shall see.

It is not known positively whether Raymond ever saw the photograph. He never saw the negatives; and Captain Boast, writing in reply to Sir Oliver's query on this point nearly eleven months after the photograph was taken, thinks that Raymond did see the proofs, but "cannot say positively," although he regards it as "highly probable." On September 12 Raymond went into the trenches, and on September 14 was killed in action.

Sir Oliver Lodge claims that the first intimation of the existence of this photograph was from the spirit of Raymond himself. On September 27, Mr. Vout Peters, a medium, at a sitting with Lady Lodge, professed to receive a message from the spirit of Raymond through the agency of his "familiar spirit," or control, "Moonstone." He refers to the existence of *this particular* group photograph (so Sir Oliver asserts), saying, "He is particular that I should tell you of this."

On December 3, 1915, two months and six days afterwards, Mrs. Leonard (another medium), speaking for the spirit of Raymond through her "familiar spirit," "Feda," describes this photograph with remarkable accuracy.

Sir Oliver Lodge claims that we have here genuine supernormal evidence of Raymond's "surviving personality" in giving this information, because on September 27 the negatives were not yet in England, and on December 3 neither he (Sir Oliver Lodge) nor any member of his family had as yet seen a print or copy of it.

Let us consider the communication of the medium, Mr. Vout Peters, through the agency of "Moonstone" (this "Moonstone" is supposed to be the spirit of a patriarch who lived to a hundred years, and was a "yogi" in his earth-life), who is in communication with Raymond. This is the communication:—

> "You have several portraits of this boy. *Before he went away* you had a good portrait of him—two—no, three. [Note by Sir Oliver: "Fully as many as that."] Two where he is alone, and one where he is in a group of other men. He is particular that I should tell you this. In one you see his walking-stick." [Note by Miss Kennedy: "'Moonstone' (*i.e.*, Peters) here put an imaginary stick under his arm."] [Note by Sir Oliver: "Not known yet."].

This is the only reference to any group photo given by Peters. In his later sitting with Sir Oliver, on October 29, 1915—a month before news of the photo arrived—he makes no mention of it.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

The Christian Law.

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.
A new law I give unto you, that ye love one another.
The Papal Peace Note has been received with almost universal derision.

TALK not of peace, 'tis treason;
Hold thou no truce with reason;
Grim death must have his season—
This is the Christian law.

The maimed and halt pass by;
Still let the children die;
Still the widow's cry—
This is the Christian law.

Loud let the great guns thunder:
Bid nations lust and plunder;
Thy brethren tear asunder—
This is the Christian law.

Behold the Nazarene,
No more in love serene;
Let hate thy vision screen—
This is the Christian law.

GADFLY.

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Acid Drops.

By the courtesy of the editor of the *Literary Guide*, we have been supplied with an advance copy of a letter by Mr. Edward Clodd in reply to our "Views and Opinions" of last week, and also in answer to a letter written by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner. Mr. Clodd admits that our comments on his "few words" were fair, and he desires "with apologies" to cancel them. As Mr. Clodd thus retires with credit from a quite indefensible position which ought never to have been taken up, there is no more to be said on that point.

A word or two, however, is called for in connection with certain sentences from the late Sir Leslie Stephen and Professor Huxley which Mr. Clodd says he had in mind. "The Agnostic," says Sir Leslie Stephen, "is one who asserts that there are limits to the sphere of human intelligence." And Professor Huxley says: "In matters of the intellect do not pretend that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or demonstrable. That I take to be the Agnostic faith." But with all due respect to both these gentlemen, and as it is best to use perfectly plain language, we desire to say that so far as the relation of Agnosticism to belief in a God or in religion is concerned, they were talking undiluted nonsense. The counsel is excellent, but it would be ridiculous to count the voicing of these ancient platitudes as the real reason for coining such a word as Agnostic. It was the question of belief in a God which both these writers had in mind, and their great concern seems to have been to discover a word that should escape the odium attached to Atheism by the religious world. That they misled others only serves to make their action the more regrettable. And in relation to the existence of God there are only two positions—either one believes, and is a Theist, or one does not believe in a God and is an Atheist. And, in the name of all that is sensible, if a man or woman is an Atheist, why not say so?

The converted Atheist has again made his appearance; this time in the pages of the *Royal Magazine*. His sponsor is the Rev. F. H. Gillingham, the cricketer-parson, who says that this particular Atheist joined a college mission and became a Church stalwart. No name is mentioned, and the mission is also nameless. Perhaps the Rev. F. H. Gillingham will oblige with further details?

The Rev. A. C. Dixon, Spurgeon's successor at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, says, "Faith in Jesus as one would have faith in Gladstone or Lloyd George saves nobody." Is this a compliment to the distinguished Welsh Baptist?

The clerical mind is a fearful and a wonderful thing. This is how the Rev. F. H. Gillingham, of Bermondsey, refers to the birth of his infant son: "The spell which some evil magician cast over the rectory has now been broken; our little son is the first child born in the rectory for many years." The owner of this massive intellect defends the Christian religion in the pages of a popular monthly magazine.

The *Church Times* expresses its disapproval of the desire of a party in the Anglican Church to revise the Bible by deleting the imprecatory Psalms. In its issue for September 7 it says:—

> We grieve to find that there lived in the early nineteenth century rectors capable of sharing the strange fancies of the Lectionary Revision Committee of to-day. It appears that in a certain village, when the clerk gave out the 94th Psalm:—
>
> O God, to whom revenge belongs,
> Thy vengeance now disclose,

the young rector tapped the partition, and said out, for all the church to hear: "Handy, I don't worship such a Being; sing the evening hymn." But such is the Deity revealed in all parts of the Bible, even in the New Testament, where he is represented as tormenting unbelievers in hell-fire for ever and ever. The only possible refuge for tender-hearted people is to be found in Atheism.

The clerical contention that war has an uplifting tendency is not borne out by facts. There are 90 cases, comprising 140 prisoners, down for trial at the Old Bailey. This is a much heavier list than usual.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton considers that the War against the Central Powers and their Allies is "a peculiarly Christian and peculiarly humanitarian duty." Why does he drag in humanitarian?

Mr. Horatio Bottomley is proving a very awkward convert to Christianity. Writing in the *Sunday Pictorial*, he bursts out, "Cursed be the peacemongers. Clap the lot of them in gaol." Where does Mr. Bottomley expect to spend eternity?

Mr. Austin Harrison has been girding at the English Sunday. "Most places closed," he says, "hardly anywhere to go. Little to do. Few public places of amusement open." That is one of the many blessings springing from the Christian superstition.

The new political movement is described as an effort to form a "stable party." The description would apply to the Christian religion.

Referring to the appalling condition of children during the first half of the nineteenth century, the *Daily News* says "Religion offered them no protection." Yet religion had been in existence for thousands of years.

Principal Selbie, of Mansfield College, Oxford, contributed a highly amusing article to the *Christian World* for September 6, in which he displays a most intimate knowledge of God and his relations with men. He deplores the fact that "many of our intercessions are based on a radically false conception" of the Divine Being, with the result that "men speak to him as though he required to be told of the horror and wickedness abroad in the world, and as though he would not do the right and kind thing until he was asked." But, surely, all prayer is based on that assumption, for otherwise it would have no meaning at all. Three years ago this month churches and chapels held crowded prayer-meetings, at all of which God was passionately asked, pleaded with, to give us a speedy victory. The belief was, as the Bishop of London and Sir William Robertson Nicoll assured us, that if we asked for it earnestly and often enough, God would grant our petition. The futility of that prayer is now known to us all; and no such crowded meetings for intercession are any longer held.

Dr. Selbie admits the decay of the prayer-meeting because the people have lost their faith in the efficacy of prayer. And the people are right. Like the belief in God, prayer is the offspring of ignorance and fear. The Principal knows this as well as we do, and yet as a minister of the Gospel he must urge his fellow-beings to cultivate the habit of prayer, though fully aware that no prayer has ever been answered by a supernatural being. Why culpably waste time and energy, then, on so profitless a performance!

The *Christian World* points out that Church Parade attendance is voluntary in the American Army, and about one in thirteen attend the services. Uncle Sam's soldiers will not fight the worse on that account.

The power of the Church is fast waning, and notably so in social life. Seventy-six decrees nisi were made absolute in the Vacation Court recently. Evidently, more people than ever refuse to believe that those whom "God" hath joined, may not be put asunder.

Providence still has its playful moods. Lightning struck a provincial munitions works recently, and an explosion followed, causing great excitement. A number of women workers fainted.

Chief Constable Stevenson, of Glasgow, is much concerned with the growth of "criminality" amongst boys. Addressing the Scottish Sabbath School Union, he said that the "only

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real deterrent," apart from committal to an industrial school, was whipping. We should have thought that the fallacy of flogging as a moral agent was clear to all intelligent people by now; but it is suggestive that its advocacy should come from a speaker before a Sabbath School Union. How is whipping boys going to counteract the War atmosphere, the absence from home of the father, and the fact of the mother being often away also, engaged on munition-making? In this direction we are paying the price of War. We have all been more or less brutalized this past three years, and it is absurd to expect children to escape. To indulge in a new brutality will only make things worse.

The Lord's Prayer contains a supplication for daily bread, but Providence does not pay much attention to it. In the recent gale at Yaverland, near Newport, Isle of Wight, sheaves of wheat were blown over the cliffs into the sea.

A writer in a daily paper deals with the question of amusement in mathematics, but adds, "I still cannot see myself laughing over the Rule of Three—though I have a dim recollection of weeping over it." Let him dry his tears, and try to solve the tangle of the Trinity.

In a leading article, the *Daily Chronicle* refers to the Vatican as "the ancient repository of Christian virtues." Yet Catholics have covered Europe with fraudulent religious relics.

The Nonconformist *Daily News* expresses astonishment that the great Duke of Marlborough was dubbed "Corporal John," and Napoleon "the little Corporal." Yet Christians profess to believe that the King of Kings was a carpenter.

The *Daily Chronicle* retails a good story of one of Huxley's scientific meetings which was interrupted by a simple-minded parson. It was wrong, he asserted, to disturb the fossil fragments of the Silurian period, for they might be the bones of fallen angels precipitated into the slime after the Deluge. What a comment on the clerical opposition to science.

"Presbyter is but priest writ large," says old John Milton. And Nonconformity apes the arrogance of the older forms of the Christian superstition. At a big Wesleyan meeting recently, Sir Robert Perks referred to reconstruction after the War, and added, "We should feel far more satisfied with these committees if there were among the members fewer Agnostics, fewer Jews, and fewer members of the Fabian Society." Mark the Christian humility! Although Agnostics, Jews, and Socialists are citizens quite as much as Nonconformists, yet this Wesleyan would have them excluded from public life. This is the spirit that once lighted the fires of Smithfield.

A waistcoat worn by King Edward VII., when Prince of Wales, at the marriage of his sister, the Princess Royal, was sold recently for six shillings. How the clergy will smile! They know how to make thousands of pounds from exhibiting the clothing of a man who never lived.

About thirty convalescent soldiers at St. Anne's Convalescent home have protested against a rule of the establishment which beats anything we have read of for bigotry and tyranny. The rule is that the men must attend religious service twice a day or go to bed. We cannot conceive a greater indignity than this being sent to bed like a naughty child for not attending church. Men who submit to it are hardly worth keeping alive. And those who enforce it never ought to have been born.

A Kentish organist estimates that, during nine years, he has smoked a hundredweight of tobacco. As a rule, "sulphurous and tormenting flames" are confined to the pulpit.

Among the schoolboy "howlers," told by the late Headmaster of Eton, is the following:—

> A long time ago they wrote the Apostles' Creed. Nobody believed it. So they waited a bit and wrote the Nicene Creed. Still nobody believed it. So they waited a bit and wrote the Athanasian Creed, and they had to believe that.

Luckily they only had to *believe* it. If they had been forced to understand it, the prospect would have been too horrible for contemplation.

An application came recently before the magistrates of the Worthing Petty Sessions for permission to open the Dome and Theatre for cinema performances. The application was opposed by that relic of the Stone Age, the Lord's Day Observance Society, on the ground that to grant it would mean a desecration of the Sabbath. The military representative and the police both supported the application on the ground that the cinema provided a harmless entertainment for soldiers, and that it meant less drunkenness and less harm in other directions. Ultimately the Bench granted the application, and the supporters of the Lord's Day Observance Society went their way sorrowing.

"To-day devout worshippers at the cathedrals and churches of Russia are fewer in number than they were," says Mr. A. H. Fletcher, in *Cassell's Magazine*. We are pleased to hear it. The Church in Russia has played an evil part in the life of the nation, and it was only to be expected it would suffer when the awakening came. But what of our own press, which gave such wide publicity to two such windbags as the Bishop of London and Mr. Stephen Graham in their praise of the religious life of Russia?

Amazing beyond comment is the credulity of Professor David Smith, who figures so prominently in the *British Weekly*, to which he contributes two articles every week. In the issue for September 6, dealing with to-day's International Lesson for Sunday-schools, he surpasses even himself in treating pure legend as literal fact. The subject is the story of the miraculous escape of the three young Jews when thrown into the over-heated furnace, as related in Daniel, which story Dr. Smith instructs Sunday-school teachers to accept as veritable history, well knowing that Biblical critics regard the Book of Daniel as wholly unhistorical. We sincerely pity the tens of thousands of young people who will be victimized to-day by this mediæval and utterly discredited method of expounding Scripture.

The Book of Daniel was written, as internal evidence clearly shows, between the years 169 and 165 B.C., and has for its object the glorification of Jehovah as infinitely superior to all other gods. Now, the miraculous incidents recorded belong to a period not later than 600-560 B.C., and no reference whatever to them is to be found anywhere else. Probably, the author believed that they had actually happened; but, in any case, he knew that the recital of them would comfort the superstitious and much-tried Hebrews during the horrors of the Maccabæan age. The Book abounds with historical inaccuracies and discrepancies; but Dr. Smith is blind to them all, and contents himself with pietistic platitudes and anti-scientific statements which are completely out of date in the present state of Biblical criticism.

A correspondent sends us the following: An unoffending person in Peckham named Davies last week unwittingly shocked Christendom by changing his name by deed-poll to *W. J. Christ*. A correspondent of the *Weekly Dispatch* is much disturbed, and feels that the Chancery Court has committed a grave blunder in permitting such a name substitute, and thus "doing violence to religious sentiment." The *Weekly Dispatch*, in giving publicity to this "horror," apparently forgets that in Spain and South America the "Christian" name of "Jesus" is a common one, and it is no unusual thing to ask Jesus, one's odd man, to get in the coal, or tell Jesus, one's stable boy, to take a day off at the races! Surely it is high time that we, in this England, were sufficiently broad minded to permit an honest tradesman to change his name without holding up our hands in hypocritical horror, and casting Christian cobblestones at him in the press. Perhaps you, Sir, in the *Freethinker*, will uphold for once the cause of Mr. Christ, who, in this case, is apparently genuine.

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"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

It is never a pleasant task to appeal for money, but so far as it can be robbed of its unpleasantness, this has been done by the prompt and hearty support given to the *Freethinker* Sustentation Fund. And gratified as I naturally am to see so prompt a response, I confess to being still more pleased with the generous tone of the letters that accompanied many of the subscriptions. These have given me renewed encouragement in a situation that is peculiarly trying. Some letters received are of so personal a tone that I cannot do more than acknowledge them in this way. I can only hope I have earned a part of the compliments they offer. Readers will, however, be interested in excerpts from some of the letters received.

From Mr. F. W. Hall we get the following cheery letter:—

> In answer to your appeal in this week's *Freethinker*, I have pleasure in enclosing cheque for £50, and trust the deficit will be quickly made up. It affords me the utmost pleasure to thus have the opportunity of showing my intense appreciation of the excellent way in which the journal is conducted in the interests of what I firmly believe to be the very best of causes.

Mr. H. Jessop, in sending his cheque for £25, writes:—

> I congratulate you on your successful year. It's wonderful! I don't know how you do it, but I hope all Freethinkers will support you by seeing you are not short of cash.

Lady Maxim forwards a cheque for £6 "to a cause that Sir Hiram had very much at heart."

Mr. J. Sumner writes:—

> To have kept the flag up during the past three years of the War is in itself an achievement, but to have increased the circulation and to have improved the paper too, in face of all adverse circumstances, must, I think, induce a glow of appreciation in the circle of its readers which will speedily result in the liquidation of the debt.

Mr. R. Wood writes:—

> You may well feel proud of your wonderful achievement under most trying circumstances. You put the matter very modestly.....but I trust and expect that this modest appeal will be promptly and satisfactorily responded to.

Dr. McDermott, in forwarding cheque, hopes that "in the future history of the *Freethinker* it may not be necessary to encroach upon the private exchequer of its editor and moving spirit." In self-defence I must say that it is not an encroachment upon *my* private exchequer, which, alas! is non-existent. Credit should be given to those friends who have obliged me with loans sufficient to meet the calls upon the paper. My share was to undertake personal responsibility for repayment.

Mr. E. D. Side writes on behalf of a family of sturdy Freethinkers:—

> It is indeed a pleasure to feel we are helping you in your successful effort to keep the *Freethinker* not only going, but of such high quality during the War. It is decidedly the best twopennyworth of *brains* in the market, supplied by real men; and each twopennyworth contains enough to invigorate and strengthen one, however strong in the Cause.

Another old friend of the *Freethinker*, E. B., writes:—

> Will you please accept the enclosed as a humble offering from E. B. You have managed wonderfully, and your self-sacrifice in going without salary, and, moreover, making yourself responsible for borrowed money on behalf of the *Freethinker*, is above all praise.

Mr. W. Mumby wishes all success to the Fund, and thinks the *Freethinker* is more needed now than ever.

"If I were a praying man," writes Mr. J. McGlashan, "you should have my prayers morning, noon, and night for your health and success. Please accept my thanks for your very able conduct of the only paper of its kind." We cheerfully dispense with the prayers of such men as Mr. McGlashan, so long as we have their appreciation and good wishes.

Mr. and Mrs. Harden send cheque with hopes that the *Freethinker* will long keep going, and in memory of their only son, Capt. Allen Harden, D.C.M., mentioned in dispatches, after two and a half years' service, who died of wounds at Dir-es-Salaam, August 3, 1917, aged 24 years. "A born Freethinker." We beg to offer Mr. and Mrs. Harden our sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

C. W. B., in enclosing cheque for £5, hopes that this time the Fund will be kept open for six months. One may assume that the idea behind the suggestion is expressed in set terms by several other subscribers, who hope that enough will be raised to see the *Freethinker* through the War. Of course, if this were done, it would lessen the worry; and one must, apparently, count on at least another year of war. And, naturally, the conditions become more difficult the longer the War continues.

We have many other letters from which we should like to quote, but must defer doing so until next week.

The following represents the subscriptions received up to the time of our going to press:—

First List of Subscriptions.

F. W. Hall, £50. H. Jessop, £25. Lady Sarah Maxim, £6. T. Robertson, £5. Dr. P. M. McDermott, £5 5s. W. Mumby, £5. S. M. Gimson. £5 5s. J. B. Middleton, £5. J. Pendlebury, £3. Miss Pendlebury, 2s. 6d. Collette Jones, £1 1s. D. D. B., £2 2s. T. A. McKee, 2s. 6d. W. H. Harrap, 6s. E. A. McDonald, £1. J. L., 2s. E. J. Jones (Liverpool), 2s. 6d. J. Hamilton (South Shields), 5s. W. R. Munton, £5. Dr. J. Laing, £3 3s. S. M. Peacock, £1 1s. A. R. Wykes, 10s. R. Wood, 15s. Greevz Fysher, £1. J. Sumner, £5 5s. S. Scott, £1. J. G. Finlay, £2. W. A., £1. T. A. Williams, 2s. 6d. E. B., £1 1s. James Davie, £5. R. H. Side, £2. E. D. Side, £2. Mrs. E. D. Side, £1. Miss A. Harris, 5s. G. Backhouse Church, 5s. J. Newton, £1 1s. J. Withy, 10s. R. W. Blakeley, £1 1s. W. B. Columbine, £5 5s. Major G. O. Warren, 5s. G. Alward, £2 2s. A. H. Smith, 10s. 6d. G. R. Harker, 10s. J. Shields, £1 1s. S. Gimson, £3. J. and J. McGlashan, £2. Mrs. H. Parsons, 10s. 6d. H. Austin, 2s. 6d. L. W. (Manchester), 5s. R. Wilson, £1. C. W. B., £5. E. L. G. (Dundee), £1. Surgeon-General D. Sinclair, £2. J. Breese, £1 1s. S. Clowes, 5s. John Roberts, £1. 1s. H. Mitchell, 2s. 6d. J. A. Fallows, £5. T. T. (Glasgow), 2s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Bowman, 5s. Dr. R. T. Nichols, £5 5s. J. R., 1s. Old Member, 10s. Mr. and Mrs. Harden, £1 1s. A. Delve, £2 2s. P. and J. P., 10s. Dr. C. R. Niven, £1 1s. S. Hudson, £1. H. Irving, 10s. G. Samuels, 5s. A. Davies, 5s. A. Vinestock, 5s. J. Davies, 2s. J. Robertson, 5s. J. H. Waters, 10s. T. H. Elstob, £1. A. D., 10s. J. A. Reid, 1s. 6d. J. Daley, 1s. J. G. Bartram, 5s. J. Close, 5s. Frank Maclachlan, £1. R. Daniell, 2s. 6d.

Total: £198 18s. 6d.

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To Correspondents.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 23, Birmingham Town Hall; September 30, Swansea; October 7, Failsworth; October 14, Leicester; October 21, Manchester; October 28, London; November 4, Abertillery.

R. WILSON.—We are flattered by your opinion that, in our hands, the *Freethinker* "will have a long life and an honourable one." We think we can promise it shall have an honourable life, and if it does not have a long one, it will not be for want of hard work on our part.

H. AUSTIN writes that finding an index to this paper would be useful, he compiled one by taking a copy-book, writing down a table of contents each week, and adding author, title, date, and any explanatory note needed. Undoubtedly this plan saves time in the end, and most probably many of our readers adopt a similar plan.

G. ALWARD.—We are much obliged for your subscription to Sustentation Fund, and also for promise to contribute further if necessary. That, we hope, will not be, but we shall see. Anyway, your cheerful help is encouraging.

T. A. WILLIAMS.—The fact of your not going "all the way" with us is a tribute to your own liberality of mind, and cheering to ourselves. Many thanks.

CORPL. A. V. HARRIS.—Glad you found the literature sent useful for distribution. We are sending you on some pamphlets that may prove useful. Shall always be pleased to hear from you and of your experience.

W. PLOTTS (U.S.A.).—Subscription for *Freethinker* received. Pleased to know you think this paper deserves a wide circulation outside of England. Will you be good enough to let us know particulars of the letter sent to this office and to which you received no response. The address of this paper is always at the foot of Correspondence Column and on last page.

Y. O. C.—We *have* several times thought of starting a Children's Column. When we can get a little more assistance on the paper we may do so.

G. GROVE.—A very ancient fable now; but, as you say, it is hard to overtake a lie.

J. R.—Your subscription indicates the right kind of spirit, and so long as that is general among our readers we can face the future with confidence.

G. J. BARTRAM.—Very sorry to hear of the death of yet another young Tyneside *Freethinker*. Please convey our sympathy to the right quarter.

A. M.—It does one good to see you have your heart so much in the cause.

MR. MOUNTAIN.—There are some things that one could not easily pass over. This was one of them. Please to know that your "fondness for the *Freethinker* grows weekly."

MR. AND MRS. BOWMAN.—Thanks for remittance and appreciation of paper.

C. S. MAYER.—Sorry we are unable to give you the exact address, but a letter c/o the University, California, would be almost certain to reach its destination.

T. A. MCKEE.—We hope the future will be brighter for you than you seem to anticipate; but whatever it is, your letter shows you will face it with courage.

F. DORRINGTON.—We agree with you that it would be well to reprint many of the late G. W. Foote's articles. We are always on the point of doing so, but the pressure of matter awaiting publication prevents realization. However, we will try and reprint some occasionally.

P. RIPLEY.—Shall appear.

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.

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

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.

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. Cohen commences his Autumn lecturing campaign with two lectures in the Town Hall, Birmingham, on September 23. As the Town Hall has a seating capacity of between 2,000 and 3,000, we hope that local Freethinkers will do their best to see that it is well filled on both occasions. A well filled hall helps both speaker and audience.

A Freethinker writes from the Front:—

> *Apropos* of God's wonderful preservation of crucifixes, let me give you a true authenticated fact.
>
> On a recent part of the Front, during the German retreat, attached to a large roadside crucifix was a tin can, tied by wire. A Tommy, when releasing same, was, along with the crucifix, severely damaged, owing to a bomb, being concealed in tin can, exploding.
>
> A suitable postcard, subscribed by the boys, has been forwarded to the Rev. J. Thomas, of Chelmsford, who ascribed the heavy storms of late to the fact of Divine displeasure at people working on their allotments on Sunday. He will receive a shock. A pity these gentry, who are in such close touch with God, cannot ask him to stop the War. Probably that would be asking him too much.
>
> We had a parson lecturing last Monday on "Why Marry?" He is single.

Business as usual—on both sides.

The same correspondent vouches for the truth of the following story:—

> A body of troops entraining for the Front were being supplied with refreshments (on payment of course). Two or three men had been supplied with tea. Shortly afterwards they returned to the coffee-stall and told the lady helps that the tea just supplied to them they had used for making cocoa, could they have more, it was just as serviceable as hot water?

At the last moment considerations of space compel us to hold over a fresh instalment of Mr. Palmer's excellent articles on "The Rise and Progress of Mental Power." We much regret having to do this, but good things are worth waiting for, and Mr. Palmer's readers will kindly reserve their mildest malediction for the editorial head.

The North London Branch N. S. S. has arranged a Whist Drive for Wednesday, October 3, to be held in the Large Hall, St. Pancras Reform Club, Victoria Road, Kentish Town. Tickets, price 1s. (for members and friends only), may be obtained from the Secretary of the Branch, Miss Lane, 29 Burton Street, King's Cross, W.C.1; Miss Brandes, 89 Union Grove, Wandsworth, S.W.; and from all Branch Secretaries. Prizes, of course, will be given. Early applications for tickets should be made, as the number is limited.

The Prayer Importunate.

A CHANCE phrase often succeeds in making a sharp appeal to the imagination, opening out interesting fields of speculation. Such a phrase is "a daring Christian thinker" just encountered in a volume entitled *Prayer in War Time*, by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll. What can constitute "a daring Christian thinker" at this time of day? A generation ago such a reputation was easily gained. An attempt to soften the crudity of any demented dogma was quite enough. Dean Farrar, for instance, became an "advanced" thinker by merely doubting the number of thermal units in store for those who spurned the narrow way. Nowadays one can occupy a Christian pulpit in a state of complete dogmatic nudity, and play shuttlecock with the faith of our fathers without creating

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more than a mild sensation. And if one is capable of more or less skilfully punning on the terminology of the creeds and articles no sensation would be created at all. This is, in fact, theological modernism. Other avenues of hardihood have been opened out by publicly damning the Sultan, and, more recently, thanking God for the Zeppelins; though, in this latter case, we are willing to admit daring. Altogether, we are inclined to think that Dr. Nicoll himself is, perhaps, as deserving of such a distinction as anyone; to write a volume on the subject of prayer at this moment of the world's history is courageous to a degree.

It is more than courageous; it is audacious. For consider what the present situation is as expressed by John Galsworthy:—

> God on the lips of each potentate and under a hundred thousand spires prayer that twenty-two million servants of Christ may receive from God the blessed strength to tear and blow each other to pieces, to ravage and burn, to wrench husbands from wives, fathers from their children, to starve the poor, and everywhere destroy the works of the spirit. Prayer under the hundred thousand spires for the blessed strength of God, to use the noblest, most loyal instincts of the human race to the ends of carnage!
>
> No supernatural creed—in these days when two and two are put together—can stand against such reeling subversions.

But Galsworthy is but a humble uninspired scribe with a negligible following of thoughtful men with big hearts. The editor of the *British Weekly* leads religious Nonconformity, is an Honourable Knight, and has "done his bit" in the Great War by helping to raise to power a prayerful premier. Such a dignitary is not likely to yield with unseemly haste to the logic of the moment. Besides, Nonconformity has never struck us as being particularly interested in elementary mathematics, and reeling under subversions may be to it but a normal and blessed exercise of faith. It is British Nonconformity that constitutes Dr. Nicoll's public.

Pace Galsworthy then. Dr. Nicoll "is very deeply convinced that if we are to see the end of this horrible anarchy we must far more seriously as a nation and as individuals give ourselves to prayer." "It is our business to pray for victory on the battlefield." "We must pray for our soldiers and sailors, and pray, as far as possible, for each by name." It is both "lawful and right." The one thing wanted, in fact, above all, is a "nation of pray-ers." Not only pray-ers, but "good pray-ers." The distinction is important, and has interesting implications. Prayer is not, or should not be, a poor stuttering mode of communication between man and his maker. It should be based on principles which Dr. Nicoll, *en rapport* with the celestial mind, undertakes to "apply to our present circumstances." It is his knowledge of the ingredients of the "good prayer" which will make, one would think, his volume both useful and timely to believers. For none, we take it, cares to pray for an altogether unreasonable period without encouragement. The believer in Prayer without Ceasing, be he ever so enthusiastic for a "Wait and See" policy, is apt to faint by the wayside if the waiting is indefinite and the state of "low visibility" permanent. Learning that he is but a poor pray-er, he, naturally, turns to a celebrated divine for the correct form of incantation. Dr. Nicoll, being a veritable John Wellington Wells, can tell him how, when, and where to pray; in short, how to pray "with acceptation."

Our mind not being in tune with the Infinite, we are, naturally, puzzled over the recommendations. When Dr. Nicoll admits, as he is bound to, that God answers prayer as he thinks fit, one would expect him in logic to put in a good word for the prayer of resignation, expressed or unexpressed. But no, God does not mean our prayers to be "a mere sign of acquiescence." Some degree of garrulity is preferable to a simple "Thy will be done." The "prayer of yearning" also is damned with faint praise. No doubt it has its points, but "prayer succeeds by the intensity of the will power put into it." The prayer with the greatest chance of materializing, then, is the "importunate prayer." "God," we are told, "loves to be entreated, pleaded with, wrestled with." These are the prayers that tell, unless, of course, we are hopelessly literal-minded and expect to get what we pray for. "Ask and ye shall receive," says Holy Writ, but it is not promised, mark you, that you shall receive what you ask for. This is a shallow interpretation confined to fellows careless alike of ablutions and aspirates, who bellow out blasphemies from egg-boxes in public places. Students of High Olympus know better. They know how the gods delight in laying verbal pitfalls. Note how ingeniously Midas, for instance, was tripped up over a phrase, and his case was only one of thousands. Perfectly justifiable, then, and in strict accord with precedent is the reading: Ask for bread and you may receive a stone; seek for comfort and you may receive tribulation; knock at the door of Paradise but abandon hope all you that enter there.

If we accept, and we might as well, that the importunate prayer is the prayer that God loves best, then the Deity, for one, has managed to drain some satisfaction from the last three years. One importunate prayer has been urged with troublesome urgency and reiteration:—

> Fathers, mothers, wives, lovers pray that prayer and wonder how it is with their dearest in these vallies and heights of death.....Oftentimes they are stricken and blinded by receiving the tidings that this one prayer the nearest to the heart and the dearest can be uttered no more. Each name on the long list on which our eyes fasten every morning means the stilling of an importunate prayer, often of many importunate prayers, which for weeks and months and years have been lifted to God.....We know very well, however, that promises which attach to prayer do not and cannot attach to every petition. We know that not all of our prayers can be granted. Not everyone can come back whole or even wounded from the battlefield.

Still, "We must be importunate in prayer—*importunate that is for that answer God is always willing to bestow.*" We have taken the liberty to italicize this last qualification, for it seems to us not only to discourage the Christian business man, but to chill into non-existence the importunity of the most devout. In spite of the puffs preliminary the prayer importunate is turning out to be but a sorry speculation. But we have Dr. Nicoll's word for it that it is the best line in prayer-going.

We know, with the writer, that many prayers are not answered; but this seems to be the only point where our information coincides. We do not know of any prayer that is answered, and here we are led to infer that our knowledge is much less than his. Still, we have something approaching a conviction that Dr. Nicoll also knows not of any such thing. We are convinced, also, that he is really profoundly ignorant of a Deity "that loves to be entreated, pleaded with, and wrestled with," and measures out his favours accordingly. We believe, in short, that he knows very little indeed about such matters, but that he has simply got into a habit of emulating Merlin when his followers clamour for a sign.

The circumstances responsible for the importunate prayer, the anguish and sincerity that characterize them, make an appeal to us if not to the Deity; and in no particular instance can one feel inclined for either remonstrance or criticism. We must content ourselves

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with the one satisfactory fact that from this plethora of petitionings, in every case one form or other of human love emerges. One member of the human family feels the presence of another to be in degree necessary to his or her happiness, and it is from this great outstanding fact of love that all hopes of human regeneration spring. There can be no doubt, either, that the value of prayer is being questioned by thousands owing to the failure of the one importunate prayer. All these, if desirous of helping on the time when the sum-total of human grief will be diminished, will be thrown back upon human effort and human resource. It may seem to some a black day when the help of Omnipotence is dispensed with. With the help of Omnipotence, the day is black enough—so black, indeed, that Humanists cannot afford to lose the help of anyone of heart and head at present endeavouring to alter the course of events by importuning the atmosphere. When the poignancy of their grief is over, and they are prepared for stouter counsel, they must be told once more of the evil that is wrought by want of thought, and learn that they must stand erect and with eyes very wide open indeed if they are ever to come to grips with the Infamous.

T. H. E.

The "New Republic" and the New Religion.

MR. JOSEPH MCCABE has recently remarked upon the absence of anything like a weighty Freethought movement in the United States of America. When one considers in what manner the Churches in this country have been driven to theological re-statement and to social activity by the pressure of humanist movements outside them, one is not surprised to discover that organized religion in America, comparatively undisturbed by such movements, maintains much that has here been discarded.

In a recent issue (June 9, 1917), of the *New Republic*, a journal which in the realm of politics expresses the democratic ideals of President Wilson with marked distinction, and is consequently widely quoted in Europe, there was an article on "The Future of Religion," by Professor Kirsopp Lane, of Harvard. In this article there is expressed that vague, nebulous view of religion which one associates with the new theologians from Mr. Campbell to Mr. Wells. That such an article should appear in the *New Republic* is a remarkable evidence of the backwardness of our Trans-Atlantic cousins in those tasks of research and rational reconstruction to which, every year, an increasing body of the most intelligent of our population is devoting itself.

Professor Kirsopp Lane, for all he teaches early Christian history at Harvard, paints a picture of the theologians and preachers of America which is as black as any Rationalist could make it. "I am pessimistic," he writes, "about the present attitude and the future fate of the Churches."

His pessimism is, to be sure, justifiable enough on his own showing. He writes of "ministers of religion" who "are tragically ignorant of the history of religious thought"; of the God of their conception as "a God outside the universe which he created, playing, as it were, tricks with it, in alternating moments of superhuman love and infra-human wrath. He has unlimited power, but he does not use it to prevent evil." This sort of God, says the Professor bluntly, "is not conceivable by a rational mind."

There is growing up in America inevitably, as in every free country, a generation which cannot stomach this theological reaction, and is looking for more rational and nobler principles. What sort of provision can this learned Christian Professor make for it?

Just as his strictures on orthodox theologians and ministers are those which have been the commonplaces of criticism in this country for many years, so his notion of religion for the future is the commonplace and utterly unsatisfactory notion of a non-anthropomorphic view of God, and of religion as a part of life and not as something "added on to life."

Professor Kirsopp Lane gives no hint that it is being found possible to get along quite well without God; but he is greatly concerned to establish the possibility of a concept of God and of religion that shall not conflict with the best thought and the highest emotion of men.

I confess that some of his arguments are ingenious, but none of them are at all convincing. For example, he says:—

> It must be remembered that the exact phrase "a personal God" scarcely belongs to the great period of formative Christian theology. (If any doubt this let them try to translate "a personal God" into Greek.)

It is a little astonishing to be told that "a personal God" is a phrase that "scarcely belongs to the great period of formative Christian theology." Dr. Kirsopp Lane's stress is, of course, on the words "*the exact phrase*," and the theologian will readily perceive what he is driving at, and that he might be able to make an academic case of sorts for this contention. But what does it matter? The real question of the moderns is not as to this or that conception of God. It is as to whether *any* conception of God is possible, nay, is not in conflict with all that we know of the origins and development of the world and of makind?

In precisely the same manner—I had almost written the same tricky manner—the slightly more practical problem of the relations of religion and life are dealt with. Thus:—

> In early or mediæval thought the belief obtained that religion was something added on to life. A man might do his work well and be a good and useful member of society; but unless he was religious and did the extra things which religion demanded, he was a lost soul. This is the implication of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*..... Now the situation is changed; religion is valued as a part of ordinary life, so far as it makes men good citizens, and the whole idea of salvation by some appendix to life, controlled by some special class, is in abeyance and to most of us repugnant. We agree with the poet, though perhaps not in his sense, that "the daily round, the common task, will furnish all we need to ask."

Now, this is an argument with which we are very familiar. When the supernatural faith has failed, when everything that the theologians have taught has proved futile to arrest the progress of enquiry and mental emancipation, when, despite all the obstacles of the Churches, men come face to face with realities; the people who provided the obstacles, the powers that veiled the realities, say—"these realities to which you have come—these are religion!"

It is an argument which could only be swallowed by a person of more than mediæval credulity, and one not without awkward consequences for those who make use of it. Professor Kirsopp Lane does make use of it thus recklessly:—

> .....This is religion. It is the real thing; and the religious nature of the whole mind of the modern man is being revealed to the student of historical theology, as he sees how, in war and in peace, men subordinate their own interests to those of some higher aim in which, express it how they may, they find the true purpose of life. Therefore, that this is religion I do not doubt; but whether it will officially retain that name is another question.

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There is only one escape for the Professor from the charge of reckless superficiality. Is he not, after all, attempting to provide an easy road from faith to reason? For he says:—

> Faith is not the antithesis of doubt, which is only another name for intelligence, but of timidity. It is the power which leads men to go on, knowing that that which is beyond is good, and trusting themselves to the guidance of life. It means forgetting the things which are behind and reaching out to the things which are before. In his own sphere the business man of to-day has done this; in his own very different sphere the man of science has done this. To continue in Biblical language, they have used the talents entrusted to them and need not be afraid to stand before the Son of Man.

And he concludes:—

> But the professional ecclesiastic has insisted on keeping his talent unchanged, removed from the commerce of the market, and the time is approaching when it will be taken from him and be given to others; he himself will retain merely the hole in the ground in which he once hid it. He may continue to call that hole religion or God or Christianity or anything which he likes, and perhaps he will be allowed by others to do so, for men who are in earnest have little time and small inclination to contend about words. But the reality will be elsewhere, even if it be under another name, and the children of the new age will follow the reality, not the name.

Put into plain English, this means that religion for every man is the following out of truth and duty, that it is, in a word, the fine conception of enlightened humanity. Why, then, call it religion—a name with an ugly history; and why seek to attach to these antiquated legends and formulæ of the past the ever-growing body of truth which mankind has learned, despite the opposition of their professional defenders?

Professor Kirsopp Lane says he is an optimist about religion! But what he is optimistic about is humanity—like all the theologians of the modern school who are not really theologians at all.

Alan Handsacre.

Correspondence.

INFANT MORTALITY AND THE BIRTH-RATE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Is "Y. C." quite justified in his contention that a high birth-rate necessarily connotes a high infant mortality rate?

The following points, I think, will show that there is at least another side to the question.

1. The Jews are strikingly prolific, yet both their infant and general mortality are low.
2. The Irish have a high birth-rate and a low infant mortality rate.
3. The birth-rate in England and Wales began to decrease since 1870, yet the infant mortality rate was never so high as it was in the decennium 1891-1900.
4. Some medical officers of health, particularly Dr. Hope, of Liverpool, have shown that there are families in which 50 per cent. of the children have died before reaching their second birthday, yet other families having the same number of children and living under similar conditions of sanitation, in the same streets and districts, have been enabled to rear all their children.

This point is also of importance in showing how small is the effect of sanitation in affecting infant mortality; and is now generally admitted by sanitary authorities. At a Public Health Conference, a few years ago, Dr. Buchan, Medical Officer of Health for Bradford, declared that there was a general consensus of opinion among sanitary experts that sanitation has little or no effect upon infant mortality. This opinion was generally endorsed by Dr. S. G. Moore, Medical Officer of Health for Huddersfield, in his Milroy Lectures of last year.

5. Have not the records of the Tribunal Courts constantly shown that the biggest families have often the most robust children?
6. That the factors of infant mortality are not quite so obvious as is generally supposed, may be gathered from the following facts:—
   (*a*) On the Isle of St. Kilda, off the north-west coast of Scotland, from 50 to 60 per cent. of the children born there died before they were nine days old. They were born apparently quite healthy, and if they succeeded in surviving the first fortnight after birth, there was no further danger. This remarkable mortality continued for about 150 years, until the beginning of this century.
   (*b*) Coal-mining villages throughout England and Wales have extraordinarily high infant mortality rates. Even when ideally situated, and when both the housing and sanitation are quite satisfactory (I am now speaking from actual personal experience), the rate of infant mortality is often much higher than that of the poorest parts of the East End of London.
   (*c*) The infant mortality of Malta is very high; averaging, for the past fifteen years, about 210 per 1,000 births. Yet its sanitation is quite up-to-date; and there is practically no industrial employment of mothers. Comparing Malta with the towns of Sicily and of Southern Italy, although their sanitation is in an extremely backward condition indeed; yet the infant mortality of the latter is much lower than that of Malta.

My own opinion is that the schools for mothers have provided the key to the solution of the problem: "Feed the expectant and nursing mother with an adequate supply of wholesome food, so that she may be able to feed her baby at the breast." I believe that also explains the low infant mortality obtaining among the Jews and the Irish.

J. McGhee.

SOCIALISM AND FREETHOUGHT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Although the *Freethinker's* special province is the exposure of religious fraud and the emancipation of the people from the religious superstitions which enervate and impoverish them, yet there are economic superstitions equally baneful, because the free expression of honest thought is now impossible except for the few who possess economic independence. And so I was very glad to read Mr. Thos. A. Jackson's article on the above subject in your issue of to-day, and thus learn so many details about the famous Karl Marx.

Mr. Jackson, however, concludes with the categorical statement that "every genuine Socialist *must* be a Freethinker," which is clearly meaningless unless we know just what the terms used connote. I certainly do not limit my definition of a Socialist to those only who accept the Marxian economic philosophy, any more than I limit my definition of a Freethinker to those only who accept the religious philosophy of our respected Editor. A Socialist seems to me to be one who sees the folly and injustice of our present social system, and thinks they can best be remedied by collective ownership and management of industry; while a Freethinker seems to me to be one who has enough independence of character to think out his opinions for himself, and who abjures all authority in the exercise of his reason or the expression of his views, and is, moreover, eager to allow the same freedom of thought and expression to those who differ from him.

In view of those two definitions, it is certainly not true that every Socialist must be a Freethinker. There are many degrees in Socialism, *e.g.*, a man may believe in nationalizing the railways, the mines, and the shipping, in addition to what is already nationalized, viz., the Army and the Navy and the Post Office, without going any further; so far he would be a Socialist, without any reference to his belief in a God or the reverse. Besides that, if we had a complete system

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of State Socialism—every form of industry under the control of State officials—it is true that we should all be sure of good food, clothing, and shelter, so long as we behaved ourselves in accordance with the regulations, as in the Army and Navy now; but I very much fear that our freedom of thought and expression would not be nearly so great as in the present economic variety show.

Since the War broke out, we have had a fairly good experience of the tyranny and inefficiency of a socialistic bureaucracy, which have been endured solely because we are seriously threatened by an infinitely worse tyranny in the hands of a German bureaucracy.

And when we trace the present disparities of wealth to their source, they are found to rest on the two great monopolies of land and banking, causing enormous increments of unearned wealth to fall into the hands of a few privileged persons. A National Bank, furnishing banking facilities at their true labour cost of half per cent., would give us a non-interest-bearing currency. The land could then be nationalized by buying out its present owners, who would soon cease to enjoy unearned incomes, because the money they received would have lost its unjust power of automatic increase. So far, then, I am a Socialist; and as I acknowledge no authorities in forming my views on any subject, I am also a genuine Freethinker.

September 2, 1917. G. O. WARREN, MAJOR (retired).

Obituary.

It was with sincere regret that we learned recently of the death of Mr. George Taylor, of Liverpool, a man whose devotion to Freethought was well known and appreciated. We refrained from saying anything at the time, as we were informed, that a Church of England Service had been conducted at the cremation, which took place at Anfield Cemetery. On inquiry, we learned that this was done at the instance of Mrs. Taylor, against the desire of the dead man and also in spite of the protest of his son, who would, naturally and properly, have liked to see his father's wishes carried out. Unfortunately, the power of the next of kin in this matter is absolute; and where religious prejudice overcomes one's respect for the memory and the expressed wish of the dead, he or she orders matters to his or her liking. For ourselves, we can only regret that so sturdy a Freethinker was exposed to this last insult. Mr. Taylor made no secret of his opinions while living; he was prompt and generous in the support he gave to Freethought propaganda; and his death removes a much-respected member from the ranks of Liverpool Freethinkers.—C. C.

We regret to report the death of Mr. Alfred Ford, of Rotherhithe, in the sixty-sixth year of his age. He was a constant reader of the *Freethinker*, and a great admirer of the late G. W. Foote. He had a long and painful illness, which he endured with remarkable fortitude, and during which he availed himself of every opportunity to express his Freethought convictions. He had two sons in the Army, one of whom was killed some time ago. The funeral took place at Brockley Cemetery on Tuesday afternoon, September 4, when a Secular Service was conducted. He had asked his friend, Mr. G. Hollamby, to see that he was buried "without any of the men of God stepping in." "They had me at my birth and at my wedding," he added, "but I don't want them to have me at my death." We tender the widow and family our sincere sympathy in their bereavement.—J. T. L.

With deep regret I record the death of another young Freethinker, Private Robert William Warner, aged twenty-one, of Gateshead, who was killed in action on August 10. Deceased was the son of Mrs. Alice and the late George Warner, both pronounced Freethinkers, the latter being well known locally as an outdoor advocate of Freethought in Newcastle. Young Warner was of a more retiring disposition than his father, but his cheery voice and happy countenance will be greatly missed. Readers of the *Freethinker* will sympathize with his sorrowing mother and stepfather, Mr. Jas. Blackhall, in their sad bereavement.—J. G. B.

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.

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SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Miller, "Charles Bradlaugh: His Life and Work."

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Views and Opinions.

Agnostic or Atheist?

A correspondent asks *apropos* of our notes of September 16, if we can tell him the difference between Agnosticism and Atheism. Candidly, we can't—at least so far as the question of the existence of God is concerned, and in any other connection the subject is of no consequence here. In a philosophical discussion there is a question as to the nature of "Reality"—something which is assumed to exist beyond the world as it appears in consciousness, and is the cause of our conscious states—and in relation to that we can conceive a state of mind that may be correctly described as "Agnostic." But in relation to the existence of God, we can see no distinction whatever between a logical Agnosticism and Atheism. Neither have we ever met anyone who could explain wherein the difference lies. All we know is that some people prefer the name "Agnostic" to that of Atheist. They prefer the new name; we prefer the old one. But as the Agnostic is one who doesn't believe in a God, and the Atheist is one who is without belief in a God, we find ourselves quite unable to point the difference between the two. To use an alleged Hibernicism, they are both alike, but one is more so.

* * *

Science and God.

The peculiar thing is that so many people, of whom one would expect better things, persist in debating the question of belief in God as though they existed in the eighteenth century instead of the twentieth. Let us bear in mind that for considerably over half a century anthropologists have been collecting, classifying, and analyzing facts, all of which go to show how the idea of gods originated, and how it has developed. Now, we admit, that one may reject the story of the origin of the God-idea as told by anthropology, and logically profess a condition of mental uncertainty as regards the existence of God. But if one accepts this story as true in only a general way, what is their left for discussion? Is not Atheism the logical—the only issue? If people began to believe in gods because in their ignorance they misunderstood things, which we now understand, what is there left for discussion? A little more than two centuries ago the belief in witches was in full vogue. And, under the then existing conditions, one can conceive many people being genuinely puzzled as to whether witches really existed. But when the facts upon which this belief was based were properly understood, and differently interpreted, what room was there for doubt or debate? Clearly none at all. And this is quite on all fours with the belief in God. If the belief in gods began in a mistaken interpretation of natural facts, subjective or objective, what justification is there for regarding the conclusion as probably true when the premiss is dismissed as demonstrably false? No amount of reasoning can bring something out of nothing. You cannot extract a fact from a delusion. You may, if you like, dispute the anthropological date, but you cannot honestly ignore it, still less can you admit it, and then proceed with your argumentation as though it did not exist. If a reinterpretation of the facts upon which the belief in witches rested, warrants a complete rejection of the idea of witchcraft, why will not a reinterpretation of the facts upon which the belief in gods rest, warrant us in treating the God-idea in the same fashion?

* * *

Does Atheism Deny?

It may be said that the Atheist is one who denies the existence of God; the Agnostic merely suspends judgment. But this statement concerning the Atheist is, in one sense, not true, because it is impossible. In another sense it is as true of the Agnostic as it is of the Atheist. There is, even with the Agnostic, no hesitation in denying the existence of any of the god's figured by the religions of the world. The Agnostic is not in doubt concerning the existence of the God of the Bible any more than he is in doubt concerning the existence of the Mumbo Jumbo of an African tribe. The Agnostic is not in doubt here. His disbelief is complete and final. And if we reject the possibility of these particular gods one after the other, what have we left? All that remains is the bare word, and that by itself stands for nothing at all. Abstractions are—abstractions, they are not existences. Once all particular gods are negatived the word "God" loses all significance or value. The Atheist, therefore, cannot deny the existence of a "God" because by itself the word is unintelligible. It stands for nothing that will carry affirmation or negation. And in repudiating or denying the existence of particular gods, he is doing only what every Agnostic is bound to do, and does without the slightest hesitation.

* * *

On Behalf of Clarity.

It may be said that we are trying to prove a negative. But this is not so. One can only attempt to prove a negative when the terms of a proposition admit of being brought together in consciousness. Mark Twain said that he believed Adam was buried in the place pointed out to him, because no one had ever been able to prove that he wasn't. But if anyone had tried to do so the

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terms of the proposition—a dead man, a grave, an act of burial—were all realizable in thought. But in the case of the existence of "God" we are on different ground. Historically, "God" means a God believed in by some people, somewhere, at some time. Put on one side this consideration, and there is left the subject of neither affirmation nor negation. "God" in the abstract is not a possibly real existence any more than a tree in the abstract is a real existence. There is a pine tree, a pear tree, an apple tree, etc., but there is and can be no "tree" apart from known trees. So, if we accept the possibility of the existence of the gods worshipped by various peoples, "God does exist," or "God does not exist," becomes an intelligible proposition. Reject this existence, as Agnostics do, and there is nothing left. We have nothing of which we can plead ignorance, there is nothing concerning which we can profess a suspension of judgment. "God," by itself, means nothing. It is nothing. No one can deny its existence, for no one knows what it means. * * *

Atheism the Logical Issue.

The present position of affairs is curious. On the one side there is a crowd of theologians whose minds are naturally in the pre-evolutionary stage, and whose thinking is unaffected by the newer knowledge. From them no one expects a recognition of the truth that the gods have been explained out of existence, as witches and warlocks were several generations ago. But stranger still it is to see on the other side those who avow acceptance of the natural origin of the God-idea, and who yet, when they come to deal with current religion, talk as though it were a question of the inconclusiveness of religious arguments. It is nothing of the kind. The reply to the arguments set forth on behalf of Theism is not that they are inconclusive, and therefore leave one undecided, but that they are absolutely irrelevant to the question at issue. We cannot remain undecided because there is nothing to be undecided about. We *know* that the idea of God is pure myth, and that it was never anything else. A belief that began in error, and which has no other basis than error, cannot, by any possible argument, be converted into a truth. The old question was: "Can man by searching find out God?" The modern answer is an emphatic affirmative. Substantially we have, by searching, found out God. We know, substantially, the origin and history of one of the greatest delusions that ever obsessed the human mind. God has been found out. Analytically and synthetically we understand the God-idea as previous generations could not understand it. It has been explained; and the logical consequence of that explanation is—Atheism.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Reformation in Scotland.

I.

THE more we study the Protestant Reformation the more indubitable it becomes that it was a movement calculated ultimately to make, not for a higher type of spiritual religion than the prevailing one, but for the emancipation and glorification of the human reason. We do not affirm that it actually established religious liberty, or the right of private judgment. Its immediate object, as championed by Luther and Calvin, was to transfer the seat of authority from an infallible Church to an infallible Book. This change did secure religious liberty to the Reformers themselves, but not to the rank and file of their followers. There was absolutely no liberty to criticize any of the Reformed doctrines, and many were imprisoned, tortured, and put to death, simply because they had the courage to commit that heinous offence. Professor Bury is quite right when he says that "nothing was further from the minds of the leading Reformers than the toleration of doctrines differing from their own," and that "so far as the spirit of intolerance went, there was nothing to choose between the new and the old Churches" (*History of Freedom of Thought*, pp. 77, 78). Furthermore, the Protestant Reformation was not even a religious movement, pure and simple. No doubt, Luther and Calvin were pre-eminently religious men, but the changes which they were the means of introducing were more political and social than religious. Now, what was true of the movement in Germany, Switzerland, and, to a certain extent in France, was truer still in England. Henry VIII. broke with Rome and established the Anglican Church, not on religious grounds at all, but on grounds exclusively personal and political. Had the Pope sanctioned the divorce between him and Catherine, there would have been no Protestant Reformation in England, at least during his reign. In Scotland, the movement, in its origin, lacked the religious element altogether. The first Protestants did not even pretend to be led by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of restoring religion to its pristine simplicity and purity, but were influenced solely by a desire to be revenged upon the Court and the Church. Their desire to reform the Church was the offspring of a stronger desire to punish the ecclesiastical leaders who, acting conjointly with the Crown, had done them such gross injustice.

In order to understand the origin and nature of the Reformation in Scotland, we must take a glance at the problems which confronted that country as it emerged from the darkness of the Middle Ages. During the Dark Ages, the Scots, though intellectually a superior race, were in a state of deplorable ignorance and stupidity. We are told by one, whose disposition was to exaggerate the noble qualities of his countrymen, that "from the accession of Alexander III. to the death of David in 1370, it would be impossible, I believe, to produce a single instance of a Scottish baron who could sign his own name" (Tyler's *History of Scotland*, vol. ii., pp. 239, 240). Buckle says that having no trades, or arts, which required skill or dexterity, upon which to exercise their intellects, the people "remained so stupid and brutal, that an intelligent observer who visited Scotland in the year 1360, likens them to savages, so much was he struck by their barbarism and their unsocial manners" (*History of Civilization in England*, vol. iii., pp. 38, 39). Naturally, in such dense ignorance, superstition luxuriated and priestcraft bore high-handed sway. Every department of the country's life was controlled by the Church. Even the national conscience was in subjection to priestly authority. No other country in the world, except Spain, was so absolutely loyal to what was believed to be Divine rule. The Scots could put their kings to death without a scruple, but they never failed to respect and obey their priests.

Now, the Scottish Church was steeped in the grossest corruption. The lives of the clergy were notoriously dissolute and openly dishonest, and there was nothing they would not do to gratify their lust and their greed. Buckle describes them thus:—

> In the fourteenth century, when the sufferings of Scotland were at their height, the clergy flourished more than ever; so that as the country became poorer, the spiritual classes became richer in proportion to the rest of the nation. Even in the fifteenth, and first half of the sixteenth, century when industry began somewhat to advance, we are assured that notwithstanding the improvement in the position of laymen, the whole of their wealth put together, and including the possessions of all ranks, was barely equal to the wealth of the

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> Church. If the hierarchy were so rapacious and so successful during a period of comparative security, it would be difficult to overrate the enormous harvest they must have reaped in those earlier days, when danger being much more imminent, hardly had any one died without leaving something to them; all being anxious to testify their respect towards those who knew more than their fellows, and whose prayers could either avert present evil, or secure future happiness (*History of Civilization in England*, vol. iii., pp. 35, 36).

Wealth led to luxury, luxury to immorality, and the immorality of the clergy to that of the people generally. We know that in obedience to a papal order, issued in 1225, a council of Scottish ecclesiastics was held, at which the shameless licentiousness of the clergy was denounced "as a disgrace to the Church." But this violent denunciation of the assembled Fathers-in-God resulted in little if any improvement, for we find that towards the middle of the sixteenth century a Dominican, named William Arith, undertook the task of attacking the vices of his fellow-Churchmen. He preached several sermons at St. Andrew's, in one of which he argued "that the disorders of the clergy should be subjected to the jurisdiction of the civil authorities."

> He introduced an anecdote respecting Prior Patrick Hepburn, afterwards Bishop of Murray. That prelate once, in merry discourse with his gentlemen, asked of them the number of their mistresses, and what proportion of the fair dames were married. The first who answered confessed to five, of whom two were bound in wedlock; the next boasted of seven, with three married women among them; and so on until the turn came to Hepburn himself, who, proud of his *bonnes fortunes*, declared that, although he was the youngest man there, his mistresses numbered twelve, of whom seven were men's wives (Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, vol. ii., p. 156).

Curiously enough, however, the Scottish Reformation did not originate as a protest against the appalling degradation and corruption of the Church, but rather, as an expression of the hostility of the nobles towards both Crown and Church. For generations Crown and Church had co-operated in numerous attempts to crush the aristocracy. As Buckle says, "in Scotland the power of the nobles was a cruel malady, which preyed on the vitals of the nation"; but the same was true of Crown and Church. James I. systematically oppressed the nobles, his object being to establish his own sovereignty throughout the land. In the Parliament assembled at Perth in the spring of 1425, he suddenly arrested a large number of them, including the Duke of Albany and his two sons, whom, together with the Earl of Lennox, he put to death, and confiscated the estates of several of them. Two years later, at Inverness, he laid hands on Donald of the Isles and fifty of his chiefs, three of whom were executed, and forty sent to prison. But in 1436 the nobles turned upon his Majesty and put him to death. James II. pursued the same oppressive policy, in which he was cordially supported by the Church, his confidential adviser being Kennedy, Bishop of St. Andrews. James III. exerted himself to the utmost with the same purpose in view, and was in his turn slain by his enemies. Taking a comprehensive survey of the whole subject, we agree with Buckle's following observation:—

> Looking at the interest of the nation, it is evident that the power of the nobles, notwithstanding their gross abuse of it, was, on the whole, beneficial, since it was the only barrier against despotism. The evil they actually engendered was indeed immense. But they kept off other evils, which would have been worse. By causing present anarchy they secured future liberty (*History of Civilization in England*, vol. iii., p. 30).

In the Scottish commonwealth in the fifteenth century there were only three orders, namely, government, clergy, and nobles, and we find ourselves substantially at one with the same author in the following statement:—

> The two first being united against the last, it is certain that if they had won the day, Scotland would have been oppressed by the worst of all yokes to which a country can be subjected. It would have been ruled by an absolute king and an absolute Church, who, playing into each other's hands, would have tyrannized over a people, who, though coarse and ignorant, still loved a certain rude and barbarous liberty, which it was good for them to possess, but which, in the face of such a combination, they would most assuredly have forfeited (*Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 51).

As a matter of fact, the combined action of kings and priests utterly failed to break the power of the nobles. Between 1513 and 1524 they flourished abundantly until the management of affairs fell into the hands of the the Douglases, who seized the person of the king, deposed the powerful Beaton from the office of chancellor, and put themselves and their adherents into every official position. But their prosperity lasted but a day. Cardinal Beaton's political ingenuity and priestly cunning triumphed, and by a well-organized conspiracy he rescued the king from captivity and recaptured for the Church all it had so recently lost, with the result that the nobles were completely robbed of all their gains and became objects of cruel persecution. Now, without a doubt, this sudden triumph of the Church, and the consequent downfall of the nobles, must be regarded as, what Buckle calls, "the proximate cause of the establishment of Protestantism in Scotland." It was not the love of spiritual religion, it was not the working of the grace of God in pure hearts, that gave birth to the Reformation in Scotland, but hatred of the existing Church, and the very human instinct of revenge.

J. T. LLOYD.

Two Graves at Rome.

> Death, not armed with any dart,
> But crowned with poppies. —*Julian Fane.*

A NEWSPAPER paragraph states that an attempt is being made to bring into British ownership the German-owned English cemetery at Rome. Such a movement should not fail of its object, for even among the unnumbered wonders of the Eternal City the tree-clad burial-ground outside the Porta San Paola holds a place apart. Pilgrims come from remote corners of the earth to linger in the quiet corner where John Keats lies beside his friend, Joseph Severn, his gravestone bearing the bitter words: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." Not far away rises the slope where the heart of Percy Bysshe Shelley lies buried beside the body of his friend, Edward Trelawny. It is curious that when Shelley visited the place years before his own death, he described it as "the most beautiful and solemn cemetery I ever beheld," and, in the preface to *Adonais*, he says, "It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place." Nor is this all, for Shelley's little son, William, was buried in the same cemetery, which afterwards received the body of Keats and his own ashes. No stone marks the child's grave, for Shelley and Mary were unable to superintend the erection of a tombstone.

Shelley's death was untimely. He was drowned in the sea he loved so well, and whose praises he had so often sung. From his early years the sea ever had a fascination for him. Even in his boyhood days he loved to watch the drifting of paper boats down a stream, and thought that drowning would be the most beautiful of deaths. Thrice he had narrow escapes from shipwrecks

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—once flying with Mary across the English Channel, once with Byron on the Lake of Geneva, and, again, with his friend, Williams, in Italy. Shelley was luckless with all his boats. His unfortunate first wife, Harriet, sought the same mode of death which at last overwhelmed the poet. Shelley prophesied his own end, though few have noticed it. In *Julian and Maddalo* he makes Byron ("Count Maddalo") address to him a jesting warning:—

> You were ever still,
> Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,
> A wolf for the meek lambs.

And the warning concludes:—

> Beware, if you can't swim.

A prophecy the more sinister for its levity, its unconsciousness of hastening destiny. The recurrence of this thought in Shelley's poetry is very singular. The last lines of *Adonais* might be read as an anticipation of his own death by drowning. In *Alastor* we read:—

> A restless impulse urged him to embark
> And meet lone death on the drear ocean's waste.

The glorious *Ode to Liberty* closes on the same fateful and pathetic note:—

> As waves, which lately paved his watery way,
> Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

The *Stanzas Written in Dejection, near Naples*, echo the same thought:—

> And I might feel in the warm air
> My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
> Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

In a dirge, written in 1817, he gives vent to the idea:—

> That time is dead for ever, child—
> *Drowned*, frozen, dead for ever.

What Shelley might have done had he lived longer, or whether he would have lived much longer if he had not been drowned, are idle questions. His friend, Trelawny, was of opinion that the poet would have lived to a good age, as his father did. Shelley himself, shortly before the end, said, "I am ninety," meaning that he had lived and felt so intensely, that he felt older than his years. Nor was it an idle boast, for he was himself the Julian of his poem:—

> Me, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
> The else unfelt oppressions of this earth.

Shelley was the poet of the Great Revolution, and the poet and the Revolution were contemporary. On Shelley's birthday, August 4, 1792, it was decreed by the National Assembly that all religious houses should be sold for the benefit of the nation; and Louis XVI. was no longer recognized as King of France. It was on this same day of August that the Emperor of Germany and the King of Prussia issued their famous manifesto announcing their mission to put down the Revolution and "console mankind" by giving up "the city of Paris to the most dreadful and terrible justice." Nor is this all, for Mary Wollstonecraft, the mother of Shelley's Mary, had just published her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, and proclaimed that "liberty is the mother of virtue, and if women are, by their very constitution, slaves, and not allowed to breathe the sharp, invigorating air of freedom, they must ever languish like exotics, and be reckoned beautiful flaws in nature." This was the world in which men were living on that quiet day when the poet of the Revolution first saw the light in that little chamber looking out on the peaceful Sussex pastures.

Talk of miracles! What marvel is like to real genius? In that room, in that quiet rustic dwelling, from a rough, country squire, and from a mother who was nothing remarkable, sprang *Adonais*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and some of the loveliest lyrics of a thousand years of English literature. If, instead of Shelley, an infant Squire Western had been produced on that August day, everyone would have thought it natural, but instead of a bucolic squire, we have a master of poetical music, and a thinker five hundred years ahead of his own time. His own generation hated him, trampled upon him, and cast him out; but in the wilderness of exile he still delivered his message in deathless song, which a few brave spirits heard and treasured, and which now commands a wider audience, and which will be hailed ultimately as the Gospel of Humanity.

John Keats's grave is the older in this Roman cemetery. Shelley sang the younger poet's death-song in *Adonais*, having in that immortal rhapsody coupled the name of Keats with his own for ever. When Keats was dying of consumption, his friend, Joseph Severn, cheered his last days. "Poor Keats," he wrote, "has me ever by him, and shadows out the form of one solitary friend; he opens his eyes in great doubt and horror, but when they fall on me they close gently, open quickly, and close again, till he sinks to sleep." Is not this the true pathos and sublime of human life? Is there a diviner thing in the world than pure affection shining through the mists of death? At the last, Severn held his dying friend in his arms for seven hours. Severn outlived Keats for fifty-seven years, and his remains were removed from their original resting-place and buried beside those of Keats. It was well done. In the presence of such a perfect friendship—

> Death is a low mist which cannot blot
> The brightness it may veil.

Because of these infidel graves, generations of English and American visitors to Rome make pilgrimage to where they lie beside the Pauline Gate at the opening of the Ossian Way. Even Italians would desire that these few sacred acres should be for ever in English hands. The appeal itself is noteworthy, for it is a public confession that the two great Freethought poets confer glories upon one of the greatest cities of the civilized world, and that even the Eternal City is made more honourable and illustrious by their presence.

MIMNERMUS.

Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

X.

(Concluded from p. 582).

The intense desire for some assurance that the conscious personality does survive the Great Change has indeed been inbred and developed in man in many countries and under many systems, both of Philosophy and Religion, for many ages. So much so, that we, in Western countries at any rate, are almost unable to conceive of any other aspiration as animating the human soul.

And yet the fact remains, that probably the greater number of human beings who have inhabited this earth since man appeared upon it have held a Faith to which this idea of an eternally surviving personality is absolutely abhorrent. The Buddhist's "Nirvana" appears to mean, as nearly as European thought or language can define it, a State of Bliss in which the personality has ceased to exist.

Are these great questions to be solved for us at last by paid professional mediums? Have Messrs. and Mesdames Sludge and Co. the key to the great secret which has baffled both Philosophy and Science since their inception?

Can I, indeed, expect to buy for a guinea in Bond Street, or for half-a-crown in East London, some trick which will enable me to lift the curtain behind which lies—that which Religions have been divided upon since man was endowed with a soul?—*W. Cook. "Reflections on Raymond," pp. 92-3-4.*

MAJOR COOK comments on Peters' communication as follows:—

> Peters, on September 27th, refers to *one* group photograph in which Raymond appears with "other men"—

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an experience common to hundreds, or thousands, of other young officers in the new Army. He mentions Raymond's appearance in this group with a stick—an appendage to uniform also common to, practically, all officers of the new Army, and carried by apparently every other officer in the group photograph reproduced in Sir Oliver's book.

So far, Peters' general reference to *a* group photograph (in which Raymond appears) was a perfectly safe one to venture on as regards, practically, any young officer of the new Army. Peters' further *particulars*, however, show conclusively that his reference to *a* group photograph can apply correctly neither to the particular group reproduced in Sir Oliver Lodge's book (upon which Sir Oliver relies) nor to Raymond; because, in the latter group, Raymond's stick is not under his arm, but on the ground across his foot, and not held by him in any way; and also because neither in this, nor in any other photograph in Sir Oliver's book, does Raymond show the slightest vestige of the moustache with which Peters supplies him elsewhere in the same "sitting." No one, not even a medium making "shots" at random, could have made more mistakes than Peters crowds into his short reference to photographs of Raymond on September 27th.

Peters finally "plumps" for three photographs only as in possession of Raymond's family at the date on which he (Peters) is speaking. "*Two* where he is alone and *one* where he is in a group with other men."

Sir Oliver himself counters this assertion by the "note": "Fully as many as that," *i.e.*, Peters has understated the number of photographs.[1]

But above all (and this puts the matter out of court altogether as evidence), Peters states that this one group photograph was in the possession of the family before Raymond went away. As we have seen, it was not taken until he reached France, as Sir Oliver well knew. And yet Sir Oliver takes no notice of all these glaring discrepancies. He is so determined to find proofs, that he turns a blind eye to everything that tells against his position.

As Major Cook emphatically remarks: "The inference is plain that Peters' reference to photographs, whether group or otherwise, on September 27th, was merely a general and impudent 'shot' at random at matters of which he had no definite knowledge, whether 'supernormal' or otherwise—a random and bad 'shot' similar to his later attempt, at the same 'sitting,' when he says: 'You have in your house prizes' (athletic) 'which he won,' and which Sir Oliver dismisses as 'incorrect.'"[2]

The second reference to the photograph was at the sitting with the medium, Mrs. Leonard, on December 3, 1915; the spirit of Raymond communicating through "Feda," Mrs. Leonard's control, supposed to be the spirit of a little Indian girl. It would take too long to reproduce this communication, but we may take the description of it given by Major Cook as correct. He describes it as "vague and shuffling as regards several details with regard to which one of those who had sat for the original could hardly be in any doubt, but strikingly accurate as regards other details easy enough to be remembered by one who had merely seen, or had heard a description by another person who had seen, a copy; and to whom the existence of a 'key' was not unknown, but who had not a particularly good memory for names."[3]

One of the details described by Raymond through "Feda" through Mrs. Leonard—what a journey!—were certain horizontal and vertical lines on the background of the photograph. These lines are caused by binders and joints of the woodwork of the hut which forms the background of the group. Now, as Major Cook points out, these lines would not have been visible to Raymond, as he was sitting with his back to the hut; neither, we may add, would he have thought them worth mentioning if he had noticed them. But to a person who had only seen the photo, they would appear most striking.

There is not the slightest doubt in the present writer's mind that Mrs. Leonard had seen the photo in question. Let us go over the dates again. Captain Boast sent the negatives to England, where they arrived on October 15, 1915. A large number of copies appear to have been printed—there were twenty-one officers and their friends to supply. On November 28, Mrs. Cheves had six in her possession, with a key to the names, and wrote offering a copy to Lady Lodge, but which was not sent until December 7, an interval of nine days.

On November 28, then, it was common knowledge in Sir Oliver's household that the photo existed. On December 3, five days later, Mrs. Leonard describes the photo at a sitting with Sir Oliver. Five days was ample time for her to obtain a copy of the photo, and the unfortunate delay of Mrs. Cheves in not sending her copy until the 7th gave just the chance needed to work the oracle.

Such is the evidence with which Sir Oliver Lodge would convert the world!

Sir Oliver Lodge prefaces this record of the photograph with the remark: "This is a long record, because I took verbatim notes, but I propose to inflict it all upon the reader, in accordance with promise to report unverifiable and possibly absurd matter, just as it comes, and even to encourage it."[1] But why should the spirits wish to communicate "absurd matter"? And why on earth should Sir Oliver encourage them in it?

That they did communicate absurd matter, the following extract from this sitting will show. Mrs. Leonard—we leave out the pretended spirits of "Feda" and Raymond—speaking of the spirit world, says:—

> People here try to provide everything that is wanted. A chap came over the other day, who *would* have a cigar. "That's finished them" he thought. He means he thought they would never be able to provide that. But there are laboratories over here, and they manufacture all sorts of things in them. Not like you do out of solid matter, but out of essences and ethers and gases. It's not the same as on the earth plane, but they were able to manufacture what looked like a cigar.....Some want meat and some strong drink; they call for whisky soda's. Don't think I'm stretching it, when I tell you that they can manufacture even that.[2]

In the same sitting the supposed spirit of Raymond says: "My suit I expect was made from damaged worsted on your side.....You know flowers, how they decay. We have got flowers here; your damaged flowers flower again with us—beautiful flowers." And further, we learn: "He (Raymond) has brought that doggie again, nice doggie.....He's got a cat too, plenty of animals he says."[3]

Certainly, Sir Oliver seems to have some glimmering of the absurdity of this spiritual information; for in a footnote to the episode about the decayed flowers he remarks: "I have not yet traced the source of all this supposed information." Well, it came from the same source as the information about the photograph; for it was delivered during the same sitting.

A great deal has been made by Spiritualists of what they call "cross-correspondences"—a cross-correspondence being similar words, or a similar idea, expressed in

[1] W. Cook, *Reflections on "Raymond,"* pp. 79-80-81.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[1] *Raymond*, p. 192.
[2] *Raymond*, pp. 197-198.
[3] *Raymond*, pp. 199-203.

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the automatic writings of two independent mediums. In this matter we are of the same opinion as Dr. Mercier, who observes: they "are so few, so ambiguous, and need so much amplification by the imaginative ingenuity of the believer, as to make very little impression upon anyone who is not ready and determined to believe in spite of his own reason.....There are very few of these so-called cross-correspondences on record; they are extremely obscure, and need a great deal of torturing and interpreting and glossing before they can be twisted into any appearance of referring to the same thing or of emanating from the same source."[1]

A great deal more could be written to expose the folly and fraud responsible for the prevalent beliefs in Telepathy and Spiritualism, but enough has been said to convince any unbiased reader of the utter want of scientific evidence in favour of these delusions. If any one, after reading the evidence, still believes in these things, it is unlikely that any further evidence in any quantity will have any effect. This subject has been too long neglected by Freethinkers; they have been too prone to dismiss the subject as not worth discussing. This is the first time the subject has been discussed at length in these columns, with the exception of the Blavatsky case—and that was solely on account of Mrs. Besant's defection. Several years ago the present writer offered to write on the subject, but it was not considered worth powder and shot. In the meanwhile, this superstition has been growing by leaps and bounds. "That it is very extensive," says Dr. Mercier, "is shown in the first place by the enormous sale of the book *Raymond*, a sale that might be envied by the writer of the most popular novels." These articles will be reprinted in pamphlet form when paper is available, and every Freethinker should help to put it in circulation, in the attempt to stem this tidal wave of superstition.

W. MANN.

Better than Nothing!

THE facility with which the Nonconformist of to-day can accommodate himself to schemes for unions with State Churches is very suggestive. Believers of all sects have come to realize the value of combination. In the common anxiety for self-preservation, the Nonconformist of to-day finds it possible to pocket the principles for which the stalwart Dissenters of former times so strenuously contended.

Nonconformity hath waxed fat. The material circumstances of the majority of Nonconformists have vastly improved, and we shall all one day understand that what is *not* material is not worth considering. Are fat stipends and clerical motors the outward and visible signs of a deeper spirituality within? Modern conditions are not unfavourable to the laying up of treasure on earth. We have advanced upon the primitive methods of the hoarders of 2,000 years ago because we live in a more scientific age. Moth and rust—or even thieves? Pshaw! In any view, Nonconformity has surrendered to kid gloves and silver slippers.

We can estimate the value of Nonconformists, who pose as pioneers of Freedom, when we contemplate their attitude, for instance, to State ceremonials. Provided that they are furnished with a box at the show, they will outvie the representatives of the Government religion in a chorus of adulation and in expressions of gaping wonder at the "spiritual" significance of proceedings which have been worked up and rehearsed for weeks, and at last staged—at enormous cost to the country.

[1] Dr. Mercier, *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*, pp. 110-111.

Nonconformity stands condemned for its grievous failure to find a solution of the education problem. A Unitarian clergyman was once heard earnestly to declare that, rather than have no religious manual of instruction in the day schools at all, he would welcome the Shorter Catechism. It was better than nothing! *Any religion rather than none at all!* That is the ultimate position of even the most unclerical of Nonconformists, and Freethinkers do well to keep it in mind. The War has had the effect of stimulating efforts for a more general union of Christendom because the War has revealed to professional religionists that the influences at work undermining supernaturalism are more potent than they supposed. They affect in the pulpit to ignore or minimize these influences; but "facts are chields that winna ding," and all the juggling in the world cannot blind observant people to plain statistics demonstrating the decline of Nonconformity. Nonconformity may not be dead, but it is doomed. By this we do not mean to suggest that all those who leave the sinking ship will embrace Freethought. Many of them will find a "spiritual home" in Catholicism. There are plenty of astute clerics still about who are not slack in their efforts to bring about combines, and to take what advantage they can of human fear and human weakness.

The clear conclusion to which all the facts point us is, that if the average Nonconformist of to-day were shut up to a choice between two positions, he would far sooner be a Roman Catholic than an Atheist. This may not be news to all of us, but it is something we should all keep before us in weighing up the existing situation. We are speaking of the Nonconformist of *to-day*; but every morrow that dawns makes the prospects of Atheism the brighter, because every day man adds a little more to his *knowledge*; meaning thereby, in its widest connotation, that *science* is gradually but surely supplanting superstition.

Every man who has the tiniest drop of the *virus* of religion in his blood is a potential Romanist. When France disestablished the Church, we heard frequent exclamations of horror from Nonconformists in this country about the "disaster" that had befallen that country because it had rejected God for Reason. And if the Unitarian can embrace Presbyterianism, what is to prevent him from transferring to Episcopacy, and from that to the original fold? The old man of Rome knows there is nothing to prevent him; and the farthest-seeing Romanists are biding their time. They look forward to the day foretold of old when there shall be "one flock and one shepherd." The wise old man knows there is no traditional or historical basis for the sects that have sprung up since the so-called Reformation. They are all wanderers from the Father's house. But these errant children are returning, says the patient old man. One day they will all be back again. Just give them time—give them time. And 300 years ago Romanist and Protestant burned one another! If your Faith is not sacred enough to justify the extremest measures in its vindication against heretics, what is your Faith worth? Let us get back to mediævalism by all means! We may practise it better than the Huns.

An examination of recent history does not suggest that we need entertain any regrets about the impending fall of Nonconformity. It will bring release to many prisoned minds; it will serve to simplify the issues in the future contest between Rome and Reason; and it will convince a certain nebulous type of sceptic that oil and water will not mix. Christianity, it has been suggested, destroyed two great civilizations, and is menacing a third. This War, as a contemporary event, has proved what Freethinkers have ever been maintaining is proved from the Bible—that the most frightful savagery is quite

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possible in association with the most fervent and most orthodox piety. The ancient warrior Jew is reproduced in the modern Hun. God is not Love, whatever else he may be. Everywhere, in so far as savagery has been replaced by humane conduct, we owe it to the ever-widening and ever-deepening current of secular advancement—and to that alone.

IGNOTUS.

Acid Drops.

By some means we missed an article in the *Daily News* of September 6, by the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell—an omission rectified by the kindness of one of our readers. Mr. Russell's article is on the question of religious teaching by the State, and in that he frankly and fully accepts the principle of Secular Education. The following expressions are worth citing, not as anything new to *Freethinker* readers, but only as an endorsement of our position:—

> If the State compels its citizens to pay for religious teaching in which they do not believe, it commits, in my opinion, a palpable injustice.
>
> It is indeed unjust to make a Quaker pay for teaching the doctrine of the Sacraments, or a Unitarian for teaching the Deity of Christ; but it is equally unjust to make an Atheist pay for teaching the existence of God.
>
> Churchmen will best serve the religion which they profess by joining with other "men of goodwill," though of different faiths, who desire the Secular solution. In that way only, as far as I can see, can the interests of Education be reconciled with the higher interests of Justice.

The unfortunate thing is that, to the vast majority of Christians, considerations of justice on a question of religion carries no weight whatever.

The one false note in Mr. Russell's article is struck in connection with the use of the word "Secularism." This word, he says, "has been converted in the past with a blatant form of negation, and also with a social doctrine which all decent people repudiate." It is true that many speak of Secularism as a "blatant negation," and the only explanation for that is ignorance or wilful misrepresentation. With regard to the social doctrine "which all decent people repudiate," by that Mr. Russell means, presumably, Malthusianism. And while that has no necessary connection with Secularism, it is little less than a libel to speak of it as a doctrine repudiated by all decent people, as though only indecent ones advocated it. Mr. Russell should acquaint himself with the names of those who have publicly advocated, and advocate Malthusianism before making himself responsible for such senseless slander. Malthusianism may be either sound or unsound in its philosophy, but it is childish—when it is not worse—to label a thing "indecent" because one disagrees with it. We agree it is an effective method—with the British public. For there is nothing that that public fears more than to be *called* indecent. To *be* indecent is quite a different matter.

The John Rylands Library, in Manchester, has been enriched by some Syrian manuscripts, among which is one entitled, "Discourse written by Shem, Son of Noah." Doubtless, it is as true as the Bible story.

A good story is retailed by the *Sunday Herald*, which has quite a profane flavour. Mr. Asquith was told once that a frank and full exchange of views had taken place between M. Cambon and Sir E. Grey. "In that case," said the late Prime Minister, who knew the linguistic limitations of both, "the Holy Ghost must have been present."

A press paragraph states that pilgrims bearing the Holy Carpet have left Cairo for Mecca. This is a gentle reminder hat King George reigns over more non-Christians than Christians.

The playfulness of Providence has by no means been lessened by the world-War. At Weasenham, Norfolk, a cow has given birth to four calves, which the newspapers describe as a record.

A bogus matrimonial agent with three wives, who was sentenced to three years' penal servitude at the Old Bailey, was said to have been a missioner and preacher. Judge Rentoul described the case as one of the worst he had ever tried. The restraining power of religion is not very apparent in this instance.

Professor David Smith says that when we go to heaven our dogs who love us will join us there. That is an exceedingly delightful prospect; but if the Professor's gospel be true, the majority of us are doomed to enter the other place, and one wonders whether the animals who love the ungodly will share their sufferings in hell. Will Bill Sikes' faithful dog be at his side for ever as he endures the torment of the damned? The curious thing is that Dr. Smith, who promises heaven to animals, does not know that there is either a heaven or a hell even for ourselves, beyond the tomb.

Archdeacon Holmes is perfectly well aware that there is no God who answers prayer, whether there is one who hears it or not; and yet the venerable gentleman wants his hearers to believe in God and practise prayer. In his plausible but fundamentally fallacious apologia for God he falls back upon the plea that, normally, there is no Divine action save through instrumentalities. As reported in the *Church Times* for September 14, he says:—

> You must help. For remember this: to ask God to do without you what he will only do through you, is to make a mock at prayer.

Then there is absolutely no evidence that God does anything at all in human, or any other, affairs; and to pray at all is to make a mock at Nature's laws. Literally nothing happens or is done except in strict subjection to those firm laws.

It apparently never occurs to the Archdeacon that, if we do things ourselves, it is a piece of pious hypocrisy to ask God to do them. If parents must look after their children themselves, of what earthly or heavenly use can it be to invite the Heavenly Father to do it also? Mr. Holmes tacitly admits that if parents neglect their children, God won't act the part of "a glorified relieving officer." Quite so; then why drag an imaginary Divine Being into the case at all?

The Bishop of Hereford has always been regarded, and often violently denounced, as theologically a heretic; and yet it is he who, on his retirement, announces that he will not avail himself of the liberal pension to which he is legally entitled.

The Food Controller will be getting into serious trouble if he is not careful. The Vicar of Pinner says that to use War bread at Holy Communion is "absolutely illegal," since it is forbidden by the rubric, which declares for the best and purest wheat bread that may be obtained. But if the faith of the believer can transform bread into the body of Jesus Christ, it seems a little thing, by comparison, to change War bread into a pure wheaten loaf.

A correspondent wrote to the editor of a Sunday paper protesting against the constant abuse of the Kaiser, and adding, "in his private life he is a good, Christian man." Just so! He is a good man in the worst sense of the word.

The dear *Daily News* has been wondering how Cardinal Merry del Val came by his name, and says that an ancestor of his was an Irishman named "Merry." Not many followers of the Man of Sorrows can boast of being "merry."

The *Daily Telegraph* reports that the War has created a big demand in America for Bibles. We suspect the paragraph is one that has been sent round the press by some agency, but what we should like to know is the origin of the demand? Does it originate with the soldiers or with some professional

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money-collecting agency for providing the Army with free copies? We strongly suspect the latter.

Nearly three years ago Professor Griffith Jones contributed an article to the *Christian World*, in which he asserted that Nietzscheanism was supreme in Germany, and that the War was largely attributable to that fact. In the *British Weekly* for September 13, the same divine is reported to have recently admitted that "the Kaiser is a genuinely religious man," but to have claimed that "he believes in the God who commanded the Israelites to slay the Amalekites, sparing neither man, woman, nor child." The Principal is still a false witness, for the Kaiser is as evangelical a Christian as Dr. Griffith Jones himself, and, possibly, a great deal more orthodox. But his being a fervent Christian does not prevent him from ordering, permitting, or winking at the unspeakable horrors of which the Germans are guilty during this War.

"Salvation Army officers have arrived in France for service among the American troops," runs a newspaper paragraph. "Now we shan't be long."

The Young Men's Christian Association should be making a good thing out of the canteens for the soldiers. Money is freely subscribed by the public; much service is given free; and goods are sold to soldiers at cost price *plus* a percentage to cover working expenses.

The poor bishops have a hard struggle to keep up their positions, but they sometimes manage to leave small sums behind them. Miss Jane Monk, of Cadogan Square, Chelsea, one of the daughters of the late Bishop of Gloucester, left £43,533.

The four hundredth anniversary of the sailing of the *Mayflower* will be celebrated shortly. This was the famous boat on which the Pilgrim Fathers sailed to America, where they landed at Plymouth rock. Colonel Ingersoll said, jestingly, that it would have been better for the United States if the Plymouth rock had landed on the Pilgrims.

Apropos of our paragraph last week referring to the Peckham tradesman who changed his name from Davies to Christ, a correspondent sends us a letter from the States who reports the name of one of America's new Army as "Goodall Holy Bible." That is indeed, hard to beat.

A writer in the *Sunday Chronicle* provides the following as a specimen of the rhymes unwritten by soldiers sentenced to terms of detention:—

King David and King Solomon
Led rather naughty lives;
They enjoyed themselves immensely
With their concubines—and wives
But as old age came creeping o'er
They experienced serious qualms,
For King Solomon wrote the Proverbs
And King David wrote the Psalms.

The Rev. E. Shillito confesses that all is not well with the Free Churches. They are not what they used to be fifty years ago. The congregations are not only restless and listless during worship, but they are audacious enough to indulge in cool and peevish criticism there upon. And that is not all by any means. The Free Churches are being deserted by growing numbers every year. Mr. Shillito thinks that one reason for this desertion is dissatisfaction with the mode and quality of the worship; but we venture to submit as the chief reason the fact that Christianity's days are numbered, and that already it is a back number so far as individual or national life is concerned. Only cranks trouble their heads now about what Jesus would do if he were with us.

It is sheer bunkum on the part of the Rev. Tolefree Parr, President of the Primitive Methodist Church, to declare that a million children could be gathered into the Sunday-schools "if the Churches would focus their forces on this end, and if thousands of their leisured people would sacrifice themselves to become effective teachers." That "if" throws a flood of light upon the situation. The Churches are powerless because they lack faith, and they lack faith because Christianity has ceased to be a living reality to them. These men of God are wilfully blind to the fact, so patent to most others, namely, that the Christian religion is, to all intents and purposes, already obsolete, from which state no power on earth, or from heaven can recall it.

In the recent severe thunderstorm in Paris the cathedral of Notre Dame was struck by lightning, and in London's air-raid the windows of a church were blown out. "God" appears to care as little for his houses as for his children.

Lord Leverhulme says that after the War every able-bodied man and woman must work. This is a hard piece of advice for the clergy and others who play in the Lord's vineyard.

A correspondent sends the following true story. A man was trying to sell a copy of Jack London's *When God Laughs*. To him came a horrified member of the Plymouth Brethren with the query, "And when is that?" "Why," replied the other, "it is when you go round the doors with your tracts." A neat retort.

At Brentford, John Hopkins, a Wesleyan minister, and Superintendent of the Wesleyan Circuit, was summoned for obtaining sugar under false pretences. A form was filled up asking for 80 lb. of sugar for preserving own-grown fruit, and 36 lb. was sent. Inquiries showed that Mr. Hopkins possessed only four plum-trees, and that there had only been half a dozen plums on them. We like sweet things ourselves, but twelve pounds and a half of sugar to one plum does seem a trifle excessive. Mr. Hopkins was fined 40s.

"General" Booth is still spending money in advertisements asking for cheques for the "War Work" of the Salvation Army. The most warlike action of this "army" is the singing of "Onward, Christian Soldiers."

Churches are often advertised like cinemas and theatres. A prominent notice in the City reads: "St. Mary-at-Hill. Photos. Phonos." If the stories *Noah's Ark* and *Jonah and the Whale* were made the subjects of the films there ought to be full houses.

The wife of a Grimsby parson has given birth to triplets. There is at least one Christian family obeying the Biblical command, "Increase and multiply."

On a recent fete-day, the Vicar of St. Katherine's, Southbourne, Hants, the archdeacon called at the vicarage—in trousers. This reminds us of Mark Twain's description of church parade in one of the South Sea islands, where the congregation was partially dressed in European clothes. One wore a hat only, another a waistcoat, and a third was resplendent in a coat, which he wore as a pair of trousers with his legs crowded through the sleeves.

The Right to Affirm.

By the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888 affirmation may take the place of an oath in courts of law and in all other places where the taking of an oath is necessary.

Affimation may be claimed on one of two grounds. (1) On the ground of having no religious belief, (2) on the ground of an oath being contrary to one's religious belief.

A judge or other official may ask on what ground affirmation is claimed, but no further question is warranted, and all such additional questions should be respectfully and firmly declined.

In all cases where any trouble or difficulty occurs it would be well to inform us of the circumstances at once,

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To Correspondents.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 23, Birmingham Town Hall; September 30, Swansea; October 7, Failsworth; October 14, Leicester; October 21, Manchester; October 28, London; November 4, Abertillery.

A. Williams.—Pleased to hear from one so earnest in the Cause. The MSS. sent is promising, and although not up to our standard, we advise you not to be discouraged. Writing, like other things, is not learned in a day. And you have ideas. That is the main thing.

J. Hudson.—It is good that you wish you were able to send ten times as much. For your sake we wish you could. But we are quite content with each one doing his or her share.

Capt. Latham.—Thanks for card. The building looks fine. Pity such magnificent structures are not put to better uses. Glad to hear you are well.

J. Close.—We have no doubt your hope that "the rank and file of the Freethought Party" will do their share towards the Sustentation Fund will be realized.

J. Breese.—We agree with you as to your estimate of H. G. Wells. But a man who writes so much cannot be expected to think soundly—unless he happens to be a genius.

A. Harvey.—We are not surprised that your knowledge of "the business side of things" led you to anticipate the opening of a Sustentation Fund. Gratified to have your praise of the *Freethinker*. We are "dreaming dreams" of it's future, and if we do not break in the making, some of those dreams are going to be realized.

T. Fowler.—We remember the description, which was a very apt one.

F. C. Willis.—Help and appreciation from one who describes himself as "*one* of the workers" is doubly welcome. And we know that the description is deserved.

A. Clarke.—Thanks for cutting.

G. J. Rendle (Uganda).—Thanks for letter. Trust you will have a safe and pleasant trip home.

W. W. Ford.—The passage in Josephus commencing "About this time was Josephus" is given up by nearly every authority worth citing. Some of the older and more orthodox writers, such as Lardner, Giles, and even Dean Farrar, are emphatic in its rejection. The passage was unknown to anyone before the time of Eusebius, and he is generally credited with having inserted it. If you take the passage immediately before the one referring to Jesus, and the one after it, you will see they form a natural sequence. The Jesus passage interrupts the sense of the narrative and makes some of it nonsense. With reference to other quotations, it must be remembered that neither "Chrestus" nor "Christians" have a necessary reference to an historical Jesus. Both terms are independent of the New Testament story. Sorry we cannot use MSS.

E. G. Dawson.—There is no Branch of the N. S. S. at present in Southampton.

E. Lechmere and Others.—There is really no need to apologize for the smallness of a subscription to the Sustentation Fund. Those who help to the limit of their opportunities are doing their share equally with those who help in a larger way. And we have the best reason for knowing that nothing pleases the larger givers more than to see *all* showing in a concrete manner their interest in the common cause.

J. Stanway.—We are quite content. If we had been looking round for an easy, well-paid job, we should never have taken on this one. We are doing what we like, and that is everything.

F. S.—If we ever have to make that journey, we would not ask for better companionship on the road. We feel assured that you are helping in all ways to the limit of your opportunities, and no one could ask for more.

W. J.—(1) The title of "Freethinker" is fully warranted as a title for a paper in which opinions are expressed free from the distorting prejudice of social convention. (2) We do not agree that Huxley and Spencer used "agnostic" solely for the reason that the limitations of knowledge forbade dogmatism. The question of the limitations of knowledge had little or nothing to do with it. And they were confusing the "Problem of Reality" with the belief in God—two quite distinct things.

J. Blair Williams.—Thanks for letter, which shall appear in our next issue.

W. Dodd.—Your delight at the subscription list in last week's issue is shared by all our readers who have written. There seems a general determination "to be in it" this time.

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

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.

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"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

As will be seen, our Sustentation Fund is going along merrily. It looks, indeed, as though the wishes of many of our subscribers will be realized, and, in addition to clearing off last year's deficit, there will be left in hand a substantial contribution towards meeting the recurring weekly loss. In that direction I am quite in the hands of my readers. In any case, I can only thank in a general manner all who have subscribed, and even those who would have done so had their means permitted. I have been much encouraged by the letters which accompanied most of the subscriptions. It is good to feel that one's efforts are so appreciated, and that one has so warm, and even enthusiastic, a backing.

I am again compelled to severely restrict the number of letters from which I quote.

C. W. writes:—

> For well over a year I have been impressed by the fact that I have been receiving weekly for twopence a journal for which I ought to have paid at least threepence. I have now much pleasure in enclosing all these withheld pennies in one lump sum, and hope that all your readers will follow suit. Of course, in reckoning this way, I am looking at the *Freethinker* commercially. From any other point of view a cash computation is quite inadequate.

If considerably less than all our readers followed this plan, we should be free of all financial worries until the end of the War.

This is echoed by H. C. who, in sending P.O. for 4s. 4d., says:—

> I am willing and wishful to make my *Freethinker* 3d. per week. Its worth it. You have never written better than you are now doing.

Mrs. E. Adams encloses cheque, and writes:—

> I am so very glad to see so good a response towards the Sustentation Fund, and I do hope that it will continue for a time, so that you may be relieved of all financial worry. I think it is wonderful what you have done at a time like this.

Mr. O. Friedman writes:—

> I have been reading the *Freethinker* for seven years, in which I have gained much knowledge and good food for the intellectual part of my anatomy. So, for this pleasure, please find my cheque for £3 10s., and should your appeal not meet with the success I anticipate, I shall send you another cheque. Freethinkers should prove to such men as Mr. H. G. Wells and others their impertinence and calumny by supporting heartily and generously the cause of emancipation. The *Freethinker* is a great means of bringing light to those who, unfortunately, have had their brains cobwebbed and their ears closed to reason.

Mr. S. S. Leech regrets that his subscription was not among the first received, but adds:—

> I was extremely glad on opening my paper this morning to see how Freethinkers have responded. I am inclined to think that one of the reasons is this: To every other paper the definite article attaches, and we take the *Morning Post* or the *Times*, as the case may be. But with the *Freethinker* nothing but the possessive adjective fits the case. We look forward to receiving *our* paper with its brilliant incisive articles, all based on good common sense, and with profit and pleasure we hasten

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to help *our* editor out of his difficulties. Every good wish and success to him.

Mr. H. Irving wishes to know why it should be necessary to explain at length the reasons for needing so small a sum as £250 at a time like this, and wonders how much would be needed if the Editor and staff "were paid for the brilliant articles appearing weekly." He adds:—

> "The Guards want powder, and, by God! they shal have it," said Corporal Brewster. Editor Cohen should only say, "The best of causes wants £250," and every Freethinking son of a Brewster should get away and buy a P.O., saying, "And by George (Meredith or Foote)! he shall have it."

Mr. Irving will realize by now that this appears to be the spirit animating our readers. By the time the Fund is closed we have not the slightest doubt that not only will the loss of last year be cleared, but that a substantial contribution will be made towards meeting the deficit that is bound to recur under existing conditions. As to saying why it is needed, we prefer always that, where possible, reasons should be given. It prevents misunderstandings.

Mr. W. B. Columbine, in sending cheque, writes: "Great credit is due to you for the able manner in which you are conducting the *Freethinker*, and your efforts to keep the flag flying in these difficult times should receive generous support from the whole of the Freethought Party." We are, we think, getting it.

The West Ham Branch of the N. S. S. forwards a subscription in recognition of the high quality and the propagandist value of the *Freethinker*.

Mr. J. B. Palphryman, in wishing us health and strength to continue the work, says:—

> How you have kept the Freethought flag flying under the abnormal conditions which have obtained since the advent of War is little short of marvellous. That this is recognized by many of your readers is evident from the prompt and handsome response to your appeal as shown in the last issue of the *Freethinker*.

Mr. James Ralston writes:—

> The *National Reformer* did not survive the great personality of Charles Bradlaugh. The *Agnostic Journal* did not survive "Saladin." I am very pleased with your splendid and very successful effort. You have kept the *Freethinker* going through three of the worst years in the history of journalism.

We can only blush, and remark that but for the loyal support of friends and readers our "successful effort" would have been impossible.

Mr. S. Scott says: "Will you allow me once more to express my pleasure at the high standard still maintained —and even heightened—by the *Freethinker* since it has come under your editorship. It is really splendid."

Mr. J. Shields hopes that "the mental and financial anxieties which every business man knows must have been yours during the last three years will now be at an end."

Mr. J. Middleton hopes that all *Freethinker* readers will appreciate the difficulties of the situation and help accordingly.

Second List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £198 18s. 6d. Andrew Harvey, £1. J. W. Wood, 10s. 6d. Oscar Friedman, £3 10s. J. Shepp, 5s. C. W., 5s. B. B., £1. E. Parker, 5s. F. C. Willis, 5s. Tony and Tiny, 5s. J. G. White, 10s. S. S. Leech, £2 2s. W. Bailey, £1 1s. Jas. Rowland, 5s. Mrs. A. Brook, 5s. Miss E. Lechmere, 4s. X., 10s. 6d. James Ralston, 10s. Deneb, 2s. 6d. E. J. Jones, 2s. 6d. J. B. Palphryman, 10s. 6d. J. Stanway, 10s. F. S., 1s. J. Hamilton, 10s. J. Hopkins, 2s. 6d. G. Smith, 10s. 6d. Mrs. E. Adams, £4 4s. West Ham Branch N. S. S., £1. A. J. L., £1. Sapper Cheetham, 3s. G. Smith, 10s. W. Dodd, £1. Harriet Baker, 5s. J. B. Williams, £5. E. Thurlow, 5s. H. C., 4s. 4d. S. E., 1s. Total: £226 19s. 4d.

Correction—"G. Samuels" in last week's list of acknowledgments should have read "G. Saunders."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (Sept. 23) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Town Hall, Birmingham. There will be two meetings—one in the afternoon, at 3, subject, "Morality Without God"; and in the evening, at 7, subject, "Why Men Believe in God," with special reference to Mr. H. G. Wells. Admission is free to both meetings, but there are reserved seats, tickets for which may be obtained of Mr. J. Partridge, 245 Shenstone Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham. We hope that Birmingham Freethinkers will do their best to see that the meetings are as widely known as possible.

Next Sunday (September 30) Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures in the Docker's Hall, High Street, Swansea. We are asked to state that visitors from a distance may have tea provided between the afternoon and evening meetings on communicating with Mr. B. Dupree, 12 Short Street, Swansea. It is necessary to write owing to war-time difficulties.

Mr. J. Turnbull (Falkirk) writes: "Does the following constitute a record. For every year of my life I can count a convert to the Cause of Freethought, not considering those who stopped at the half-way house for refreshment. The method I adopt is to send literature to any who have become interested, starting with the *Age of Reason* and ending with *Determinism or Free Will?*" Whether any of our readers has a better record than this we cannot tell. But we do say the record is a fine one. It is such disinterested labour that makes one proud of Freethought and Freethinkers.

The new Manchester Branch has arranged a series of monthly lectures, to be opened by Mr. Cohen on March 21, and followed by Mr. Lloyd, Mr. T. F. Palmer, and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner. The Secretary of the Branch, Mr. H. Black, 446 Great Cheetham Street East, Higher Broughton, Salford, appeals for the support of both members and friends in making the meetings a success. Those who cannot help financially can help in making the meetings well known, and some may help in both ways. For the general work of the Branch, a large room has been taken in the Bakers' Hall, Swan Street, Shudehill, for Sunday evening meetings. The first meeting is to be held here on October 7, at 6.30.

We wonder how much of the interest in *Songs of a Miner* (Herbert Jenkins, Ltd., 2s. 6d., net), is due to an unaffected love of verse on the part of the reading public, and how much to the knowledge that the poet, Mr. James C. Welsh, has been a pitman for some twenty years, and is now employed as a checkweighman at the pit-head. For some of us the association of rhythmic emotion with the more elemental forms of labour seems natural enough; indeed, even more natural than its association with the dull routine of journalism or the duller routine of the Civil Service. Mr. Welsh, we are pleased to see, would have us judge him as a poet, not as a *miner*-poet. And in this we feel he is right. It is this insistence, in all probability, that prompted Mr. Bernard Shaw to decline to write an introduction to the book. But Mr. Shaw knows little about poetry and cares less. He would have introduced Mr. Welsh to us as a super-pitman, a sort of companion in verse to Mr. W. H. Davies, whom he once induced to pose as a super-tramp; and, most likely, we should have been tempted to give our new acquaintance the cold shoulder. Mr. Welsh, however, is well able to stand on his own legs, and needs the support of Mr. Shaw as little as did Mr. Davis.

The longest and most ambitious poem in the book is the one with which it begins, "The Crusade of Youth." Written

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in loosely rhymed pentameters, it is a dithyrambic indictment of the wrong done by man to man, especially the colossal stupidity and brutality of war. The words vibrate with genuine emotion, and at times glow with the white heat of an imagination purified by the fire of suffering. If, in the end, the dream of brotherhood is vague and unreal, the passion of the appeal is none the less moving. In "Labour" and "The Miner," Mr. Welsh has evidently forced himself to see only the violent, sombre, and ugly aspects of life, the result being a want of balance. Yet the majority of the shorter poems reflect a temperament which rejoices in beauty and sane emotions. The poems in Scots dialect, especially, have a rhythmical beauty marked enough to demand a musical setting. In a less obvious vein, "A Picture in Grey" curiously reminds us of Verlaine or Whistler. The best poem in the book are the four stanzas "To My Wife." It has a firmness of touch, a subtle simplicity of feeling, and a shapeliness which come as a pleasant surprise to those of us who have had the misfortune to be obliged to wade through the verse of our much-belauded soldier-poets.

We are asked to remind those of our friends who attend the outdoor lectures that in consequence of the earlier closing of the parks each Sunday, the time of all Evening Lectures has been changed. The exact hour will be found by reference to our Lecture List.

The Rise and Progress of Mental Power.

VII.

(*Continued from p. 573.*)

Although an awareness of self as an active and feeling organism exists in animals and infants, this consciousness is mainly objective in character. That conceptual self-consciousness which permits an animal to think of itself as such, in other words, subjectively, is feebly represented in organisms below man. Still, the germs of the higher ideation are there. As Darwin remarked in his *Descent of Man*:—

> It may be freely admitted that no animal is self-conscious, if by this term is implied that he reflects on such points as whence he comes or whither he will go, or what is life and death, and so forth. But how can we feel sure that an old dog with an excellent memory and some power of imagination, as shown by his dreams, never reflects on his past pleasures and pains in the chase? And this would be a form of self-consciousness.

The young child invariably regards itself objectively, although clearly conscious of its own personality. After the child commences to speak, it long refers to itself in the third person, and never as "I" or "me." And its phraseology does not, in this respect change, until its third year, while it is questionable whether this change would occur at a stage so early were it not hastened by the influence of example. As Sully says, the distinction between personal and outside existences, and the difference between the "I" and the "you" is constantly presented to the child's notice by the language of its elders. Step by step, from this stage onwards, complete awareness of self as a separate personality is steadily reached. Yet there appears to be a period in infant life when full consciousness of individual existence emerges. Wundt dated the dawn of this complete consciousness of self in his own case to the occasion when he, as a child, suddenly and unexpectedly rolled downstairs into a cellar.

But beyond this critical stage the increase of mental capacity in each creature becomes a matter of slow and sometimes painful progress. Little children long regard all moving objects as living things, and frequently fear them on that account. Savages, the surviving representatives of the pre-historic childhood of the civilized peoples, everywhere endow inanimate objects and the blind forces of Nature with psychic attributes, and our own growing children are apt to address their toys as if they were alive. Even European rustics habitually read their own thoughts and emotions into the involuntary activities of rain, wind, clouds, and streams. Yet, grotesque as such fancies appear to the educated rationalist, they survive in many unexpected quarters, and probably in the past have served to raise us to superior mental planes. The lower animals display alarm at novel sights and sounds of a harmless kind, until they are satisfied as to their nature. All such phenomena, whether ejectively or objectively considered, have helped to promote the mind's advance both in animals and in man.

It is now evident that the human mind has been evolved from that of the lower Primates. Yet the critics of the doctrine of the natural genesis and development of man's intellect have persistently asserted that language alone presents an insuperable obstacle to the acceptance of this truth. But, both in substance and in fact, this assertion is false. Blinded and bemused by traditional preconceptions, the majority of modern philologists were, until the nineteenth century, quite adverse to the idea of a natural development of language. Still, alike in ancient Greece and Rome, the problem had been studied from a scientific standpoint, while the yet earlier thinkers of India had made remarkable progress in their analysis of grammar. In later Europe a few pioneers, such as Sir William Jones, Grimm, Bopp, and Pott laid the foundation stones of that contemporary comparative philology which now furnishes some of the most conclusive evidences of mental evolution.

Philologists are all evolutionists now. Even the conservative Max Mueller candidly admitted in the preface to his *Science of Thought* that "no student of the science of language can be anything but an evolutionist, for wherever he looks he sees nothing but evolution going on around him." The eminent Schleicher declares that "the development of new forms from preceding forms can be much more easily traced, and this on an even larger scale in the province of words, than in that of plants and animals."

In addition to the various dead languages, more than one thousand tongues are still spoken on our planet, not one of which is ordinarily intelligible to the user of another. These numerous modes of speech may be arranged into one hundred families, and the latter lend themselves to further reduction to three orders. From these three forms the 1,000 living languages are the probable descendants.

The root terms out of which languages are evolved comprise their elementary constituents, although many of these radical words admit of still further reduction to still simpler forms. Chinese is a monosyllabic language, and consists of some 500 separate words. Renan reckoned the roots of Hebrew at the same number. Professor Skeat has traced English to 461 Aryan roots; Benfey discovered over 1,000 roots in ancient Sanskrit, but more critical researches reduce this estimate very considerably. Max Mueller found 121 roots only in Sanskrit, the tongue from which all the Indo-European languages have been developed. But comparatively simple as these "roots" are, investigation reveals them, not as original, natural words indicative of concrete ideas, but as terms expressing general or abstract notions, and far in advance of the lost language from which Sanskrit was elaborated. Moreover, the Sanskrit radicals betray a remarkable amount of repetition, which also proves that the language of ancient India was much removed from primitive speech. As a matter of fact, the Aryans

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of old had attained a relatively high stage of culture. Again, all the terms in Mueller's list denote actions or states. Now, substantives or nouns came before verbs, for as Farrar observes: "The invention of a verb requires a greater effort of abstraction than that of a noun.....We cannot accept it as even *possible* that from roots meaning *to shine, to be bright*, names were formed for *sun, moon, stars*, &c." Plainly, therefore, we must seek in far lower levels of culture for any approximation towards the speech of aboriginal man. In the words of Prof. Sayce, in "all savage and barbarous dialects, while individual objects of sense have a superabundance of names, general terms are correspondingly rare."

In the infancy of our race, as in the infancy of our children, the principle of onomatopœia—the formation of sounds or words which mimic and resemble the things signified—must have operated on a very extensive scale. Most of these primitive terms have become obscured as their applications have been enlarged. The same is to some extent true of the various interjections so naturally expressive of our several states of feeling or emotion. To a biological disciple, Darwin imparted some interesting particulars concerning one of his own grandchildren which prove how terms of onomatopœtic origin employed by the young become obscured as they become generalized. Thus:—

> The child who was just beginning to speak, called a duck "quack"; and by special association, it also called water "quack." By an appreciation of the resemblance of qualities, it next extended the word "quack" to denote all birds and insects on the one hand, and all fluid substances on the other. Lastly, by a still more delicate appreciation of resemblance, the child eventually called all coins "quack," because on the back of a French sou it had once seen the representation of an eagle. Hence, to the child, the sign "quack" from having originally a very specialized meaning, became more and more extended in its signification, until it now serves to designate such apparently different objects as "fly," "wine," and "coin."

A mere modicum of scientific insight is, therefore, needed to grasp the significance of Goethe's aphorism that the original meanings of words slowly wear away like the letters and image on a piece of money. And there remains this further fact to be observed with reference to imitative names, that in the early stages of articulation, the words derived from the sounds they mimicked, in large measure depended upon accompanying gestures for their complete intelligibility. Apart, however, from conjectural cases, overwhelming proofs exist of the onomatopœtic origin of numerous words in ancient, modern, and savage languages. Needless to state, such imitative terms are most common in uncivilized speech. To the formation of articulate language onomatopœia, instinctive cries and calls, and capricious naming have all contributed. Words otherwise entirely destitute of meaning are invented by most children to name recepts or pre-concepts, and many of these arbitrary inventions will persist in families and among neighbours as nicknames generations after their original significance has been obscured or forgotten.

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

A Note on Wilde's "De Profundis."

THERE are some people who like to think that every one of us in this world gets precisely what he deserves. No doubt, for many of us, this is true enough; but it is emphatically not true for the man of genius. Let us look for a moment at one or two examples. The official life of Walter Pater, a refined scholar and a master of English prose, is written, not as one would expect, by Mr. Gosse or Mr. Arthur Symons, but by a Mr. Wright, of Olney, who was apparently intended by Nature for the biographer of some company promoter or pushing "captain of industry." Pater may not have been the saint his friends are so anxious to make him out to be, but even Dante would not have punished him in so barbarous a fashion. Again, what had that dapper little prig, Canon Ainger, in common with the exquisite humourist and Freethinker, Charles Lamb? What he ought to have written was the life of another prig, say that of Jowett, who was not only a prig himself, but the fruitful cause of priggishness in others. That would have been a sort of poetic justice. But it may be that Nature is an ironist, and loves a paradox even better than does our friend Mr. Chesterton.

In the case of Oscar Wilde, all the moral depravity in the world would not justify the philistine denigration of his biographer in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. With a few honourable exceptions, notably an article by Mr. Ernest Newman in the *Free Review* (1895), and Mr. Ransome's little book, Wilde has suffered more than any other writer from vulgar and incompetent scribblers. He is just beginning to get the criticism he deserves. Still, it must be pointed out that he himself was partly to blame for the niggardly appreciation of his critics. He always found pleasure in saying—paradoxically, perhaps—that he had put his genius into his life, and into his books merely his talent. He said this so frequently, and it was echoed so faithfully by men of letters and journalists, that it came to be accepted as the truth by even the most intelligent of his critics. It was therefore possible for M. Andre Gide, in 1901, to insist upon reminding his French readers that Wilde was not a writer of any value. By 1910 the French critic's opinion had been profoundly modified, and he deplored the unjust severity of his earlier opinion. We are at last coming to see that Wilde stood in closer relation to the artistic ideals and inspirations of his time than any other writer; that he is a more representative man of letters than Pater, largely because of his richer vitality; that his prose style is perfection; that he handles the English language in his *Intentions* and *De Profundis* with a natural grace and a command of subtle rhythms that make even some of the finest styles appear lumbering and monotonous.

. . . .

It must have been noticed by anyone who has given attention to the attitude of the critics to Wilde's work that many of his detractors were quite certain that they could detect the note of insincerity in *De Profundis*. But the charge of insincerity is as easy to make as it is difficult to make out. Some objected to the style as out of keeping with the subject. Others were annoyed by the paradox; the incoherence in the thought. They could not see that if Wilde had thought and written in any other way—that if his style, for instance, had been as plain and as unlovely as that of some of his critics—the charge of insincerity would have had a solid foundation. It was not the sort of book the critics would have written, therefore it was insincere. Imperfect sympathies have never been too scrupulous. The critics more or less unconsciously found insincerity where there was only inconsistency.

De Profundis, whatever else it may not be, is patently sincere. It was written, Mr. Ross tells us, during the last moments of Wilde's imprisonment. It was his last work in prose. The manuscript passed into the hands of Mr. Ross, but it was not printed in its entirety. The omitted portions, or a part of them, were made public through an incredibly foolish libel action. For the student of Wilde's work, there is as much of him in *De*

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Profundis as there is in the *Intentions*. And yet the two books are, in some respects, worlds apart. The earlier one, written in his most prolific period, when his genius was at its highest and clearest, has all that exquisite feeling for form, all the blitheness, the acumen, the varied knowledge, which made Wilde as great, if not a greater, critic of art than J. A. Symonds or Walter Pater. *De Profundis* seems, in some respects, the antithesis of *Intentions;* M. Gide calls it a palinode. Throughout it is extremely confused and incoherent; the broken utterance of a man whose lamentable suffering has exhausted his cerebral energy. It is written in tears of blood. The saddest and deepest emotions of the human heart are vibrant on every page. Although for many of us analysis is an essential factor in all criticism, it seems rather unreasonable to bring to a book like *De Profundis* the test of absolutely clear thinking. From first to last Wilde was as much an impressionist as Ruskin. At times they both thought and spoke of the reasoning faculty as a kind of machine, and prided themselves on saying the first thing that came into their heads. It is futile to reject the good in such writers as Wilde and Emerson because they are not, as De Quincey would say, non-sequaceous. Inconsistency is, no doubt, irritating to the merely rational type of mind; but we do a foolish thing if we reject wisdom and beauty when they do not reach us by the way of a logical train of thought, by the discussive understanding. But a discussion of the claims of intuition or insight as against an abstract intellectualism, however interesting it may be, is outside the scope of this informal note.

Geo. Underwood.

(To be concluded.)

Separation and Divorce.

[The following letter, written in reply to a communication from Lord Halifax, was refused publication by the *Times*. It has been sent to us with an application that it might be allowed to appear in the *Freethinker*, and we gladly comply with the request. The writer might have concluded appropriately with the following extract from an article which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for January, 1890, by the eminent churchman, Archbishop Magee: "It is not possible for the State to carry out, in all its relations, literally, all the precepts of Christ, and a State which attempted this, could not exist for a week." But if there be any person who maintains this, his proper place is in a lunatic asylum, and the only person called on to discuss this question with him would be his medical attendant.]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

Sir,—Lord Halifax is undoubtedly correct in asserting that a very large number of people will oppose, "to the very utmost of their power," any legislation for the relaxation of the matrimonial bond. Large numbers opposed "the damnable heresy" of the Copernican Theory and the teaching that the world was spherical, and "the very utmost of their power" went to the extent of burning, at the stake, Giordano Bruno. The abolition of slavery was gained in the teeth of bitter opposition; the use of chloroform was strenuously opposed when it was first discovered; the education of the masses has plenty of opponents even yet. Cremation—the most sanitary method of disposal of the dead, marriage with a deceased wife's sister, the advance of scientific research, have all been assiduously opposed, and the antagonists of all liberal evolution have nearly always claimed God as their ally—very similarly to the way in which the Kaiser has constituted him his ally in the cruelties of Louvain and the present War generally. To ask you to give space for arguments would be more than inconsiderate, but I hope you will permit me to make two points. There may be such a thing as "holy matrimony," there is certainly such a thing as *un*holy matrimony, and it is the latter, not the former, on which the reformers seek to lay hands. Most of those whose opposing voices are heard on all occasions where reforms and benefits to suffering humanity are advocated, are in complacent ignorance of the suffering it is sought to alleviate:—

> The toad beneath the harrow knows
> Exactly where each tooth-point goes;
> The butterfly, upon the road,
> Preaches contentment to the toad!

To some of us, the suggestion that "God has joined together" many of the ill-assorted couples we know of is little short of blasphemous. It is an accusation of failure and incompetence. The next point is the amazing "lesson" which Lord Halifax has learnt from the War, viz., "that the real welfare of mankind depends on adherence to Christian principles"! This, the most murderous of all wars, a crime which has staggered the world, was engineered and is being prosecuted by adherents to Christian principles. No Buddhist, Confucian, Hindu, Mohammedan, Taoist, Parsee, Animist, or Jew, has had anything to do with it except to follow the dictates of the Christian nations. It is preeminently a war of the Christian nations. And yet Lord Halifax is conservative enough to suggest the old, old remedy of the hair of the dog which has bitten. I am not attacking the teaching of Christ. There is a limitless difference between the teaching of Christ and Christian teaching. Nietzsche once said: "There was one Christian; he died on the Cross."—Your obedient Servant,

"Progress."

Correspondence.

"COMMUNION WITH THE DEAD."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I should like, if you will allow me to do so, to congratulate you upon the *Freethinker*. Until a copy of it came into my hands a few weeks ago, I did not know that any publication existed where plain facts are so simply and frankly stated. I once wrote the sentence, "I believe that those who are capable of thinking should think for themselves," and was jeered at by the reviewers for having uttered a self-evident truism. Yet there is nothing, in my experience, less free than thought. Probably not one man in a hundred thinks for himself upon every subject.

I am puzzled, however, by the attitude taken by your paper, which in other respects exhibits a conspicuous and refreshing freedom from prejudice, towards the question of the survival of personality over death. No real Freethinker, as it seems to me, can have a prejudice; he *must* approach every proposition on its merits, and either accept or reject it or suspend his judgment after weighing the evidence. In regard to matters resting solely upon "revelation," there is no evidence to be weighed; therefore, the Freethinker, bringing everything to the tribunal of his reason, is justified in brushing them immediately aside. But the question of the survival of personality is fundamentally a scientific question. It rests ultimately, not upon "revelation," not upon vague and pious beliefs, but upon experience. It rests also, in some measure, upon logic. Thus: If a thing once exists, it must always exist, for annihilation is inconceivable; you cannot turn something into nothing. The human personality is an existing, positive thing. How, then, can it be annihilated? It may be transmuted or disintegrated, certainly. But why is it more scientific that a thing should be transmuted or disintegrated than that it should remain what it is?

Mr. W. Mann's articles on this subject are clever, but they are candidly *ex parte*, they betray prejudice. They make no pretence to be judicial or investigatory. So far as I have read them, and so far as I know, there is nothing stated in them which is not true. But there is much omitted that is also true. By such selective methods as Mr. Mann permits himself to use, it would be easy to make it appear that the idea that the earth moves round the sun is stupid and farcical.

It is known—if for a moment, for convenience, I may look at the subject from an angle which appears to beg the question—that memory is carried over in a very imperfect state; it is known, too, that communications become involved with mental stuff belonging to the subconscious strata of the person through whom they come; and it is known, of course, more generally, that the world holds any number of impostors who are prepared to prey upon human credulity. It is unneces-

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sary for Mr. Mann to labour those points; they form part of the data with which the investigation of this subject is approached. Nevertheless, your contributor thought it worth while, for example, to devote a whole article to the case of Mme. Blavatsky, who was exposed by the Society for Psychical Research so long ago as 1885.

If Mr. Mann has formed a deliberate opinion on this question, after weighing all the evidence available, and wishes to elucidate it for those who have not had similar opportunities or have not his analytical gifts, he should fasten, not on the incorrect statements, but on the true ones, those regarding matter demonstrably outside the possible knowledge of the percipient which have been verified—he will find a great quantity in the twenty-nine volumes of the impartial records of the Society for Psychical Research—and offer his alternative explanation. For it is the *true* statements that form the crux; anyone can explain the false ones. If responsibly conducted experiments had produced only one per cent. of veridical statements, they would amount to a considerable mass in the aggregate, and would need to be explained. But I think they have produced considerably more than one per cent. I myself have carefully studied the records of many of the investigations exhaustively reported in the voluminous *Proceedings* of the Society of Psychical Research; and I cannot but say, as an honest witness, that after all the incorrect statements and all the non-evidential matter have been eliminated, and after the theories of telepathy and of the "subliminal consciousness" have been stretched to the extreme (far further than the results of experiments warrant), there emerges a very considerable residuum, to explain which the *prima facie* hypothesis of discarnate communicating intelligence stands at present alone in the field. If Mr. Mann, instead of labouring admitted facts and telling us things which everybody knows or could know, apparently for no purpose—I hope I am not doing him an injustice—but to sow prejudice, will deal with this difficult residuum, he will be writing to the furtherance of the understanding of mankind, and, incidentally, will show that he approaches his task without bias and is thinking freely.

One word in conclusion. If anyone should have a thought that I may be inclined to superstition, will he read *The Rationalist*, my last published book?

HUBERT WALES.

BIRTH-RATE AND INFANT MORTALITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In his letter last week, Mr. McGhee has brought up a number of interesting points to set against the contention that high birth-rates and high infant mortality rates are in close correlation, and, doubtless, there are exceptional instances where the direct correlation between the two is obscured. It is, however, only by taking statistics for millions of people of all classes, over long periods, that we can arrive at a true generalization.

So far from the Jews having a high birth-rate, in Mr. Israel Cohen's book, *Jewish Life in Modern Times*, (Methuen, 1914), we find the following: "Although modern Jewry has such a favourable record in regard to morality and disease, it has a remarkably diminishing birth-rate, which is lower than the birth-rate of the general population in all the countries of Europe," which statement he then supports by the actual figures.

Ireland, also, is decidedly not a high birth-rate country. For the period 1881-1906 her birth-rate was between twenty-two and twenty-four per thousand. There are many parts of Ireland where families are large, and, as Dr. Prudence Gaffkin remarked in the Carnegie Report, infantile mortality is not deplored in Ireland, where the life here is considered but a prelude to the world to come, and the babies that are cut off short have at least gained the boon of everlasting life. Miss Rebecca West in the *Sunday Pictorial* of June 3, advises mothers to "disregard the advice of bishops who are unable to grasp the implications of the fact that the eight European countries with the highest birth-rate are also the eight with the highest infantile mortality rate." The most effectual answer to the whole argument would be to show a country that has a *high* birth-rate and *low* infantile mortality rate. Where is it?

Y. C.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

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COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall): C. Cohen, 3, "Morality Without God"; 7, "Why Men Believe in God." With special reference to H. G. Wells.

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Views and Opinions.

Agnosticism Once More.

We were quite alive to the consideration that in dealing with Agnosticism *versus* Atheism we were inviting comment, and arousing dissent. But that is not a bad thing, even among friends; and it would be a queer kind of Freethought which could not indulge now and again in a dispute without the sacrifice of good temper or without gaining a clearer conception of the point at issue. So we do not regret that our reply to Mr. Clodd in the *Freethinker* for September 9, with the couple of "Acid Drops" in the issue of September 16, have caused several readers to write us on the subject, the general tenour of which communications is well represented by Mr. J. Blair Williams' letter on another page. For these correspondents, and we daresay for many others, the matter remains where it was. It may remain in the same position even after another, and for the time being final, attempt; but an endeavour to induce clarity of thought—with either writer or reader, or both—can never be quite wasted effort.

* * *

Clearing the Ground.

Let us clear the ground a little by pointing out that the dispute is one that is forced on the Atheist by the Agnostic; it is not the other way about. "Atheist" is a very old word with a very definite meaning. "Agnostic" is a very new word with a very ambiguous meaning. And the Agnostic forces the Atheist to defend himself by declaring that "Agnostic" is a more correct, a more philosophical, description of the non-theistic mind. It is on this point that the Atheist joins issue. He asserts that the older term is a quite correct one; that "Agnostic," *in relation to the belief in God* (we wish to emphasize this) is "Atheist" over again, and that the Agnostic only produces an apparent justification of a preference for the new word by misrepresenting or misunderstanding the older one. We do not, of course, mean that the misrepresentation is deliberate; but it is there all the same. And the proof is that, whenever the Agnostic attempts to justify his rejection of belief in "God," he is forced to restate the atheistic position, and whenever he attempts to justify his repudiation of Atheism, he invariably misstates it. As to the Christian Theist, he is a past master of misrepresentation, and one takes his conduct as a matter of course. But one may be excused looking round for a bludgeon or a whip when avowed Agnostics like Mr. William Archer—in the midst of an attack on Mr. Wells for not thinking clearly!—talks of those who deny progress as "the true and irredeemable Atheists." One cannot but feel suspicious of this readiness to join with Christians in tacking "Atheist" on to everything that is considered objectionable.

* * *

A Suspicious Origin.

Now, it is difficult for anyone who considers the way in which the word "Agnostic" gained currency in this country to resist the conviction that the underlying motive was to find a word that should not be offensive—or not so offensive as "Atheist"—to the religious ear. Spencer presented the religious world with his "Unknowable" as an object of worship—one of the greatest jokes in the history of philosophy. Huxley, always with a hankering after the "respectable," says he invented the word because he wished to proclaim that he knew nothing about "God." And a very acute French observer of English life, M. Emile Boutmy, has well pointed out that in France both Spencer and Huxley would have called themselves Atheists, and no one would have dreamed of calling them anything else. And it must be observed that on the Continent there is no vogue in Agnosticism. That remains substantially an English commodity. This cannot be because the Continent is behind England in philosophic strength or subtlety. French observers would not hesitate to say that in these matters English timidity is notorious.

* * *

Agnosticism and Atheism.

Mr. Williams does not agree that in relation to the belief in God "there are only two positions—either one believes in a God and is a Theist, or one does not believe in a God and is an Atheist." And he grounds his disagreement on the fact that before one can disbelieve one must have some idea of what is the subject of our disbelief. Granted, with all my heart. And that is precisely what every responsible Atheist has always said. When a Theist has come along and assured the Atheist that there exists a God who is omnipotent, or omniscient, or is a "First Cause," or who is "pure mind," etc., the Atheist has replied "I disbelieve in any such existence, because its existence is as impossible as a square circle or a round triangle." These things are all unthinkable. And if the Theists asks further do you believe in any "God," the reply of the Atheist has always been that "God" by itself means nothing at all. And of that which carries no meaning, neither affirmation nor denial, neither belief nor disbelief can be admitted. Both etymologically and philosophically an Atheist is one without belief in a God. The Agnostic is also without God. And we

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are still waiting to discover the difference between the two. It is not we who say that the Agnostic is wrong in being without a belief in God, it is the Agnostic who says the Atheist is wrong and attempts to prove it by stating Atheism in a way which all Atheists repudiate.

* * *

The Origin of God.

But our principal complaint against Agnosticism is that it so often connotes hesitancy where hesitancy ought not to exist. Mr. Williams rests his Agnosticism on the ground that "God" is a meaningless term, and with that we agree. But there are others who treat it as a case of suspended judgment. These say they neither affirm nor deny, they simply do not know. And we have been for years asking this class, and now ask again, what will they do with all that we know of the origin of the God-idea itself? Let it be remembered that the belief in God did not commence as an abstraction. Primitive gods are concrete enough in the minds of their worshippers. They only become abstractions as the process of development shows the original ideas to be quite untenable. But here is the question to which we desire to direct attention. Knowing, as we do, the conditions that gave rise to the belief in gods, we also know that the belief in gods represent a mistaken interpretation of known facts. These facts are still with us. But they are differently understood. But if this be admitted, what other basis is there, or has there ever been, for a belief in God? We know of none. And must not the Agnostic, who, with the Atheist, accepts the statement that the belief in gods sprang from a misunderstanding of natural facts, subjective or objective, physical, mental, or social, must he not dismiss the whole belief in God or gods as pure myth? There is really nothing to suspend judgment about. It is not a case of the Agnostic saying to the Atheist or the Theist, we confess our ignorance of what you are quarrelling over. The present state of knowledge concerning the origin and development of the gods gives the fullest warranty for dismissing the theory of God as pure delusion and nothing else. No one professes Agnosticism in relation to witches, or wizzards, or fairies, or gnomes. Will someone explain what better foundation there is for the belief in gods, or why the same mental attitude is not correct in *all* these instances?

* * *

The Simple Issue.

For the rest, while we quite agree with Mr. Williams that before a proposition admits of belief or disbelief, its terms must be realizable in thought, we do not see that this has any special claim to be called Agnosticism. It is a rule of mental guidance; or, if you will, a law of thought. Agnosticism implies this, as does Atheism, as does all thinking, for the thinking which ignores it is only pseudo-thought. In the sense with which we are concerned with the word, Agnostic is only of significance in relation to the belief in God. And here the matter resolves itself into a simple and definite issue. All the gods of the various religions are to Atheist and Agnostic alike admittedly myth. There is no hesitation here, there is no room for suspension of judgment, there is no room for doubt. We can say with absolute certainty that we disbelieve in their existence. Our correspondent will, we doubt not, say so, Mr. Clodd will say so, so would Huxley, or Spencer, or Stephen. And, with regard to any other conceivable Deity, the position is the same, for so soon as the proposition is stated within the limits of conceivability, it is seen to be on all fours with asserting the existence of square circles or four-sided triangles. Once more the Atheist and the Agnostic are at one. And in relation to anything else, *i.e.*, some unknown inconceivable sort of existence, no one can believe or disbelieve, because no one knows what is affirmed. Thus, so far as "God" is used in a legitimate manner, and so far as it falls within the limits of conceivability, belief or disbelief follows. We can see no room for any middle term. And for the Agnostic to say that his Agnosticism implies want of knowledge of, or want of belief in, something which defies conception, would be to make Agnosticism more absurd than its bitterest enemy has yet asserted.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Reformation in Scotland.

II.

OUR main and most essential contention is that the Protestant Reformation was an exclusively human movement, being a revolt against ecclesiastical tyranny and corruption. In Scotland it was an aristocratic movement, designed to crush the combined power of Church and Crown, because the supreme object of both was to demolish the nobility. It was simply in self-defence and in order to wreak vengeance upon their tormentors that the nobles became Protestants. The Earl of Angus was banished and his estates were confiscated, while the Earl of Caithness had to confront an expedition sent out to destroy him. The Douglas family endured ruthless persecution at the hands of James V., and all members thereof were forbidden to approach "within twelve miles of the king, under pain of death." Buckle says:—

> In 1531, the king deprived the Earl of Crawford of most of his estates, and threw the Earl of Argyle into prison. Even those nobles who had been inclined to follow him, he now discouraged. He took every opportunity of treating them with coldness, while he filled the highest offices with their rivals, the clergy. Finally, he, in 1532, aimed a deadly blow at their order, by depriving them of a large part of the jurisdiction which they were wont to exercise in their own country, and to the possession of which they owed much of their power. At the instigation of the Archbishop of Glasgow, he established what was called the College of Justice, in which suits were to be decided, instead of being tried, as heretofore, by the barons, at home, in their castles. It was ordered that the new tribunal should consist of fifteen judges, eight of whom must be ecclesiastics; and, to make the intention still more clear, it was provided that the president should invariably be a clergyman (*History of Civilization in England*, vol. iii., pp. 56, 57).

It was such royal deeds of deliberate persecution, done at the suggestion and with the full approval of the Church, that converted the nobles to Protestantism, rather than any disinterested desire to reform the Church. After they had adopted the principles of Protestantism, they were persecuted as heretics, not merely as political enemies. On this point Buckle is most emphatic:—

> The love of innovation was encouraged by interested motives, until, in the course of a few years, an immense majority of the nobles adopted extreme Protestant opinions; hardly caring what heresy they embraced, so long as they were able, by its aid, to damage a Church from which they had recently received the greatest injuries, and with which they and their progenitors had been engaged in a contest of nearly a hundred and fifty years (*Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 58).

Keith, in his *Affairs of Church and State*, states that "several of our nobility found it their temporal interest, as much as their spiritual, to sway with the new opinions as to religious matters."

By the year 1560 the Reformation had been well established in Scotland, after a long-continued and painful struggle. In connection with the movement, two men stand out from among the crowd as born

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leaders, namely, Cardinal Beaton and John Knox. Beaton was eleven years older than Knox, and his public career closed tragically when the other's was about to open. The Archbishop was one of the ablest and most cunning men of his day, and his loyalty to the Catholic Church was beyond question. His enemies describe him as an unprincipled man, and by their testimony even Buckle is not uninfluenced. That he was immoral cannot be denied, for, though a bachelor, he was the father of many children; and of this fact he was by no means ashamed. In the year 1546, he gave his eldest daughter in marriage to the eldest son of the Earl of Crawford, and in the marriage articles, signed with his own hand, he boldly called her "my daughter." And there are evidences not a few that he was dishonest, even a forger. Like most men in authority at that time, he was capable of the most horrible cruelty to Protestant heretics. George Wishart (1513-46) was a Lutheran divine, who, in 1543, went on tour through Scotland, preaching Protestant doctrines. At Dundee, Montrose, and other places he made numerous converts. The Cardinal pursued him with biting hostility, and ultimately had been arrested at Ormiston. The poor man was kept in prolonged captivity; but in 1545, or 1546, he was tried and sentenced to death as a vile heretic. From a window in the castle the Archbishop witnessed the burning of the man he so cordially hated. The persecution was carried out on an extensive scale, but the majority of those who suffered were nobles.

George Wishart was the "spiritual" father of John Knox, "the most conspicuous character of those troublous times." In the estimation of not a few people, John Knox occupies a nitch by himself in the Temple of Fame as the greatest Scotsman that ever lived. We readily admit his sincerity, fearlessness, outspokenness, and incorruptibility; but Lecky does not hesitate to speak of him as "this apostle of murder" (*The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. ii., p. 44). It is well known that in the spring of 1545, a conspiracy to assassinate Archbishop Beaton was formed by the leading Protestants; but it was not until a year later, May 29, 1546, that the foul murder was actually committed "under circumstances of horrible mockery and atrocity." Protestant historians are very fond of relating that the Cardinal passed the night before his assassination with his mistress, Marion Ogilby, who was seen leaving his chamber shortly before the murderers, Norman Leslie and Kirkaldy of Grange forced their way into the castle; but they are not so ready to admit that when the French came to arrest his assassins who held the castle, John Knox was among them, and was taken as a prisoner to France. The fact is that he gave his sanction to the dark deed performed, and was, to a great extent, responsible for it. Nor are we surprised at this, for his whole life bears witness to his sternness, brutality, and unrelentingness. With what undisguised delight he stigmatized "the pestilent Papists and Massemongers" as "adulterers and whoremasters," whom he perpetually pointed at as objects of execration and ridicule. "One mass," he exclaimed, "is more fearful to me than if 10,000 armed enemies were landed in any part of the realm." Not only were priests prohibited from celebrating, but worshippers were by law prohibited from hearing mass, under pain of the confiscation of their goods for the first offence, of exile for the second, and of death for the third. The permission given to the Queen of Scotland to hear mass in her own private chapel was publicly characterized as an intolerable evil. John Knox was of opinion that those who were guilty of idolatry might justly be put to death, and for his authority he fell back upon the Old Testament. Listen to the following extracts from his *Appellation*.

> None provoking the people to idolatry ought to be exempted from the punishment of death.....The whole tribes did in verie dede execute that sharp judgment against the tribe of Benjamin for a lesse offence than for idolatrie. And the same ought to be done wheresoever Christ Jesus and his Evangill is so receaved in any realme province or citie that the magistrates and people have solemnly avowed and promised to defend the same, as under King Edward of late days was done in England. In such places, I say, it is not only lawful to punish to the death such as labour to subvert the true religion, but the magistrates and people are bound to do so onless they will provoke the wrath of God against themselves.

Then he called upon the nobles of Scotland not to spare the sword of justice, but to pay due heed to his accusation against the "bishops and the whole rabble of the Papistical clergie of idolatry, of murther, and of blasphemie against God committed."

After the assassination of Archbishop Beaton, Knox was condemned to the French galleys, and he was a prisoner in France for eighteen months. On his release, on the recommendation of Edward VI., he came over to England. When Mary Tudor ascended the throne he went to Geneva, where he stayed for nearly eighteen months, visiting such centres as Zurich and Frankfort-on-the-Main. In 1555 he returned to Scotland, where his advocacy of Protestantism was so full of bitterness and bigotry that he was compelled to quit the country. He sought refuge once more at Geneva where he spent some three years. During his absence the nobles worked hard in the dissemination of the new doctrines. They drew up a covenant, in which they vowed to stand by one another in their resistance to the tyranny that threatened them. Then they asked John Knox to return, which he did not do till 1559, by which time the nobles had practically won the victory for Protestantism. One of the first things the Reformer did after his arrival was to preach a sermon at Perth, which was followed by a riot resulting in the plundering of churches and the destruction of monasteries. Then a war ensued between the two religious factions which ended in the triumph of the Lords of the Congregation. Perth, Stirling, Linlithgow, and Edinburgh fell into their hands. Erelong the Protestant religion gained the supremacy in Scotland.

With such a history in mind who can honestly believe that the Reformation in Scotland was the work of God? It was simply a violent contest between two sets of superstition which differed but little the one from the other. Other struggles followed between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy, and between different schools of Presbyterianism. But in none of the religious revolutions and sectarian disputes through which Scotland has passed was there the slightest evidence of any supernatural interference. Scotland is still in the throes of a mighty conflict, not between two types of ignorant and superstitious faith, but between reason and credulity, between natural knowledge and supernatural belief, and we are confident that the outcome of it will be the complete downfall of supernaturalism, and the happy enthronement of the natural.

J. T. Lloyd.

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 efficacy 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.—*J. S. Mill.*

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Richard Carlile.
1790-1843.

I pray thee then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men.
—*Leigh Hunt, "Abou Ben Adhem."*

"THE old guard dies, but never surrenders." The famous saying leaps to the memory at the mention of the name of the lion-hearted Richard Carlile. The story of his struggles is a part of the history of Freethought, and it is a romance of a hero fighting at fearful odds against "the whips and scorns of time, the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely," and leaving an imperishable name. Carlile's was the true soldier's temperament, supported by the unshakable principles without which no great purpose can be achieved. No misfortune disconcerted him; no defeat cowed his indomitable spirit. He could not be bullied or frightened, although Freethought was fighting for its very existence in the days when he fought the good fight. Superstition, effectively disguised in the ermine of the judge, was strong in the land, and contemptuous enough of the little band of heroes and heroines, whose evangel has revolutionized every branch of knowledge, and rewritten the intellectual history of the world. In the darkest days of the Freethought Movement, Carlile and his colleagues never lost courage, for they knew the longer they lay in prison the greater triumph would be won for the cause they had at heart.

Think of it! Richard Carlile himself suffered nine and a half years' imprisonment for championing freedom of speech. His wife and other members of his family, and shop assistants, divided among them fifty years' confinement in gaols And what a man was the leader, that vivid, vital, radiant, restless, dynamic personality; all aglow with enthusiasm, who diffused energy all about him, and whose very presence caused stimulation.

A son of the West Country, Richard Carlile was self-educated. As a boy, he collected faggots to burn in effigy "Tom Paine," the Guy Fawkes of that period, whose virile writings were in after life to influence him so greatly. For he was twenty-five years old before he began to read Paine, whose books roused Carlile like a trumpet-blast. Henceforth he was the dauntless champion of Freethought and free speech. Taxes were then placed on knowledge, and fine and imprisonment faced all who dared to speak or write of religious or political liberty. England was then ruled by a crazy king, a profligate regent, and a corrupt government; but Carlile, a poor man, defied the Cerberus of Authority, and broke the fetters of press despotism. For, remember, the press to him was not a mere purveyor of news and dirt and scandal. It was a vehicle of ideas, a pulpit from which the evangel of liberty could be proclaimed with tongue of fire, a trumpet whose clarion note would summon men and women to the unending battle against wrong.

Alive in every fibre, Carlile was the very man to carry a forlorn cause to victory. Handcuffed and imprisoned, he roused the public conscience, and compelled the all-powerful authorities to cry "halt." It was impossible to suppress him; it was but punching a pillow. When a score of his assistants had been sent to prison for selling Freethought literature, the prosecuted books were sold through an aperture, so that the buyer was unable to identify the seller. Afterwards the volumes were sold by a slot-machine, probably the first of its kind. Among the books for sale were Paine's *Age of Reason*, Annet's *Life of David*, Voltaire's pamphlets, Palmer's *Principles of Nature*, and many other thunderous engines of revolt. When his stocks were seized by the authorities, Carlile read nearly the whole of Paine's *Age of Reason* in his speech for the defence, so that additional publicity should be given to the matter which was sought to be suppressed. Nor was imprisonment the only punishment inflicted, for fines, amounting to thousands of pounds, were imposed. To annoy his persecutors, Carlile dated his letters from gaol "the era of the carpenter's wife's son." Superior folk may lift their eyebrows at such audacity; but the fiery, restless courage which accounted for it is a quality which the world can very ill spare. What it can achieve needs no record; it is recorded on history's page in a life and actions as courageous as any recorded in the immortal pages of Plutarch. Fighting the embattled hosts of superstition, the victory remained to Carlile. Writing from gaol in the sixth year of his imprisonment, he was able to say, "All the publications that have been prosecuted have been, and are, continued in open sale." What matchless courage! "The sound of it is like the ring of Roman swords on the helmets of barbarians." Small wonder that the two greatest poets of his time, Keats and Shelley, recognized that he was a true hero battling for intellectual liberty.

Carlile's victory over his opponents was so complete that his later years were spent in comparative peace at Enfield, where he died in 1843. True to the end in his devotion to science and humanity, he bequeathed his body to Dr. Lawrence for the purpose of dissection and the advancement of knowledge. His funeral at Kensal Green Cemetery was the occasion of an exhibition of clerical spite. At the interment the Rev. Josiah Twigger appeared and insisted on reading the burial service. "Sir," said the eldest son, Richard, "we want no service over the body of our father; he lived in opposition to priestcraft, and we protest against the service being read." The clergyman persisted, and the last insult of the Church was hurled at the dead hero. Carlile's brave wife survived him only a few months, and she was buried in the same grave. Thus ended the career of one who, as Browning has it, was "ever a fighter," strenuous, eager, unsparing, often bitter and hard; but he had, as was said of Byron, the "imperishable excellence of sincerity and strength."

Such heroism was not without result. Twenty-three years after Carlile's death organized Freethought was an accomplished fact, for, in 1866, the National Secular Society was founded, the first President being the able and courageous Charles Bradlaugh. Under his leadership, and that of his brilliant successors, this Society has ever been in the vanguard of progress, sheltering behind it all the weaker heterodox people, who otherwise had been crushed by the weight of orthodoxy. Behind militant Freethought all forms of advanced thought have advanced to some measure of freedom. It has been a prolonged battle against enormous odds. As the little *Revenge* earned an undying name by hurling herself against the great battleships of Spain, so the Secularists have displayed extraordinary courage in attacking the tremendous armada of superstition. The greater the perils, the greater the victory; and in the ripe years to come recognition must be given to the superb courage, which, disregarding any reward, was satisfied with the proud knowledge that their action would diffuse the blessings of liberty to countless thousands. For in that happy time the stormy note of struggle and contention will be changed to the unfaltering trumpet-notes of ultimate victory. In that hour Carlile's noble dream will have come true, and the National Secular Society will share with him a lasting place in the history of intellectual progress by bringing it within the realities of life. So true is it:—

The greatest gift the hero leaves his race
Is to have been a hero. Say, we fail?
We feed the high tradition of this world,
And leave our spirits in our children's breasts.

MIMNERMUS.

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The Rise and Progress of Mental Power.

VIII.

(Concluded from p. 604.)

Paradoxical as it may appear, the unit of language is not the word, as we understand that term, but the sentence. Thus the sentence is older than the words which compose it. But this apparently puzzling assertion loses much of its novelty when we discover that every separate term was primitively a proposition, because it constituted by itself, and of itself, a sign capable of conveying an affirmation. The sentence-word of aboriginal man, like the terms employed by our children, formed the raw materials from which the later parts of speech were developed. When infants commence to speak, as even Max Mueller recognized, a word such as "up" is to the child's mind "noun, verb, adjective, all in one. If an English child says Ta, that "ta" is both noun (thanks), and a verb (I thank you)." Another sentence-word is the infantile Ba-ba for sleep. But, as Prof. F. Mueller points out, this sentence-word "does not mean sleep only, as a particular kind of repose, but rather also all the circumstances which appertain to sleep, such as cot, bed, bolster, bed-clothes, &c." Infants and the uncivilized eke out their crude sentence-words with gestures which help to indicate the different meanings they attach to the same term.

As languages are traced further and further backwards their structures steadily become simplified. Suffixes, affixes, prepositions, in fact all those parts of speech which denote relationship between the several parts of a sentence, progressively shrink and disappear. When all these relational words have vanished, objective terms and their adjuncts alone remain. Gradually even the verb becomes indistinguishable from the substantive, while the adjectives become completely fused with the nouns. As we wander back in time, then, the more closely we approach the period when our various parts of speech were simplified into the primitive sentence-word. This last was the nucleus from which all the involved grammatical structures of the higher languages have arisen. Or, as Geiger puts it, "language diminishes the further we look back in such a way, that we cannot forbear concluding it must once have had no existence at all."

All contemporary philologists would, probably, subscribe to the foregoing reflections on the natural genesis of languages both living and extinct, and increased light is thrown on the problem by the study of the speech of savage man. That first-hand student of uncivilized tongues, Dr. Bleek, became convinced that all primitive words were concrete in character, and that every abstract term is the result of later growth. The evolutionist anticipates that the earliest language signs were concerned with those physical phenomena directly presented to the senses. Now this is exactly what he does find, while the more complex symbols arose with an advancing civilization. It is noteworthy that the famous John Locke, in his work on *Human Understanding*, foreshadowed more recent conclusions in this matter. For he states that:—

> It may lead us a little towards the original of all our notions and knowledge, if we remark how great a dependence our words have on common sensible ideas; and how those which are made use of to stand for actions and notions quite removed from sense, have their rise from thence, and from obvious sensible ideas are transferred to more abstruse significations, and made to stand for ideas that come out under the cognizance of our senses.

Even in a highly specialized tongue, such as English, the relics of gesture language still linger. The word supercilious, for instance, literally means a man who raises his eyebrows. As Clodd observes, from A to Z, our dictionaries are crammed with examples of the concrete roots from which ethical and philosophical terms have arisen. The highly abstract term "time" is related to the physical act of stretching an elastic body. Mallery and others adduce innumerable evidences of the same character from the languages of savage races. As a matter of fact, no word is known whose etymology can be traced which is not derived from a concrete root.

Further testimony is supplied in existing speech, for the Society Islanders use separate terms for sheep's-tail, dog's-tail, bird's-tail, etc., but have no word for tail itself. The Mohicans possess words which signify different modes of cutting, but are without the verb "to cut." The Eskimo, the natives of Australia, and numerous other races are remarkably deficient in abstract terms, and despite all the disadvantages of their lumbering languages the concreteness of their speech seems positively requisite to their rude intelligence. And this poverty of abstract words is more than compensated by a multiplicity of objective terms. While the Tasmanian tribes had a distinct name for each kind of tree—gum-tree, wattle-tree, etc., no term for tree itself existed in their tongue, "nor could they express abstract qualities, such as hard, soft, warm, cold, long, short, round." (*Vocabulary of Aboriginal Tribes of Tasmania*, p. 34). As Sayce sums up the subject:—

> All over the world, indeed, wherever we come across a savage race, or an individual who has been unaffected by the civilization around him, we find this primitive inability to separate the particular from the universal by isolating the individual word, and extracting it, as it were, from the ideas habitually associated with it.

The prodigious part played by the sense of sight in the progress of human brain power has been noted by several naturalists who have surveyed the subject from the standpoint of anthropology. Geiger reached the same conclusion from the view point of the linguist. It is not claimed that human or semi-human vision is necessarily superior to that of birds or quadrupeds but that man, owing to his erect posture and other attributes, more constantly employs his eyes than other animals. The experiences of infants are enriched as they gaze intently at objects placed in their hands, or follow with their eyes the moving existences within their range of vision. To an animal so observant as early man, thought Geiger, it became natural to employ gestures and grimaces for purposes of communication, and that from these arose movements of the mouth of a sympathetic character which, in turn, gave rise to sounds to which some special significance became gradually attached. In any case, it is certainly suggestive that the creature to which the visual sense is most important is also the creature which has enormously outdistanced all others in the sign-making faculty. Articulation once attained, however rudimentary its form, the path was clear for future progress. When once begun, this advance would, probably, proceed at an ever-increasing rate; gesture and vision would constantly supplement each other, while the division between man and his closest kindred would widen more and more.

Darwin's wonderful powers of penetration are splendidly shown in the appended passage from his *Descent of Man*. "I cannot doubt," he says,

> that language owes its origin to the imitation and modification of various natural sounds, the voices of other animals, and man's own instinctive cries, aided by signs and gestures.....Since monkeys certainly understand much of what is said to them by man, and, when wild, utter signal cries of danger to their fellows;

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and since fowls give distinct warnings for danger on the ground, or in the sky from hawks.....may not some unusually wise ape-like animal have imitated the growl of a beast of prey, and thus told his fellow-monkeys the nature of the expected danger? This would have been a first step in the formation of language.

Conceivably, song also may have assisted in the evolution of articulation. Some of the apes utter what to them seem musical sounds. Calls, cries, shouts, and sounds expressive of endearment when embracing the female were other factors involved in the genesis of speech. It is certainly significant that all sounds which express purely emotional states proceed from the throat and larynx with small, if any, assistance from the lips and tongue. The earliest efforts towards articulation were, probably, chiefly composed of vowel sounds, and from these the liquid and, finally, the lingual consonants very gradually emerged. It is worth noting in this connection that in our own language it is quite impossible to pronounce the name of a single consonant without the aid of vowel sounds.

Clicks, again, must have formed a conspicuous part of all primitive speech. The clicking noises so prominent in the languages of the Bushmen and Hottentots of South Africa were carefully investigated by Dr. Bleek, and this authority states that the clicks which occur in most of their words are so important to the anthropologist that their thorough study is essential if science is to possess "even an approximate idea of the original vocal elements from which human language sprang." Prof. Sayce is convinced that these savage clicks still show how the sounds of speechless man could be employed to embody and communicate ideas. For when we bear in mind the Bushman's inarticulate clicks "it would seem as if no line of division could be drawn between man and beast, even when language is made the test" (Introduction to the *Science of Language*, ii., p. 302). After deprecating the comparative neglect among naturalists of the study of monkey language, in a letter to Dr. Bleek, Haeckel remarked that among the numerous sounds made by apes he had himself "frequently heard in zoological gardens, from apes of very different species, remarkable clicking sounds, which are produced with the lips, and also, though not so often, with the tongue."

In view of the preceding considerations, we may justly infer that given an animal slightly, or not at all superior to the higher apes in intelligence, but more erect in posture, and possessed of stronger social instincts than they; then the genesis and development of that speech which has played a part so tremendous in man's progress is fully accounted for without the least necessity for any mystical intervention whatsoever.

T. F. PALMER.

Voices.

I HAVE been reading Byron, and I am again impressed with the thought that the Shakespeares and the Byrons are more honoured in the breach than the observance. The Bible is not the only neglected book. We honour the pigmies and slight the giants—all those unresentful dead, and over whose marble brows no hectic of a moment passes, but yet who win a terrible and undesired revenge; witness the War and the warriors, the widows and orphans; the pomp and circumstance, the misery and woe. Burns wished,—

> That I for poor old Scotland's sake
> Some useftn' plan or book could make
> Or sing a song at least.

Ours is, as perhaps was his, a wider wish. Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away. O for a new Cervantes to rid the world of this—this—this.....

I have been listening to the wind. There is wisdom in it—I speak metaphorically. It sounds every note, harmonizes every discord of life, rebukes every folly, and goes its viewless, careless, austere, incalculable way. Solemn in the echoing rumble in the chimney-top, in the solemn mood, as the Thinker sits by the fire that lisps and whispers as its red glow turns to grey, silent at last and dead while the requiem sounds, or we list the menacing march of the hosts of the air onward from and to all time and all eternity, under the black flag and stars of night or day's bright banner of blue. Robust and rousing at times, soothing and sweet, tender and tuneful, it is yet of the melancholy wind I speak, the prophetic, because remembering, the wise old wind! It goes for ever, and for ever comes, crooning its deathless lament, mingling with the memory of the long martyrdom of man, visiting every field of the dead, straying in every churchyard. Behold they know not anything, these dead; but even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries, and the wind grows yet more pregnant, poignant with the stilled yet clamorous innumerable voices of the past, and of those millions freshly slain.

Nor will the ocean yield its dead. As the first drowned seaman slept, he is sleeping now; the last will sleep as long.

> With Earth's first Clay they did the Last Man knead,
> And there of the Last Harvest sowed the Seed:
> And the first Morning on Creation wrote
> What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

But the tides remember, and the waves recall their sea-green sepulture; and, in the majesty of the ocean's voice, the silent sleepers, in hyalline halls and caves, become articulate for evermore!

And meanwhile the priestly *Hence* is growing more shadowy and dim, or vulgar and grotesque. It is lost in the noise of the winds and the waters of the present, in the thunders of cannon, the crash of wreckage, the yells of exultation and of agony; and in the midst of all the pious landshark prowls, grinding the faces of the poor. *Now* is the accepted time; here and now is the place and time and *need* of salvation. Awake to the perils of to-day, ye dreamers of to-morrow!

It is the sweet o' the year, and I have also been consulting the flowers. The yellow, sun-loving dandelion in hosts, and bevies of beauty by the rough line-side. Rude slag and iron contrasting with an enchanted atmosphere of green and gold. These, too, will pass like all the loveliest and best. But riches fineless are as poor as winter to him that ever fears he shall be poor; and so we e'en make the most of what we may yet spend. Nature, in due course, will stow us all away, and out of our crude clay may fashion more beautiful things. Meantime we may acquire—as a writer in the *R.P.A. Annual* suggests—that toughness of mind upon which the reasoning processes depend. In the words of John Keats—and one wonders how so young a mind could be so sage—we must learn,—

> To bear all naked truths,
> And to envisage circumstance all calm;
> This is the top of sovereignty.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Let us recognize the plain truth then, that it is these supernatural ideas that have obscured morality, corrupted politics, hindered the advance of the sciences, and extinguished happiness and peace, even in the very heart of man.—*Holbach, "System of Nature."*

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Acid Drops.

The German reply to the Papal peace note is what might have been expected. Christian cant is answered by Christian cant. The Pope's Christian heart is torn at the sight of Christian nations butchering each other. The German Government's Christian conscience, after the sinking of hospital ships, the bombing of hospitals, air-raids over open towns, etc., yearns for a time "when moral strength" will take the place of "the might of arms." Cant meets cant, and then goes on its way, behaving in every respect as of old. And people ask, "Is Christianity a failure?"

And while these two Christians are exchanging hollow professions, another pietist, Mr. Horatio Bottomley, visits the Front, and comes back with the following:—

> I was talking with a young university undergraduate. He had left his college because his King and Country called him. "Shall you go back after the war?" I asked. He smiled, and pointing to the scene around us—we were in the trenches—said, "Go back? Isn't this a sufficient education for any man? *I knew nothing before the war.*" There you have it. Neither did I. But in one week I have had *my* education. I know all I want to know—of life and of death.

Assuming the incidant to be a genuine one, if we were as pious as Mr. Bottomley, we should say, "God help the nation in which its young men regard the education of the battlefield as of more importance than that of the university!" Fortunately, the men who are going through what Mr. Bottomley calls "Hell" have for the most part drawn a different moral from their experience. Were it otherwise, it would indeed represent the supreme triumph of Prussianism—education in war the supreme thing in life. Mr. Bottomley himself is on a different level. The War brought him to God; it convinced him of immortality. Therefore he is thankful. Let's hope God is equally so.

A "Padre" writes to the *Daily Mail* complaining that in two plays now running the parson is represented as "a sort of village idiot." He complains also at Captain Bairnsfather not finding a better type of parson than he puts into his plays. All we can say is that Captain Bairnsfather is at the Front, and knows the average parson. "Padre" points to the casuality and honours lists. But we do not see that these disprove what is alleged to be the *general* type of parson in the War.

The Woolwich Crusade, under the control of the Bishop of Southwark, has been a stupendous failure. Among those taking part in it were the Archbishop of Canterbury and nine Bishops, who between them receive salaries amounting to upwards of £40,000 a year. There were three canons, seven noted clergymen, and over 150 other speakers. This illustrious galaxy of parsons and their satellites selected Woolwich for their objective as being "in some sense a testing-ground, upon the success or failure of the Church's great enterprise in which operations of far wider scope and importance depend." It was essentially a clerical or professional campaign, laymen being conspicuous by their absence. A *Church Times* report said that "lay speakers, men who can and will speak plainly to their brethren about the things that matter, bearing witness for God and his Church, are lamentably few in the ranks of the Crusaders," and that "their absence is disastrous."

In the *Church Times* for September 14, the report of the mission was not at all optimistic. Reference was made to "the Church's failure," and to "the appalling mass of indifference and ignorance which the Church has to meet and overcome before she can even begin to touch and convert the people of England." In the same journal for September 21, we are informed that "the stage of indifference has passed," and that now "the workers of the country regard the Church with undisguised hostility." The writer admits failure, but claims that "it is the failure—not of the Church, of course; she can never fail—but of men and women who represent her in their day and generation." We, for our part, confess our utter inability to distinguish between the Church and the men and women who represent her, for, surely, without such men and women there would be no Church.

The most noteworthy fact in connection with the Woolwich Crusade is that the Woolwich people actively resented and resisted it, regarding it as a brazen insult to their intelligence. When the Churchmen held open-air meetings in Beresford Square, the workmen held opposition meetings, and great was the ensuing turmoil. Even Bishops were asked awkward questions which they had not the courage to answer. Every now and then a speaker was asked, "Are you a workman?" "Are you a democrat?" The answer being in the affirmative, the next question was: "Then why don't you support your own class?" "The poor Churchman's efforts to justify himself were met with a continuous fusillade of, 'What about the Bishops' £15,000 a year?' 'What work have they ever done?' 'Look at 'em: never done a day's work in their lives.' 'Got soft jobs and we have to find the money.' 'Why are they trying to get at us now? They never troubled about us before. They're frightened the game's up.'"

The *Church Times* is entirely mistaken on two points. The Church is the most colossal failure in history. From the very start until now she has never been what she claims to be—a supernatural, world-renewing institution; she has always been, on the contrary, a world-disturbing and war-inciting factor. Another error fallen into by our contemporary is that there is or can be a Christianity apart from the Church, for the former is, without a doubt, the creation of the latter, and both, being equally false, are doomed to perish together. They who desert the Church renounce Christianity. Like most sensible people, the Woolwich workmen are hostile to the parsons because they are the official champions of an effete system, the fancied need for which we have outgrown.

A "Jewish Rabbi," aged nineteen, was handed over to the military authorities, and fined forty shillings, at the North London Police Court. In cross-examination the "minister" said that when he registered he described himself as a dealer in crockery, but he had never done any dealing, and did not intend to. It was also stated that the Chief Rabbi had no knowledge of the defendant. The ennobling effect of religion is sufficiently apparent in this case.

"It is a bad year for kings," says a writer in the *Daily News*. Including, presumably, God, the Invisible King.

Bishop Welldon persists in regarding Germany as anti-Christian, and says she is "the enemy of all Christian civilization." Yet a schoolboy of fourteen ought to know that Germany, Austria, and Bulgaria are all Christian nations, and the former the home of the Protestant Reformation.

N.C.O., who is probably a parson, writing to the *Ardrossan Herald* on the superstition of "The Evil Eye," remarks that the evil eye (or jealousy) was not unknown even in the "glorious company of the apostles." "But for 'the evil eye,'" he says, "there might have been no tragedy of the Cross." And therefore, of course, no "salvation of the world." Of two tragedies choose the least; but it seems to us the comedy overwhelms both.

We congratulate the *Isle of Man Weekly Times* on some of the articles appearing in its columns. In one of a series of articles on the "History of Douglas," the writer has some asides which will probably rouse the anger of Christians of all denominations. Thus, *apropos* of the effect of the War on religious belief, the writer of the articles says:—

> When, in the hour of trial and sorrow, the people should have returned in vast multitudes to the faith of their fathers, the tide has been all the other way. And no wonder. Have we not seen the Head of the largest Christian congregation in the world, so far from raising a voice for his suffering children in Belgium, siding—cruelly, painfully, and obviously siding with the oppressor? At home, have we not heard the black-

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clothed advocate of conscription for the other chap, calmly taking shelter himself behind the barrier of his priestly caste, and avoiding, with the connivance of his Archbishop, all share in the active forces of his native land?

We said at the time that the clergy made a terrible blunder in demanding exemption while acting as recruiting sergeants, and events have quite justified what we said.

Here is another paragraph from the same article:—

> The war, therefore, so far from strengthening religious conventions, has weakened them. At the outbreak of hostilities our Bishop traced the fault to a material-minded Germany, wholly oblivious to the fact that in no other land in all the world are the people so well grounded in Bible knowledge and Christian observances as they are in Germany; oblivious, too, of the fact that every evil act of the Kaiser in Belgium was an expression of exact obedience to the injunctions laid down by the God of the Bible. On the other hand, France, Agnostic France, where no Roman father is permitted to harry the sick and dying, as is the rule with our men, has conducted her warfare on lines that accord with modern civilization, not with the dark ages or the outrageous injunctions of the God of the Israelites, as expressed, say, in 1 Samuel xv. or Psalm lviii.
>
> The simple truth is that the war has shaken the foundations of all our faiths, and the inability of preachers to answer any one of the questions with which they have been deluged, has had its inevitable results. The priests' game is up. To-day we have no more faith in the Kaiser's God than we have in the God about whom Samuel spoke so gliby to Saul in Israel.

When articles of this description are admitted to the ordinary newspaper press, we may well count ourselves on the eve of a Freethought revival.

The late Rev. Dr. Hunter, formerly of the Weigh House Chapel, London, has been eulogised as "a pioneer of the New Theology." The most notable thing about the New Theology was that many of its points were anticipated by Paine and other Freethinkers a century earlier.

Many hard things have been said of science and its relation to the present War, principally by the clergy and their followers. It is, therefore, pleasant to find the *Sunday Pictorial* drawing attention to what science is actually doing. Our contemporary says, "The (British) Medical Service knows neither race nor colour or creed." The same thing could be said of the Medical Service in other armies than the British. What a contrast to the treatment of patients at some religious convalescent homes where they are forced to attend services.

The clergy prate of the blessings of poverty, but have no personal objection to substantial banking accounts. The late Rev. George Millar, of Pimlico, left £28,260. Another parson, Canon Edwards, of Lambeth, left £12,037.

It is said that, as shown by the returned papers, over 50 per cent. of the people lack either intelligence or education enough to fill up the sugar forms properly. One needn't go further for an explanation of the prevalence of Christianity and other things.

The City Temple has now a regularly-appointed woman preacher in the person of Miss Maudie Royden. There is quite a rollicking sound about the name, although we dare say the lady is demure enough. We would suggest to Miss Royden that a very interesting subject for a series of discourses by her would be the position of woman under the Christian Church from the fourth to the nineteen century.

Mr. Arnold Stephens, of Sutton, Surrey, is a Christian who has had the temerity to write to the *Christian World* for September 20 in decided depreciation of prayer-meetings, and in justification of non-attendance at them. He even ridicules the idea of meeting on Saturday night to "ask God a dozen times to bless the services of the coming Sabbath." He even casts doubt upon the efficacy of prayer, saying: "Many humble congregations in town and country continue in prayer, and also continue to see empty seats, because they lack the human conditions of success." We congratulate Mr. Stephens upon the manly courage and good sense displayed in his fine letter. What will Mr. Spurr have to say to it?

We don't know anything of the Rev. O. Rhodes, of Morpeth; and, judging from the sample lying before us, we have no great desire for enlightenment in that direction. In the Church Magazine for September, this gentleman says:—

> There are heaps of people in lunatic asylums, and there are heaps of people who can see no further than their nose. Such are the people who do not see their way to go to church.

When a man talks in that fashion, he is in a bad way. And we must remind Mr. Rhodes that people in lunatic asylums do *not* object to going to church. All lunatics are religious. An atheistic lunatic is unknown. We do not mean by this that Atheists do not go insane; only that they are not Atheists afterwards. And as for stupid people—well, whoever heard of stupidity as being a bar to church attendance? Many a man has been turned out of church for being too wise; but when was one turned out for being too stupid? And is not Mr. Rhodes himself in "Holy Orders"? It is bad to set up a thesis when one stands as its living disproof.

The officials of the British and Foreign Bible Society report that none of its branches in any enemy country has been closed during the War. Considering the statement, so widely circulated, that Germany had deliberately repudiated Christianity, simple folk will be surprised at the news. Others know the statement to be a deliberately concoted falsehood. Germany is as Christian as ever. If it were really *less* Christian, it would be far better than it is.

Charles Newland was, last week, sentenced to three years' penal servitude for bigamy and theft. Newland had been a "missioner" to marryings, and had often preached at services. Judge Rentoul said it was the worst case he had ever tried. We hope Judge Rentoul will bear this and other cases in mind when he has occasion to reflect or remark upon the relations of morality and religion.

The creation of a Jewish regiment appears to be as wise as to enrol a regiment of Catholics or of Wesleyan Methodists, or Plymouth Brethren, or Swedenborgians, or Muggletonians. In any event let us hope that the Jewish soldiers do not emulate the military heroes of the Old Testament.

Providence doeth all things well. The *North China Daily News* states that, owing to floods, three millions of people are homeless and destitute, and the number drowned cannot be estimated.

At the request of the Government, Doctors' Commons is granting marriage licenses "three at the price of one," says a newspaper paragraph. Does this suggest a return to Old Testament ideals of marriage?

The Advisory Committee of Coalville, Leicestershire, Tribunal are stated to have gone on strike owing to the War Office having secured exemption for six able-bodied monks at Mount St. Bernard Monastery, three of whom were passed for general service, and three for home service. Why is the War Office so solicitous concerning these monks when lay Christians receive such scant courtesy? Already 50,000 ministers of religion are exempted.

The clerical mind is deserving of attention on account of its infantile qualities. The Rev. A. M. Mitchell, Vicar of Burton Wood, near Warrington, writing in his parish magazine, says, "At an appalling time like the present, the fourth year of war, when parts of Europe are literally drenched with blood, some of the more superstitious among us would not be surprised to see blood-rain fall from the clouds." We wonder how many Christian folk look up to the Rev. A. M. Mitchell as a pastor and master?

"A man of seventy-two is not old nowadays," said the Chairman of the City Tribunal. In the giddy days of Adam and Methuselah he would have been still younger.

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To Correspondents.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 30, Swansea; October 7, Failsworth; October 14, Leicester; October 21, Manchester; October 28, London; November 4, Abertillery.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 7, Birmingham; October 14, Swansea.

D. GOUDIE writes: "Allow me to congratulate 'Mimnermus' on his well written and pointed reply to H. G. Wells." We pass on the congratulation with the utmost pleasure. Mr. Wells must have felt himself in a bad way to strike out as he did. Writing for the religious, he probably felt anything would do. But he should have remembered that others might read him.

S. CLOWES.—We have no intention of altering the price of the *Freethinker* unless something quite unexpected and serious occurs. As you say, we must not lose a single possible new subscriber. We thank you for what you have done and are doing to gain new readers. We are much encouraged by your letter, as by the many others we have received during the past week or so.

J. ROSEBERRY.—Your letter proves that you have grasped the essence of what constitutes a Freethinker. A man may be as much a bigot on the right as on the wrong side. It is not what a man believes, but how he believes, that makes for intellectual salvation.

E. THURLOW.—We are flattered at you thinking no other man "could or would" stand the strain of present circumstances. We prefer to think that many *would*: and as for *could*, that is a question of endurance, and we have strong hopes in that direction also. A great idea finds a suitable instrument sooner or later.

W. J. HEPWORTH (Johannesburg).—Pleased to know you received parcel safely. Delays are unavoidable nowadays. Thanks for cutting.

L. EDMUNDS (Hong Kong).—We have a number of readers in various parts of China, but no regular agent there for this paper.

C. HARPUR.—If we are right in defining Atheism as being without belief in God, and Theism as having a belief in God, how can we be accused of "cocksureness" in writing as we did?

G. RUSSELL.—Thanks for report. It is like the resurrection of one's dead sins, but in this case we are glad to see them.

ALAN TYNDAL.—We quite share your appreciation of T. H. E.'s neat disposal of Dr. Robertson Nicoll.

J. H. ENGLISH.—We only know one way of stopping a parson talking nonsense, and that is to enlighten his congregation. Thanks for papers.

SAPPER CHEETHAM.—We are glad to have your help, and hope that peace will soon release you for other work.

G. F. LAWES (Vancouver).—The travelling evangelist is much the same everywhere. And that is not surprising, seeing that he can only appeal to the same class everywhere. An intelligent man would never undertake the job, or if he did, would soon give it up. Pleased to hear from you.

C. D. WESTON.—Paper is being redirected as requested. We saw the cutting you were good enough to enclose, but did not comment on it at the time.

C. W. MARSHALL.—Thanks for the good work you are doing in spreading abroad the *Freethinker*.

W. J.—It is not a question of attractiveness but of accuracy. And we think the word selected precisely defines what is the scope of this paper.

THOTH.—Chained Bibles were once very common—at a time when books were both scarce and expensive.

H. SHAW.—Shall appear. Thanks.

J. BURY.—Exactly, "every drop" tells, and many bearers help to lighten the burden.

J. GIBSON.—See "Acid Drops." We may return to this gentleman later.

H. BLACK.—Sorry we wrote "March 21" as the opening date of the Manchester lectures. It should, of course, be October 21.

E. B. sends us the following version of the lines quoted in last week's *Freethinker*, and which he says he has had by him some years. We think them an altogether better version:—

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth."—Genesis ix. 1.

King Solomon and King David, they both led naughty lives;
Each had three hundred concubines, and eke one hundred wives.
When they arrived at riper age, they both were seized with qualms,
So, one he wrote the Proverbs, and the other wrote the Psalms.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—The worst of opening such a discussion would be, that if it were thorough it would carry us into questions that lie outside our legitimate purpose. Other matters are receiving attention.

C. BARTRAM.—Glad to hear from you and to know that you are well. Try and keep so.

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.

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"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

WANT of time and space prevents our printing more than a bald list of subscriptions this week. We have a number of letters from which we should like to quote, but they must of necessity wait for our next issue. And for the reasons already given we must bespeak the patience of a number of correspondents whose letters, for the moment, remain unanswered. Meanwhile, it is pleasing to note that our subscription list is a very representative one, although I am sure there are very many more who mean to figure therein before we write "Finis" to the Fund.

Third List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £226 19s. 4d. J. G. Dobson, 5s. J. Hall English, 2s. J. R. (second subscription), 1s. R. Bell, 5s. Alan Tyndal, 5s. K. J., 2s. 6d. E. W. (Manchester), 5s. C. D. Weston, £1 1s. Mathematicus, 10s. H. Good, 10s. Mr. and Mrs. W. Waymark, 2s. 6d. Jersey, £1. Mr. and Mrs. Gorrie, £1 1s. W. Mather, £2 2s. J. Kilpatrick, 5s. T. Dunbar, 2s. 6d. J. O. Restall, 5s. "Thoth," 10s. G. H. Murphy, 2s. C. W. Marshall, 10s. A. W. Coleman, £1 1s. Sam Healing, 2s. 6d. J. Brodie, 3s. J. Molyneaux, 2s. 6d. H. Silverstein, 5s. J. R., 1s. W. H. Hicks, £1 1s. B. R. Godfree, £1 1s. Juliet and Julian, 9s. 6d. W. C. Dodd, 2s. 6d. J. Edmonds, 5s. J. Bury, 2s. John McMillan, 2s. 6d. W. M. (Southfield), 5s. Per A. Wildman, 9s. An Essex Tommy, 3s. 6d. H. E. Latimer Voight, £2. H. T. Oatfin, 10s. J. T. Hellwall, 5s. A Friend, £2 2s. W. E. Hickman, 2s. 6d. J. Hamon, £1. M. T. 10s. W. G. Harris, 5s. W. H. Knight, 10s. Vera, 1s. Total: £246 7s. 4d.

Correction—"F. C. Willis, 5s." in last week's list should have read "F. E. Willis 10s."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Sugar Plums.

The Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. opened its season with two fine meetings in the large town hall on Sunday last. Mr. Cohen's lectures were listened to with evident appreciation, and, it is to be hoped, will lead to new members for the local Branch. A new departure is being made in the arrangement for four Sunday evening meetings in the Repertory Theatre Station, Market Street. This course will be opened on October 7 by Mr. Lloyd, and will be closed by Mr. Cohen on November 18. Mr. E. C. Williams will lecture there on October 21, and Mr. F. C. Willis on November 4.

To-day (September 30) the Branch is holding a social evening in commemoration of Charles Bradlaugh, at the Cafe Oriental, Hill Street, at 6.30 There will be speeches, and light refreshments will be served. The meeting is not reserved for members. Friends will be warmly welcomed.

To-day (September 30) Mr. Cohen lectures twice in the Dockers' Hall, High Street, Swansea. The hall is a large

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one, and we hope local Freethinkers will do their best to see that it is filled. The afternoon subject, at 3, is "Christianity Before and After the War"; the evening one, at 7, "Do the Dead Live?" Admission is free, with a charge for reserved seats.

In the *Freethinker* for September 16, when referring to the death of the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Harden, we gave his rank as captain. In this we were in error, his rank being that of lance-corporal, D.C.M. The statement appeared in citing from a letter in connection with the Sustentation Fund. We regret the blunder, although we have no doubt that had Lance-corporal Harden lived to see further service, our description would have been anticipatory.

Liverpool Freethinkers are asked to note that a meeting to consider work for the winter season will be held at the Clarion Cafe, Cable Street, at 5.45 on Saturday, September 29. It is probable that many of our readers will receive their paper in time for the meeting, and we hope they will make a point of being present.

We fancy that our readers would be surprised did they know how many copies of this paper are with the British troops on the fighting fronts. Indeed, we might be surprised ourselves. We know that we have sent out, and are still sending, a goodly number, and that we should have sent many more had means permitted. We have good reason for knowing that copies of the "One and Only" are welcomed, widely read, and well discussed. We shall be greatly surprised if, when peace comes, it does not bring us many new readers and warm friends.

One of our readers, who receives the *Freethinker* regularly from home, writes his father:—

> I am enclosing a couple of pages of two different *Freethinkers*, both of them carried over the top, one of the 7th June and the other 16th August. On neither occasion, I can honestly tell you, did my opinions alter for one moment. Some people tell you that before going over, the biggest Atheist will send up a prayer, and all that rot. Don't you believe it. I suppose this last time over I had as narrow an escape as I ever wish for, but even at that terrible moment I trusted to a clear head and sane thinking, and put on one side all thoughts of God or the Church.

We are glad to learn that carrying a copy of the *Freethinker* over the top had quite as preservative an effect as the traditional copy of the Bible. Some time ago we sent this correspondent our best wishes for his safety, and we are flattered by his saying that he would sooner carry this paper into action than the best prayer-book ever issued.

A reference to our Guide Notice will show that from the platforms of all the London Branches of the N. S. S. the subject of "Charles Bradlaugh" will be dealt with from various aspects. Charles Bradlaugh was born on September 26, 1833, and died, all too soon, on January 30, 1891. As the number of those who had the honour of knowing him personally of necessity grows smaller, the influence of his life and work increases, and the world at large is just beginning to realize what a power he was for good in the cause of Progress.

We are asked to state that the Whist Drive arranged by the North London Branch N. S. S. as taking place on October 3 has been postponed. Notice will be given when a new date is arranged.

If you must pray.....pray for a healthy mind, for healthy limbs, courage, contempt of death, a Soul that deems mere length of days to be the least and last of Nature's gifts, a Soul that is steadfast under the heaviest load, that never knew anger, has no desires, and would go through the griefs and savage toils of Hercules rather than court vice, banquets, pageantries. That which yourself can for yourself procure, I show you. One road, one alone, is sure to end in peace of mind. It is the road of Virtue, free to all of us. No God is wanting if the man be wise and good. Fortune is not a Goddess on a throne in heaven. That's an invention of our own.—*Juvenal, Satire 10.*

A Note on Wilde's "De Profundis."

II.

(Concluded from p. 605.)

THE amazing importance Wilde gives to sorrow as a factor in life and art is only the outcome of his personal experience unchecked by reason. Had he not been the victim of enraged British virtue, we should have heard little about the wonderful virtue of sorrow. His work is in itself a plain refutation of his assertions. It is fairly arguable that the best side of it is in its blitheness, its expansiveness. But let us see how far he can go in the way of paradox. "Prosperity, pleasure, and success," he tells us,

> may be rough of grain and common in fibre, but sorrow is the most sensitive of all created things. There is nothing that stirs in the whole world of thought to which sorrow does not vibrate in terrible and exquisite pulsation. The thin beaten-out leaf of tremulous gold that chronicles the direction of forces the eye cannot see is in comparison coarse. It is a wound that bleeds when any hand but that of love touches it, and even then must bleed again, though not in pain. When there is sorrow there is holy ground.....Sorrow and all that it teaches is my new world.....I now see that sorrow, being the supreme emotion of which man is capable, is at once the type and test of all great art.....There are times when sorrow seems to me to be the only truth.

He points to passages in his books whereby this so-called truth is prepared or foreshadowed. It is incarnate, he tells us in the prose-poem of the man who, from the bronze of the image of *Pleasure that liveth for a moment*, has to make the image of the *Sorrow that abideth for ever*. "It could not be otherwise," he goes on; "At every single moment one is what one is going to be no less than what one has been." M. Andre Gide, however, has pointed out this prose-poem (*The Artist*) embodies a truth diametrically opposed to that of the *De Profundis*. It was out of the bronze of the image of *Sorrow that endureth for ever* that the artist fashioned an image of *Pleasure that abideth for a moment*. How pathetically eloquent is this curious lapse of memory of a mind overwrought by sorrow! Wilde's insistence on the spiritual value of humility is, I think, only another indication of a slackening of nervous tissues, of failure from sheer weariness. We see nothing of the old Wilde, in spite of his claim to individualism, in this passage:—

> I find hidden somewhere away in my nature something that tells me that nothing in the whole world is meaningless, and suffering least of all. That something hidden away in my nature, like a treasure in a field, is Humility. It is the last thing left to me, and the best; the ultimate discovery at which I have arrived, the starting point for a fresh development.....It is the one thing that has in it the elements of life, of a new life, a *Vita Nuova* for me. Of all things it is the strangest. One cannot acquire it, except by surrendering everything one has. It is only when one has lost all things that one knows that one possesses it.....My nature is seeking a fresh mode of self-realization.....I hope to be able to recreate my creative faculty.

. . . .

The creative faculty of Wilde was to be recreated once more, and once only in the moving *Ballad of Reading Gaol*. The dominant notes of this great poem is not a Christian and servile humility, the negation of sane individualism, but, rather, a fierce demand for "common justice and brotherhood." What is more, the careful reader will find even in the pages of *De Profundis* itself many proofs that the old natural spirit of pride was not extinct. How little humility is there

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in this indictment of people who hounded him to death:—

> Many men on their release carry their prison about with them into the air, and hide it as a secret disgrace in their hearts, and at length, like poor poisoned things, creep into some hole and die. It is wretched that they should have to do so, and it is wrong, terribly wrong, of society that it should force them to do so. Society takes upon itself the right to inflict appalling punishment on the individual, but it also has the supreme vice of shallowness, and fails to realize what it has done. When the man's punishment is over, it leaves him to himself; that is to say, it abandons him at the very moment when its highest duty towards him begins. It is really ashamed of its own actions, and shuns those whom it has punished, as people shun a creditor whose debt they cannot pay, or one on whom they have inflicted an irreparable, an irremediable wrong. I can claim on my side that if I realize what I have suffered, society should realize what it has inflicted on me.

There is no perverse Christian doctrine of self-sacrifice or humility here, for Wilde was, what so many members of the Roman Catholic faith are, a natural Pagan, for whom religion had no meaning. "The faith that others give to what is unseen," he tells us,

> I give to what one can touch, and look at. The gods dwelt in temples made with hands; and within the circle of actual experience is my creed made perfect and complete.....When I think about religion at all, I feel as if I would like to found an order for those who *cannot* believe; the Confraternity of the Faithless, one might call it, where on an altar, on which no tapir burned, a priest, in whose heart peace had no dwelling, might celebrate with unblessed bread and a chalice empty of wine. Agnosticism should have its ritual no less than faith. It has sown its martyrs, it should reap its saints, and praise God daily for having hidden Himself from man. But whether it be faith or agnosticism, it must be nothing external to me. Its symbols must be of my own creating. Only that is spiritual which makes its own form.

. . . .

The idea Wilde has of the real or mythical founder of Christianity, the Jesus of the Gospels, is as fanciful as that of Renan, whose *Life of Jesus* he wittily describes as "that gracious fifth gospel, the Gospel according to St. Thomas." For Wilde, as for Renan, Jesus was a divine dreamer, a poet of whose company are Sophocles and our own Shelley. To hold up their Lord as the supreme type of the artist must seem something very like blasphemy to all good Puritans if they happen to overcome their natural distrust of art and glance at Wilde's writings. They see in Jesus only the hard moralist, the forerunner of Jonathan Edwards, just as for our friends the Christian Socialists he is a sentimental Communist, the prototype (shall I say?) of Mr. Phillip Snowden. For Wilde, as also for many of us who avoid Socialism as we would the plague, he is an Individualist, like every artist who has imposed his vision of things upon the world. Not only was he an artist—he was also a Jew. And the Jew, with his vivid consciousness of racial difference, of the peculiar value of his contribution to the world's thought and work, with his intense pride of possession, intellectual and material, does not seem to be cut out by Nature for a Communist. If he has at times become the prophet of socialistic millenniums, it has been invariably in the interest of some revolutionary cause. I can hardly imagine a company of Jews, even the least sophisticated of the race, as quietly agreeing for one day to share all things in common; but I can imagine the more sophisticated ones using their persuasive eloquence to turn their enemies into Socialists. However that may be, Jesus was bracketed with Heine as a good Communist. But as, for Wilde, Communism was merely a preparation for a sort of artistic anarchism, and not an end in itself, there is not much gained, from the point of view of Socialism, by claiming Jesus and Heine as Communists.

. . . .

Wilde was a Catholic, and for that reason more than half a Pagan. Catholicism, we are told by Remy de Gourmont, "is Christianity paganized." "A religion," he goes on to say, "at once mystic and sensual, it can satisfy and has satisfied for ages, the two primordial and contradictory tendencies of human nature, which are to live both in the finite and the infinite, or to put it in more acceptable terms, both in sensation and intelligence." De-paganized Christianity, or Puritanism, with its virulent hatred of every expression of the joy of life, every artistic impulse, Wilde distrusted as essentially unsocial. Instead of the Pagan miracle, the work of art—the only miracle upon which Wilde and we Freethinkers set any value—the Gospels give us the unnecessary miracles of raising a man from the dead, the bacchic conjuring of water into wine, the stupid bedevilment of an innocent drove of pigs, and suchlike pieces of trivial irrealism. The Christian miracle is a reality for those only who have never got beyond childhood; the Pagan miracle, a play by Sophocles, an ode by Catullus, take on a new meaning, a new beauty, as we ourselves grow in wisdom. The teaching generally of the Gospels exasperated and tormented the humanist in Wilde, and his most mordantly ironic parables were written to discredit in every sense the idealism of Christianity by setting it over against the naturalism of Pagan thought. This attitude is brought out clearly in one of of the prose-poems, "The Doer of Good," which has not a little of the subtlety of symbolism we admire in Nietzsche and Baudelaire.

> It was night-time and He was alone.
>
> And He saw afar-off the walls of a round city and went towards the city.
>
> And when He came near he heard within the city the tread of the feet of joy, and the laughter of the mouth of gladness and the loud noise of many lutes. And He knocked at the gate and certain of the gate-keepers opened to him.
>
> And He beheld a house that was of marble and had fair pillars of marble before it. The pillars were hung with garlands, and within and without there were torches of cedar. And he entered the house.
>
> And when He had passed through the hall of chalcedony and the long hall of feasting, He saw lying on a couch of sea-purple one whose hair was crowned with red roses and whose lips were red with wine.
>
> And He went behind him and touched him on the shoulder and said to him, "Why do you live like this?"
>
> And the young man turned round and recognized Him and made answer and said, "But I was a leper once, and you healed me. How else should I live?"
>
> And He passed out of the house and went again into the street.
>
> And after a while He saw one whose face and raiment were painted and whose feet were shod with pearls. And behind her came, slowly as a hunter, a young man who wore a cloak of two colours. Now the face of the woman was as the fair face of an idol, and the eyes of the young man were bright with lust.
>
> And He followed swiftly and touched the hand of the young man and said to him, "Why do you look at this woman, and in such wise?"
>
> And the young man turned round and recognized Him and said, "But I was blind once, and you gave me sight. At what else should I look?"
>
> And He ran forward and touched the painted raiment of the woman and said to her, "Is there no other way in which to walk save the way of sin?"
>
> And the woman turned round and recognized Him, and laughed and said, "But you forgave me my sins, and the way is a pleasant way."

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And he passed out of the city.

And when He had passed out of the city he saw seated by the roadside a young man who was weeping.

And He went towards him and touched the long locks of his hair and said to him, "Why are you weeping?"

And the young man looked up and recognized Him and made answer, "But I was dead once and you raised me from the dead. What else should I do but weep?"

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

Biddy's First Communion.

ON the first Sunday of last May, little Biddy Murphy made her first communion. It was a beautiful morning, and as I was going for a stroll in the warm sunshine, I met Biddy and her mother coming home. I had never seen the child in anything else but rags and hand-me-downs, and here she was, all in spotless white, a very blushing bride. I gave her a sixpence, and told her how beautiful she looked, and to be sure to let my children see her pretty dress.

Biddy is not convincing as a bride. Her rosy cheeks, straight black hair, and roguish eyes seem to ask for scarlet and yellow, beads, sequins, bracelets, and a general appearance of the world and the flesh, of gratification and indulgence instead of self-sacrifice, renunciation, of God and the cloister. Now, had it been my Margaret, that would have filled the picture, for she has golden tresses, cerulean blue eyes, a delicate skin, and an ethereal expression—surely that's the correct combination for something angelic. If I were a scoundrel, I would paint a picture of Margaret in her nightie, kneeling at a bedside in a room in which was prominently displayed a framed portrait of a soldier, a beam of light from a mysterious source falling on the sweet upturned face and irradiating her hair. The title of the picture would be "Our Father," and it would carry conviction to thousands of hearts.

Now, to be truthful, Margaret is a perfect little devil (bless her!) with not the faintest spark of reverence in her composition, and Biddy may be naturally pious for aught I know.

I could see at a glance the tawdry nature of the dress; but after all, hadn't she everything complete—white shoes, gloves, stockings, veil, etc.? Biddy was delighted with the sense of her own importance, and her mother was too proud of her to think anyone could possibly be nicer.

The Murphys live above us, in the same house as we do. They occupy what is known as the "two-pair back," while we, being quite "classy," occupy the front and back "drawing-rooms." Only those who have experienced the advantages of the Dublin tenements can appreciate the social distinctions involved.

There being a rule that tenants perform some communal cleaning, and as my wife won't do it, as I'll be damned if I'll do it, and as Mrs. Murphy asks to be allowed, for a consideration, to do our dirty work, then she "does" the stair regularly. Not that it is any cleaner after she is finished, but it is probably as badly done as it deserves to be.

Mind you, Mrs. Murphy is not a professional char-lady. Her husband, however, a hard-working man, does not "earn" enough to keep his wife and six children in a sufficiency of bread and margarine. Therefore, that she may care more for the kiddies, the mother neglects them early and late, to earn coppers by the equal distribution of mud, ironically called "cleaning." Mrs. Murphy always wears dark clothes—they "don't show the dirt," and are, in consequence, more hygienic than light garments—and, poor soul, is very shabby.

There is one thing I have never ceased to marvel at during my sojourn in Dublin slums, and that is the simply wonderful way mothers dress and turn out their children from homes that are a disgrace to civilization. What a brave face these women put on their poverty, and how grossly they are labelled for the acts of the few for whom the conditions are overpowering!

On that beautiful Sunday in May, I saw scores of little children, of the class of Biddy, walking out with their proud grown up relatives, and I did not see a mother who was even tolerably well clad. And yet they were done up in their best. Although the day was oppressively hot, the long coat concealing any amount of raggedness was much in evidence. Hats of a few seasons ago had been faked up to make them presentable. Travesties of creations in all conscience, but now quite bizarre when rejuvenated with bits of obviously new and incongruously coloured trimmings. The feet were frowsy. Low shoes are not for the poor, as poverty uncovers a multitude of shins. Altogether, the mothers were a grotesque collection, and one who did not understand might be moved to merriment. But I have known too much to make a jest of tragedy. To my æsthetic perception, even the best dressed of the children was but in better or cleaner shoddy than the others, and the difference between the way the women were clad and how they might have been with a pound or two more would be trifling. But, when we think that each of those poor Dublin mothers might have been "dressed like a lady" had she not scraped up everything to deck her child out for her first communion, we can then appreciate the mother-love of these women. Priests may assure us that it is the solemnity of the occasion that calls forth the self-sacrifice, but observation proves that the instinct to see her child decorated and beautified actuates the mother most, and that the Church merely uses human vanity—as she uses everything—for her own ends.

Margaret thought Biddy's dress was "awful beauty," and asked wistfully, "Couldn't I be a first communion, daddy?" I am afraid she would cheerfully subscribe to any creed that offered a chance of a pretty frock.

The young communicants had a red-letter day, for every sane being likes to see a child happy and to help in that happiness, and pennies were plentiful. Biddy and her brothers and sisters had a glorious beano. I know that she had, among other things, pop-corn, chip potatoes, ice-cream, monkey nuts, liquorice, winkles, and fruit cakes. By all the rules of healthy well-being—made by the medicine-men, for whom it is a necessity that stomachs be turned into rubbish-heaps, requiring to be cleansed and purified by their obnoxious potions—Biddy ought to have been seriously ill; or, at least, discreetly bilious. But I fear she is a bold girl, for her "little Mary" didn't seem to have turned a hair.

Well, Biddy Murphy, at the age of seven, has been initiated in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Now a communicant of the One True Church, she is supposed to have arrived at an age when she can discriminate between good and evil, is accountable to God (and incidentally to his earthly representatives) for her every action, and is under the dread threat of eternal hell fire for one unconfessed "mortal" sin. Quite a cheerful outlook on life for seven years old! In olden times the bodies of men were sold in the market-place in Rome. But a study of history shows us the progress we have made in a thousand years, for the *souls* of children are now *given* in the tabernacle. And when I think of the demands of the Church in attending services, in fasting and "mortification of the flesh," I am not sure but what the body is also given to Rome.

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I think back to my first and subsequent communions, and I feel proud that my youngsters need not leave their comfortable beds to go out, without food, in the early morning to receive the Bread of Life, which has even less nourishment than the War commodity.

But I don't want my children to grow up free-minded in a nation of slaves; I want all to be freethinking men and women. Little short of a cataclysm can now save poor Biddy. She will grow up as other Catholics, accepting unquestioningly every *ipse dixit* of the priest, imbibing, as she blossoms into womanhood, the "morality" framed by sex-perverted men and women, and she will be ignorant of all that life really means—the joys to be tasted, the pitfalls to beware of; for her mother, blind fool, will keep her "innocent," and leave her to God's mercy!

She will, of course, be a "good" girl, unless she has become contaminated by the suggestive literature in the "examination of conscience," or set wondering by leading questions or innuendoes in the confessional. But the chances are that she will be too stupid to take any meaning whatever out of this ritual, and will just continue in her "duties" in a mechanical manner. She will marry quite young, and, of course, a good Catholic young man; the priests will see to that. No long courtships with them, no scandals, no War babies, or other irregularities—love doesn't even matter in Ireland, where they arrange marriages on a cash basis, the priest demanding his percentage on the sale—and get children quickly; that's the racket for Mother Church, and that's all mapped out for little Biddy. In all probability her life will be as dirty and dreary as that of her mother, and *as socially demoralizing*.

Hardly entreated Biddy! would that, even yet, you could be saved; for we who are Rationalists also know the value of the childish mind. But, unlike the priests, we do not want to "capture" the children; our work is to liberate them. We would talk to them of love and laughter, of beauty and the fairyland of Nature; of the knowledge of living things, of music, dancing, kisses, and fine clothes, and precious little about "good and evil." We would not be unmindful of their "morals" as the years went by; but, as our ethics are based on naturalism and physiology, we would place no barriers in the way of their free development, nor would we, being wise from experience, disguise real dangers from them. Our object would be that each would seek happiness in his own way, but we would teach nothing of "sin" and all the other dismal doctrines of the vampire celibate "fathers" who grasp in their holy and unclean tentacles the bodies and souls of sweet little infants of seven.

J. Effel.

Correspondence.

ATHEIST OR AGNOSTIC?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—As one who calls himself an Agnostic, may I be allowed to defend my position?

I cannot believe in anything of which my mind has no conception; but, on the other hand, neither can I disbelieve in it, for to do so I must first have some idea of what it means—in other words, some conception of it must be present to my mind, which, *ex hypothesi*, is not the case. This, I take it, is philosophic Agnosticism; and with all respect to you, Sir, I think it can be applied to the word "God."

Of the wonder called electricity, science has given me some idea: I can definitely say whether I believe or disbelieve in it; even of so elusive a thing as the ether I can form some conception, however inadequate, and accept it provisionally as an explanation of certain phenomena; Goodness, too, the abstract idea as mental integration of all that is good, I can conceive and enjoy; Truth and Beauty, likewise, I know, and my soul (not ghost-soul) can delight in. But what is God? Is he discarnate personality? disembodied mind? universal spirit? What, then, are all these things? I know them not.

I cannot agree with you that "there are only two positions—either one believes, and is a Theist; or, one does not believe in a God, and is an Atheist." There is a third: The Theist says, I believe in God; the Atheist says, I do not believe in God; the Agnostic answers, I do not know what either of you is talking about.

J. Blair Williams.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Your essay under the above heading in this Sunday's issue confirms an opinion I have long held that most men, and not least newspaper editors, as a class, are arrant cowards in regard to conventional religion, and slaves of phrases. In *Reynolds'* newspaper of a fortnight ago an article appeared from Professor A. A. Cook, under the heading "Politics in the School," in which he urged, *inter alia*, the teaching of "Theism." I wrote the subjoined letter to the editor of *Reynolds'* on the same day, but it has not appeared. Only those who, like myself, indulge occasionally in newspaper controversy as recreation, have any conception of the inflexible opposition of the press, as a rule, to the insertion of anything not strictly religiously orthodox. You, Sir, have more moral courage, and need it, than all the other editors combined. Anybody can shout with the mob:—

POLITICS IN THE SCHOOL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "REYNOLDS'."

Sir,—I am not unaware that it is somewhat temerarious to challenge the dictum of a professor, especially one with quasi-editorial authority, for it is not an unreasonable presumption that the article under the above heading, by Professor A. A. Cook, in *Reynolds'* of this date, has editorial sanction, if not editorial endorsement. Without any pretension to the academic status of the writer, I should like to offer a word of criticism. I can understand his advocacy of ethics, philosophy, economics, and sociology, and his arguments in support of them. These are based on universal experience, but why "Theism"? This rests on no clearly defined basis. It is an axiom of sound education that nothing should be taught that cannot be demonstrated. Theism, at best, is purely speculative, and its effect in all ages has been destructive, disruptive, and disintegrating to the social structure, as history testifies. It has retarded, as nothing else has, intellectual progress. It challenges science and philosophy alike. It rests on an inconceivable postulate, and demands support from an impossible, endless chain of cause and effect. It is a scientific as well as a philosophical axiom that every effect is the result of an antecedent cause. It is not less axiomatic that every effect is a cause. It follows, therefore, as night the day, that there could be no first cause. If there could be an exception to this law, why not a million, or an endless series of exceptions? Either human philosophy is a paradox, and yet all human conduct rests on it, or Theism is an impossibility. Even the nomenclature, as well as the thing itself, is an uncertain quantity, and "God" has been a title for potentates and those in authority from the earliest time. Why then waste time in teaching anything so grotesque, on which anything even approaching agreement is impossible, and at the same time so prolific in mischief as the bitter wranglings of the Theists have been in all ages? The daily practices of professed believers being a flat contradiction of their precepts. Nor is a belief in *Theos* by any means essential to the most perfect ethical code, adapted to every purpose of life—or death. Education, to be real and useful, must rest not on poetic fancy or idle speculation, but on the various factors constituting our political and social life.—Yours truly,

Eastbourne, September 9. George R. Quirk.

INFANT MORTALITY AND SANITATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—As one who believes that at least 75 per cent. of the infant mortality is caused by bad and insanitary surroundings, I am inclined to disagree with your correspondent, J. McGhee, in the *Freethinker* for September 16; for, in the first place, I reside in a village of 4,000 people, *i.e.*, Fodgate, which has the unenviable reputation of having the largest infantile mortality in the county, the County of Durham. Now, the

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population of this place is composed, for the most part, of Irish people, not that I attribute to them (the Irish) anything better or worse than others; I am simply trying to point out the fallacy of Mr. McGhee's arguments in respect to this class of people. It is well known (and upon this I base my contention) that the houses for the working-class in this locality are the poorest and most insanitary in the kingdom, belonging, as they do, to a rich and prosperous iron company; they have been stigmatized as a disgrace to civilization; hence my contentions and conclusions that bad housing and worse sanitary conditions are responsible for most of the infant mortality. The above can be proved and verified by statements from Dr. Hill, Medical Officer for the County of Durham.

R. BELL.

COMMUNION WITH THE DEAD.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In reply to the criticism by Mr. Hubert Wales, in last week's issue, I can only say I regret that I have not succeeded in convincing him from my point of view. I should much like to have enlisted the pen of so brilliant a novelist in our cause; one, moreover, who does not bow the knee to the idol of British Respectability. His novel, *The Yoke*, may fairly be said to have turned "the pudic snows of Mrs. Grundy's countenance to scarlet," to use the illuminating phrase of Mr. Gosse regarding the effect of the early poems of Swinburne upon the British public.

Mr. Wales says that I am prejudiced in my views. I will not retort the charge, as that would, probably, only lead to recriminations and personalities, in which our readers have not the smallest interest. Besides, I do not see that prejudice is wrong if it is well founded; nobody condemns a man for being prejudiced in favour of morality and virtue.

A more serious charge is that concerning my "selective methods" as exemplified by the Blavatsky case of thirty years ago. But Madame Blavatsky was the only one who succeeded in founding a new cult, the Theosophical Society, which to-day is a wealthy and flourishing concern. And if it happened thirty years ago, all the more reason the younger generation should be informed of the facts, which very few have the opportunity or the leisure to find out for themselves.

As to my selection of "spirit messages," they are nearly all cases relied upon by Sir Oliver Lodge as demonstrative proof of communion with dead, or of communications through Mrs. Piper, who Sir Oliver Lodge vouches for, and I selected them because everyone is asking: "How about Sir Oliver Lodge?" and I thought I would just show what his evidence amounted to. Did Sir Oliver, then, choose the weakest examples to prove his case? In justice to Sir Oliver Lodge, I must admit that the cases he brings forward are no better, or worse, than the bulk of the others, and if the rest were subjected to a similar analysis they, too, would appear weak and foolish. And if Mrs. Piper fails, as she does, where is the medium who can compare with her?

The case for telepathy and communion with the dead is on exactly the same footing as the case for miracles; there is an enormous amount of testimony to prove them, thousands of books have been written in their defence, but when you ask for the repetition of a single one, before a competent scientific commission, you cannot get it!

W. MANN.

When the time comes for us to take command of our own intellectual faculties, we are always impeded by a dust of early training and associations, which, without giving heed to it, without examining it to see if it be good or bad, sound or silly, we have allowed to settle about our minds, until in the course of time it has become encrusted. An enormous mass of what most people consider their opinions or beliefs or instincts have rusted upon them in this way. It accounts for almost everybody's religion and for almost everybody's politics. Nothing is more difficult to eradicate, even when it has become recognized as prejudice. Some people make no effort to dislodge it; or, if they do, soon give it up: they placidly accept their slavery.—*Hubert Wales, "The Rationalist."*

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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.

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OUTDOOR.

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BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 5, P. S. Wilde, "The Influence of Charles Bradlaugh."

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, H. V. Storey, "Charles Bradlaugh."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 4, Miss Kough, "Charles Bradlaugh: 'Lest we Forget.'"

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REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 3.30, G. Rule and H. B. Doughty, "Some Incidents in the Life of Charles Bradlaugh."

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Views and Opinions.

Peace and War.

Mr. Asquith, in his speech at Leeds on September 22, struck a sound note in the following passage:—

> A peace however well initiated by the necessary ethnical and geographical changes, will not be worth many years' purchase if it permits the opening or re-opening of an era of what I may call veiled warfare. It is immaterial by what methods, whether of preparation or precaution, or in what form, naval, military, diplomatic, or economic, the disturbing and disruptive forces are allowed to operate. *We must banish once for all from our maxims the time-worn fallacy that if you wish for peace you must make ready for war.*

The italics in the above passage are ours, and they are emphasized because the concluding sentence represents a real advance in political thinking. As we have said time after time, and long before this War began, the notion that you can secure peace by everybody getting ready for war is a psychological and political absurdity. No people in their senses would submit to the burden of preparation for war unless they thought war probable. And the longer preparations are continued, the more complete they become, the stronger and more compulsive becomes the psychological atmosphere, without which war would be almost an impossibility. To think that peace can be maintained by everybody being stronger than everybody else is a banality of which only a politician or a parson could be capable.

* * *

A New Starting-Point.

If, then, we are really bent on preventing a recurrence of the present world catastrophe, our duty is clear, and the broad lines of our future policy plain. This is to create in each country a sentiment, not in favour of getting more battleships, or more guns, or more men than anyone else, but the creation of a sentiment, a public spirit, to which the very idea of war shall be repellant. And in this direction we have an obvious point of departure. It is useless trying to convert the older men of the present generation. In the mass, their minds are wedded to the "time-worn fallacy" denounced by Mr. Asquith. Under present conditions we may find our attempts to convert younger men partly frustrated by irrelevant talk about the necessity for prosecuting the War with vigour, etc., all of which may be admitted, but which remain quite irrelevant to the point at issue. That point is not how we are to finish the present War, but how we are to prevent future ones. And, we repeat, there is here a plain point of departure from the admittedly evil traditions of the past. *Let us commence with the children.* No one will claim that the children in our elementary schools will be needed in the present War. No one expects the War to last so long that the present generation of school children will be drafted into the Army. It follows, then, that every attempt to deliberately familiarize the minds of children with ideas of world empire, aggressive nationalism, with war, or militarism generally, is to furnish material for future wars. So long as warfare is believed to be an expression of national greatness and strength, instead of a proof of national weakness and blundering, war will be inevitable. The world has hitherto followed one line of education, with deplorable results. If we are to profit from the present War, we can only do so by pursuing a different policy.

* * *

Mobilizing the Schools.

We are indebted to the *Nation* for directing our attention to a recent article in the *Teachers' World* which exemplifies in a first-rate manner "How Not to Do It." This particular issue of the *Teachers' World* is devoted to lessons of "Endurance," which is quite a good thing in its way. But the peculiarly sinister thing is the advocacy of the mobilization of the childish mind for the purpose of carrying on the War. School children are to be encouraged—"encouraged" by teachers means, with the children, moral compulsion—to write letters to the men at the Front, telling them to fight on until Germany is beaten, that everyone at home is resolved to endure until victory is won, etc. Very young children may copy a letter from the teacher's blackboard, the older ones will get a little help from the teachers, and so on. "A million letters sent now to our gallant fighting men may make all the difference." Now, do not let us be mistaken. We are not arguing that Germany should not be beaten; we are not arguing that we should not endure to the end, we do not deny that a German victory would be a disaster to the whole world. We merely protest against this kind of thing being done in our elementary schools. If we are fighting for the future of the race, let us begin with the future of the coming generation. We do not believe that our soldiers need this stimulating by unreal letters from children concerning matters which they do not and cannot understand. A childish letter, filled with childish talk and childish news, will come to the soldier in the fighting line like a gleam of paradise, and bring a real inspiration to "carry on" and preserve the homeland from a repetition of the present miseries. A letter from a child filled with stilted talk about a "German peace," "We're proud of you," "We'll see it through with

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you," will, and ought to sadden, if not disgust everyone who receives it.

* * *

Save the Children.

One of the deadliest charges against Germany is not that its politicians have told lies and have broken treaties—neither thing is unique in the history of the world. The heaviest indictment was that drawn by Liebknicht in the words: "you have used the schools as a training stable for the Army." For years Germany had prostituted the minds of its children by militarizing the schools. Its military drill and discipline, its worship of the uniform, its distortion of history, had all the one end and aim. And we decline to believe that that which has wrought such evil in Germany can be without evil effects in Britain. We elders are bound, in some way or other, to bear the brunt of the War. We cannot escape it; we have no right to escape it. If we do not all share the actual dangers of the fighting line, we cannot escape war's brutalizing and demoralizing effects. Nor can we altogether save the children from its demoralizing influences. They must suffer from the relaxation of home life, and from the pervasive influence of the War spirit. But we ought, at least, to avoid lending our aid to the process. If we know anything at all of the minds of our soldiers then we can safely say that the vast majority of them would support us in saying, keep the children out of it. Let them know as little as possible about the War. Keep their minds as sweet and as clean as you can. Don't use the schools as training stables for militarism.

* * *

The Truth About War.

We agree with the *Nation* that it is our duty to keep Prussianism out of the schools. We have no fear whatever of the *Prussian* getting there, but we are not so certain about keeping out his methods. We do not want the children to associate War with high ideals of sacrifice, endurance, nobility of conduct, and the supreme expression of devotion to country. Every one of these qualities can be better expressed and developed in connection with other aspects of life, and should be so expressed. We would rather they learned with Shelley:

> War is a kind of superstition; the parade of arms and badges corrupts the imagination of men. How far more appropriate would be the symbols of an inconsolable grief, muffled drums, and melancholy music, and arms reversed, the livery of sorrow.....War waged for whatever motive extinguishes the sentiment of reason and justice in the mind. The motive is forgotten or only adverted to in a mechanical and habitual manner. A sentiment of confidence in brute force and in a contempt of death and danger is considered as the highest virtue, when in truth they are merely the means and the instruments capable of being perverted to destroy the cause they were assumed to promote.

If we are intelligently in earnest in a desire to end the era of war, let us take care that we paint war in its true colours. Hitherto it has lived on lies. Historians, poets, artists, teachers, have all lied about it—about its glory, and greatness, and nobility. Why not try telling the truth about it? Sacrifice, courage, devotion to duty, love of country, have no necessary connection with war. They are born of social life, and find their healthiest expression therein. War does but exploit these qualities to their own deterioration. To be alive to this fact is essential to real reform. It is above all essential to the true teacher. A glorification of militarism is bad enough in the outside world. It is still worse in the schools. The child of the present is the man of the future. A truism, and yet one that contains a truth too often ignored.

Chapman Cohen.

God and the War.

The Rev. W. Halliday Thompson, Vicar of St. Stephen's, Ealing, often lectures at Gresham College, and is generally known as a broad-minded, scholarly man, whose love of truth and fairplay make him eminently worth listening to on any subject. Such a clergyman, we may be sure, will only employ for the defence of God and Christianity the very soundest arguments available, and if he fails to win our assent to what he believes to be the truth, it will not be his fault, but that of the inherent weakness of his case. In his parish magazine he recently discussed the problem of war from various points of view, and we gladly admit, at the very outset, that the tone of the discussion is everything that could be desired. We deal with the article as reproduced in the *Middlesex County Times* for September 8. War is undoubtedly a most perplexing problem, especially to those who believe in the absolute and invincible sovereignty of God. Mr. Thompson declares that war, like every other event, has its causes and its meaning, and that "every one who has a theory of the Universe, must find some place in his theory for war." Broadly speaking, there are but two theories of the Universe, the Theistic and the Atheistic. Mr. Thompson mentions Agnosticism as another theory; but, on his own showing, Agnosticism is not a theory of the Universe, but a sorrowful confession that "we have not and can never have sufficient knowledge to form any theory at all," and, therefore, Agnosticism is dismissed as being of no account. With regard to the Atheistic or mechanical theory, Mr. Thompson has no remark of an illuminating character to make. He labours under the delusion that if all were matter and there were no spirit, mechanism or order, law and system, would be impossible; but he does not tell us why they would be impossible. He says:—

> Mechanism is surely a conception which implies and necessitates mind; matter alone in any world, and in such a vast and diverse world as ours, seems incapable of giving rise to anything like machinery. From a mechanical point of view, war simply means that the machinery is not running smoothly, the wheels and cogs are out of place. There is no more to be said. The machine has no purpose, now it is out of gear, may be it is running down.

Judging from that extract we must reluctantly infer that Mr. Thompson does not understand the mechanistic conception of the Universe. He seems to think that to Atheists the world is a machine in the same sense that a plough, a reaper, or a locomotive is a machine—a something constructed, as a watch is constructed, by a mind external to itself. It is true that a machine of that kind does imply a maker; but his study of science ought to have shown Mr. Thompson that, according to the mechanistic view, the laws of mechanics, physic, and chemistry satisfactorily account, not for the construction or creation of the Universe, but for its evolution from the primordial nebulæ, and that mind, like everything else, is a product of that process. Now, war is only a phase of the natural struggle for existence, modified by mind in the lower stages of its human development, and taking a comprehensive survey of its history, we learn that it has made for the Survival of the Fittest. At the root of it are ambition, jealousy, greed, lust of power, all quite human qualities. We are often told that the present War is to end war for all time to come; but there is absolutely nothing to suggest that so happy a result is in the least likely to be realized.

Mr. Thompson, strangely enough, candidly acknowledges the entire unprofitableness of all attempts to explain the War from the Divine side, saying:—

> We have all sorts of wild and outrageous opinions

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> dogmatically supplying us with God's views of the War. Most of them do not hesitate to begin with the assumption that God sent the War. How consistently with the principle of Divine goodness, they reached that conviction it would be difficult to say. Others tell us that it is punishment sent upon us for our sins; it may be a punishment for sin, but only in a very indirect fashion can it be believed that the whip is wielded by perfect love. We have no justification whatever for asserting that all calamities are sent to punish us, and none, therefore, for believing or saying it about this or any other war.

This is thoroughly good sense, at any rate. Mr. Thompson takes all the responsibility, and boldly says that "we know it was not God but man who caused the War." "Then," he adds, "we are on safe grounds." Again :—

> It is an intolerable thing to intelligent faith to be told that war comes from God, and is a Divine punishment upon nations and people; it is a presumption of the worst kind to read divine intentions into what we do not like, and to interpret our misfortunes by bringing in the name of the Most Holy. It is no worse to say that God sent the War than to say such a foolish thing as that God sent us a week's rain because we had worked on our allotments during Sunday. That is ignorant theology of the worst and most harmful type.

On this point the vicar is most emphatic: "One thing is certain, man caused the War, and not God; let us hold to that consistently, and do not let us listen to those who arrogate to themselves membership in the privy council of heaven." So far so good, and we are in complete agreement. But, after all, this species of reasoning only lands a clergyman in more and greater difficulties than it surmounts. The vital question is, Where does God come in at all, or what becomes of the theological dogma of the absolute Divine sovereignty? We are not aware whether Mr. Thompson is an evolutionist or a creationist, all we know is that he regards the Universe as being, in some sense, the work of God. The reverend gentleman is not ignorant of the terrible struggle that has characterized the ascent of life, and of how the law of Natural Selection has secured the Survival of the Fittest. The assumption is that all animals are automata, simply obedient to instincts planted within them by their Maker, over which they have no control whatever, while man received from the same Creator the awful gift of freedom, which enables him to set God at defiance and to thwart all his purposes. That is to say, God is supreme autocrat throughout the Universe, until we reach man, who possesses the power not only to ignore his sovereignty, but also to successfully resist it. In other words, man is greater and stronger than his Creator and Governor, and can go his own way in spite of the Divine will. For all wars among animals God alone is responsible, for they can only do his will. Mr. Thompson does not openly say this, but his doctrine of human liberty inevitably implies it. If God is not directly responsible for human wars, it follows that his relation to man is totally different from his relation to the rest of the Universe, which is flatly inconceivable. We do not hesitate to assert that the doctrine of the freedom of the human will is at once a contemptible and futile device to relieve the Supreme Being of all responsibility for the evils and wrongs so frightfully prevalent in the world, of which war is by no means the worst.

To be a consistent teacher, Mr. Thompson must shed his belief in a Divine Creator and Sovereign. Were he but an Atheist, how eminently true and wise the following observations would be :—

> The War means the necessity of examination, not only of individual temper and aims, but of the plans upon which society is based. This present War is full of antagonisms and enmities, there is but little harmony in our social organizations, here in England, as well as in Germany, and it is just these antagonisms between classes and strata of people which give rise to struggle and strife, whether national or civil. Our present system is hopelessly breaking down, and so the foundations must be wrong. We need to revise and reconstruct them, and the War is the pain which warns us of the disease.

Unfortunately, the article closes thus: "When we make a big effort ourselves to redeem ourselves from the passions which are at the root of all war, and to redeem the world from war, God will be on our side to help and inspire." That is the usual conclusion of all parsonic utterances, and any other conclusion would give the profession away. Our surprise is that so sensible a man as Mr. Thompson is capable of such gigantic inconsistency. If we do our very best, God will be on our side to help and inspire; but how does the vicar know that? Big human efforts are Divinely blessed, while little ones enjoy no benediction; but history contains not a shred of evidence either way. Furthermore, history does bear witness to the fact that belief in God has been directly responsible for numerous most bloody struggles, and that the religion of the Cross has often seriously checked the progress of the cause of peace. In every European war, particularly in the present one, the God of peace is appealed to by both sides as the Lord of Hosts, and the object of the horrible bloodshed is said to be the establishment of the kingdom of Christ. It is our firm conviction that had Buddhism won Europe, instead of Christianity, war would have ceased long ago, and the essential brotherhood of the race would have been established on a rational and permanent foundation.

J. T. Lloyd.

A Friend of Shelley.

We have a kindness for Leigh Hunt.—*Macaulay.*

Amid thousands of unloved and obscure graves at Kensal Green Cemetery is one with the arresting inscription: "Write me as one who loved his fellow men." This is the last resting-place of Leigh Hunt, the friend of Shelley and Byron and so many poets, and himself a singer of no mean quality.

Of his ancestry, Leigh Hunt presents a delightful picture in his *Autobiography*, stating that on his mother's side they were "all sailors and rough subjects with a mitigation of Quakerism," as on his father's side "they were all creoles and claret drinkers, very polite and clerical." Hunt's father was a clergyman, with an incorrigible propensity for conviviality, and the earliest recollections of his distinguished son were associated with the King's Bench prison, in which his father was placed for debt.

Leigh Hunt was educated, like Charles Lamb and Coleridge, at Christ's Hospital School, of which he has left a pleasant impression. "I am grateful to the Hospital," he wrote, "for having bred me up in old cloisters, for its having made me acquainted with the languages of Homer and Ovid, and for its having secured to me, on the whole, a well-trained and cheerful boyhood. It pressed no superstition on me." For some time after his school-days Hunt, characteristically, haunted the bookstalls and wrote verse. His temperament unfitted him for commercialism, and Dickens has satirized, somewhat unkindly, his failings in "Horace Skimpole" in *Bleak House*.

At twenty-three years of age Leigh Hunt joined his brother, John, in starting the *Examiner*. The motto of the paper was taken from the caustic lines of Swift, "Party is the madness of the many and the gain of a

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few." During its fourteen years of strenuous existence the paper endured every species of good and bad fortune, and Leigh Hunt and his brother were sent to prison. The *Morning Post* published a fulsome article describing the Prince Regent (afterwards King George IV.) as an "Adonis in loveliness," and the *Examiner* staff dipped their pens in vitriol, and retorted that this "Adonis" was a fat man of fifty, a violator of his word, a libertine over head and ears in disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demireps, a man who had just closed half a century without one single claim on the gratitude of his country or the respect of posterity. The two brothers were prosecuted, and fined £500 each with two years' imprisonment.

Leigh Hunt's incarceration was not a holiday, nor was it a silent meditation among the tombs. He could not go beyond the prison walls, but he had rooms furnished by himself, and he enjoyed the society of his wife and family, and had frequent visitors. The learned Jeremy Bentham came and played battledore with him. The imprisonment may have affected Hunt's health, but it was a comedy compared to the treatment of Holyoake and Foote, condemned to their cells and the prison-yard. Besides, Hunt had facilities for writing, and composed *A Feast of the Poets*, *The Story of Rimini*, in addition to doing a vast amount of journalistic work.

Hunt's imprisonment brought him into unusual prominence. He had known Charles Lamb from boyhood, and Shelley some years. He now made the acquaintance of Keats, Byron, and Hazlitt. Indeed, he was always happy and fortunate in his friendships. Later in life he added to the circle the names of Carlyle, Dickens, Macaulay, Lytton, and Lord Houghton.

For this reason Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography* is most excellent company, for he always writes naturally and unaffectedly, and his description of his famous friends is vastly entertaining. His accounts of his Italian travels, too, is an example of the best kind of such writing. His humour is never forced. A typical example is his youthful recollection of how he used, after a childish indulgence in bad language, to think with a shudder, when he received any mark of favour, "Ah! they little think I'm the boy who said damn."

An omniverous reader, Hunt secured the rare commendation of Macaulay for his "Catholic taste." Of all authors, indeed, and of most readers, Leigh Hunt had the keenest eye for merit, and the warmest appreciation of it wherever found. An active politician, he was never blind to the abilities of an opponent. Blameless himself in morals, he could admire the wit of Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Wycherley; and a Freethinker, he could see both wisdom and beauty in the old divines. It is to his credit that this universal knowledge, instead of puffing him up, only moved him to impart it. Next to the pleasure he took in books was that he derived from pointing out to others the pleasure in them. Witness his *Wit and Humour* and *Imagination and Fancy*, two of the finest and most readable handbooks in English literature. Hunt was always genuine in his criticisms. It was nothing to him whether an author was new or old, an Englishman or a foreigner, for his sympathies crossed all frontiers. Nor did he shrink from any literary comparison between two writers when he thought it appropriate. Thackeray had this same outspoken honesty, and in speaking of Fenimore Cooper's hero in the "Leather-Stocking" novels he says, "I think he is better than any of Scott's lot."

Few critics would deny Leigh Hunt's talent for poetry. There is no doubt that his verse had a very strong influence on his contemporaries, and that it inspired music much better than itself. After all, the poems, or some of them, form the only part of Leigh Hunt's voluminous literary work likely to survive. Perhaps one of his happiest lyrics is the charming trifle addressed to Jane Welsh, afterwards Mrs. Carlyle:—

Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in!
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in!
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I'm growing old—but add,
Jenny kissed me.

Some of his sonnets are excellent. One of the best is that on the Nile, written in rivalry with Shelley and Keats, commencing:—

It flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,
Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream.

This includes the magnificent description of—

The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands,

which is not only a very fine line, but the discovery of a cadence which has been imitated ever since. Hunt's sonnet on "A Lock of Milton's Hair" is a superb example of his enthusiasm for great writers:—

It lies before me there, and my own breath
Stirs its thin threads, as though beside
The living head I stood in honoured pride,
Talking of lovely things that conquer death.
Perhaps he pressed it once, or underneath
Ran his fine fingers, when he leant blank-eyed,
And saw in fancy Adam and his bride,
With their rich locks, or his own Delphic wreath.

In "Abou Ben Adhem," the poem that has found its way into every anthology and every heart, he shows an unexpected depth and tenderness. It is Ariel turned Prospero, and showing in the transformation how antic and irresponsible a spirit Ariel is. It is appropriate that on Hunt's tombstone should appear lines from that fine poem which alone should make his name immortal. Hunt's first claim on posterity is genius, but he was more than a mere writer, for he fought in the Army of Human Liberation. He loved Liberty without misgiving, and Liberty, loving him in return, has crowned his grave with honour.

Mimnermus.

The Invisible Demon King.

For several weeks past my sleep at night has been very much disturbed by dreams—mostly unpleasant—but always extremely interesting while they lasted. Often when I have laid my head upon the pillow I have seen a strange light through the venetian blinds, and heard the propellers of an aeroplane as it glided along in the still air of a summer's night; and as I turned on my right side to get a more comfortable position before dozing gradually off to sleep, I have been suddenly aroused by what sounded like the booming of distant guns. When, however, I have examined into the cause of this startling noise, I have soon satisfied myself that it was only some foolish person a few doors off who had shut the door of his house with a quite unnecessary and violent bang. Sometimes a banging noise seemed to proceed from a covering up of my right ear, and then I would turn over on to my back and try to get some sleep in this position, but always with the consciousness that whatever sleep I got would be disturbed by dreams. One night while I lay drowsily in this position I had a most interesting vision. I dreamt that I had a visit from the Invisible Demon King. He came and stood by my bedside, and entered into a long conversation with me on the all-absorbing topic of the Great War, and I found, to my astonishment, that his views on the subject corresponded very closely to those of my own.

I beckoned him to take a chair, and when I said that

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I could see him quite plainly, he said, with a smile: "In your mind's eye, Horatio," and I was not at all surprised to hear him quote from Shakespeare. Further, he explained in a very affable way, that he understood that most Freethinkers were "able to see through him." When I asked him whether he was the same demon that appeared in the garden of Eden six thousand years ago and tempted Madame Eve with an apple? or the more ferocious Devil who afflicted such terrible sufferings upon poor old Job? or whether he was the more autocratic demon who commanded Jesus to transform stones into bread? or, worse still, whether he was the fiendish spirit that Christians said had become the eternal stoker in hell? he replied, with a merry twinkle in his eye, that he could see quite plainly that I was well acquainted with the malignant falsehoods Christians had circulated about him in all the centuries of the Christian faith, and he was glad of an opportunity of contradicting, in the most emphatic way, all the infamous lies that had been told concerning him. When I said that I would take the earliest opportunity of acquainting my friends of this denial he seemed quite pleased.

"But," I said, "will you be good enough to inform me what part you have taken in bringing about the terrible War which is now raging all over Europe, and what you would do if you had the power to bring it to a speedy termination?"

At this point he rose from his seat, and in the most polite fashion said: "I am truly glad, my friend, that you have asked me these questions, and I will try and answer them with perfect candour and honesty. I had nothing to do with bringing about this terrible War. I have never been consulted by any of the belligerents from the moment of its inception to the present time."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, "Then you have not been in conflict with 'The Invisible King' of Mr. Wells' imagination, or any of the Gods, ancient or modern, concerning this matter?"

"Certainly not," replied my mysterious visitor; "as I have said, I have taken no part in the matter. All the plotting and scheming have emanated from the fertile brains of Kings, Kaisers, and Czars; of Ambassadors, and Politicians, and Statesmen, and spies of all nationalities, and of the great military authorities—they have done it all. It is to their machinations that all this crime and suffering and misery have been brought about, and terrible wars like this will never cease until the people become intelligent enough to understand their absolute futility and uselessness, and build up a civilization founded upon reason and human well-being."

I was going to interrupt by saying those were entirely my own sentiments, when my enlightened visitor smiled and continued: "But do not suppose for one moment that this result will be brought about in a short space of time. The processes of evolution are slow, very slow; but subsequent generations of men will live to see the realization in some measure of this noble ideal."

"Well spoken, my friend," I exclaimed; "I never imagined for a moment that you entertained such ideas, although I have always been satisfied that religious folk have grossly misrepresented your thoughts and aspirations. But never mind; I will try and put the matter right as soon as I get an opportunity of addressing my fellow-countrymen. But tell me, what part do you think the gods have played in this great War?"

"None whatever, and for a very sufficient reason—they have no existence apart from the brains of the men who conceive them and believe in them."

"Is it possible," I exclaimed with delight, "that you have no belief in the gods—that you are an Atheist?"

"I am, most assuredly. Why, if any of the gods existed who had infinite power and infinite goodness, would he not have stopped the terrible slaughter by the exercise of his power?"

"That is exactly what I have said a thousand times."

"Yes, and that is exactly what any thoughtful person would have said who gave the matter a moment's consideration. A good God would never have allowed the War to have begun, let alone the awful crime that has followed in its wake—the horrible carnage, the wholesale massacre of women and children, and old men well-nigh verging on the grave. No, he could never have allowed it. His whole nature would have revolted against it. Neither gods nor devils have anything to do with these things. They are entirely the work of man. You may be sure of that."

"Thank you for this assurance," I said. "And I suppose, then, that man alone can supply the remedy?"

"Certainly," he replied, with a nod. He seemed, however, to speak more in a whisper, and I had great difficulty in following him. Presently his voice became so feeble that I could not hear him at all.

* * * *

All of a sudden I heard a tremendous crash. I opened my eyes and looked around. My mysterious visitor had vanished, and in his place my daughter was by my bedside, telling me that I had better get up as there was a moonlight air-raid on; and what I had heard in reality was the falling of bombs on London, that some poor creatures at that very moment were being done to death by the murderers in the air. So I got up and dressed myself, and sought shelter in the passage; but when the raid was all over, I turned my thoughts to the strange vision I had had, and my conversation with the more modern representative of the old-fashioned theological conception of the Invisible Demon King. It was strange, passing strange, my friends, was it not?

Arthur B. Moss.

Doing His Bit.

A Study from Life of an English Clergyman.

Psalm lviii. which ventures to support the idea of reprisals, has been placed under the ban of the Church. The verses in the Psalm to which particular objection is taken are as follows:—

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. He is a God that judgeth the earth.

He is a doctrinarian whose life consists of the things which are of no real importance, and have no relationship with the actual living world.

The light of reason cannot penetrate the intense darkness of his mind. His brain, under the influence of that deadly narcotic, Orthodox Christianity, refuses to function. The bones of the young manhood of Europe are bleaching, and the soul of Europe is perishing, but he pursues his daily routine quite contented in the knowledge that his soul is saved.

What are the death-throes of Europe compared to the doctrines of "The Blessed Trinity," "The Real Presence," and "The Virgin Birth"?

These and a hundred other theological dogmas are of more importance than the lives of millions of human beings.

He conceives God as an English clergyman—an enlarged edition of himself, very jealous about the exact significance of the doctrines of "The Real Presence," and "The Holy Trinity," a God who presides over the War, keeping a "Fatherly" eye upon the destinies of his people—a God to whom he can pray for a victory that will exterminate his enemies, but who would be righteously indignant if his people continued to sing Psalm lviii.

The will of God can only be made manifest through his divinely appointed ministers the English clergy. Knowledge is given only unto him, and he expounds with unlimited self-

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assurance, and an air of infinite condescension the mysteries of God and the soul, life, death, and immortality, to men who have faced the hell of modern warfare without flinching, but he knows nothing of their souls or their lives.

He has never really lived, but he dogmatizes about life; never struggled for existence, but he minimizes the difficulties of those who have; never faced the ordeal of battle, but he offers his patronage and advice: "Be strong and of good courage" to those who have been through hell for him and his class.

He sings a hymn of praise as they go to their calvary. Murder, rapine, and hunger are stalking hand-in-hand through Europe; death rains from the firmament above, and crawls on treacherous feet in the waters beneath; little children, mothers, and wives are crushed to pulp; strong men are maimed; the human *debris* is scattered throughout the land. "In Europe is a voice heard—lamentation and weeping."

Bloody sunset is succeeded by still more bloody dawn, but *he* is "always merry and bright" in the consciousness that God has revealed his purpose to *him*, and saved *his soul*.

His courage and equanimity are such that, unmoved by the death-pangs of Humanity, he can find time to "do his bit" for righteousness and justice.

The wickedness of David has moved him to righteous indignation; he has placed Psalm lviii. under the "ban of Holy Church"; but he *still* administers "Holy Communion" to the profiteers.

Truly the way of the righteous clergyman passeth all understanding; verily, he moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform.

P. A.

Reflections.

I conclude that all the laws with which a minister swells his portfolio are vain documents that can neither make us live nor prevent us from living.

It is well-nigh a matter of indifference whether we are governed one way or another, and ministers are only imposing because of their clothes and their carriages.

I have observed that the trade most natural to mankind is that of soldiering; it is the one towards which he is most carried by his instincts and his tastes, which are not all good. And apart from rare exceptions, of which I am one, man may be defined as an animal with a musket. Give him a handsome uniform and the hope of going to fight, he will be content. The military condition has this also in keeping with human nature, that one is never forced to think; and it is clear that we were not made to think.

Thought is a disease peculiar to certain individuals, and could not be propagated without bringing about promptly the end of the race. Soldiers live in bands, and man is a sociable animal. They wear costumes of blue and white, blue and red, gray and blue, ribbons, medals, plumes, and cockades; and these give to them the same prestige with women that the cock has with the hen. They go forth marauding and to war, and man is naturally thieving, libidinous, destructive, and sensible to glory.

It is astounding, Tournebroche, my son, that war and the chase, the mere thought of which ought to overwhelm us with shame and remorse in recalling to us the miserable necessities of our nature and our wickedness, should, on the contrary, serve as matter for the pride of men; that Christians should continue to honour the trade of butcher and headsman when it is hereditary in the family; and that, in effect, among civilized peoples the greatness of the citizens is measured by the quantity of murder and carnage they carry in their blood.

I hold man free in his acts because my religion teaches it, but outside the Church (which is unequivocal), there is so little reason to believe in human liberty that I shudder in thinking of the verdicts of a justice that punishes actions of which the motives and the causes equally elude us, in which the will has often little part, and which are sometimes accomplished unconsciously.

Tournebroche, my son, consider that I am speaking of human justice, which is generally opposed and different to, the justice of God.

Judges do not sound the loins and do not read the heart, and the justice is crude and superficial. They are men; that is to say, feeble and corruptible, gentle to the strong and pitiless to the weak. They consecrate in their sentences the cruellest social iniquities; and it is difficult to distinguish in this partiality, what comes from their personal baseness and what is imposed on them by the duty of their profession, this duty being, in reality, to support the State in what it has of evil as well as what it has of good; to watch over the conservation of public morals, whether they are good or bad. Furthermore, it should be said that the magistrate is the defender, by virtue of his function, not only of the current prejudices to which we are all subject, but also of the time-worn prejudices which are conserved in the laws after they have been effaced from our minds and habits. And there is not a spirit ever so little meditative and free that does not feel how much there is of Gothic in the law, while the judge has not the right to feel it.

By the very nature of their profession, judges are inclined to see a culprit in every prisoner; and their zeal is so terrible to certain European peoples that they have them assisted, in important cases, by citizens chosen by lot. From which it appears that chance, in its blindness, secures the life and liberty of the accused better than the enlightenment of the judges can. It is true that these impromptu bourgeois judges, being ignorant of the law, they are summoned, not to apply them, but simply to decide, in one word, if there be occasion to apply them. We are told that in assizes of this character, absurd results are sometimes given, but the peoples that possess these institutions, cling to them as to a highly precious protection. I easily believe it. And I understand the acceptance of verdicts, rendered in this fashion, which may be inept and cruel, but of which the absurdity and barbarity are, so to speak, attributable to nobody. Injustice seems tolerable when it is sufficiently incoherent to appear involuntary.

Just now, this officer, who has so strong a sentiment of justice, suspected me of belonging to a party of robbers. I so far disapprove of theft and assassination, that I cannot endure even the copy of them regularized by the laws; and it is painful for me to see that judges have found no better means of punishing robbers and homicides than by imitating them. For, after all, Tournebroche, my son, what are fines and the death penalty, if not robbery and assassination perpetrated with an august exactitude? And do you not see that our justice merely tends, in all its pride, to this shame of avenging an evil by an evil, a suffering by a suffering, and in doubling misdemeanours and crimes in the name of equilibrium and symmetry?

Customs have more force than laws. Gentleness of demeanour and sweetness of soul are the only remedies which can reasonably be applied to legal barbarity. For to correct laws by laws is to take a slow and uncertain route.

My son, I have always observed that the troubles of men come to them from their prejudices, as spiders and beetles come from the dimness of cellars, and from the dampness of vaults. It is good to flourish the broom and the brush a little in all the dark corners. It is good even to give a little blow of the pick here and there in the walls of the cellar and garden to frighten the vermin and prepare the necessary ruins.—*Anatole France*, "*The Sayings of Jerome Coignard.*"

A False Quest.

Man strives for things that are not worth the striving for,
And in his strenuous search for something that his soul
Has set itself to seize, he misses that which makes
This life a thing to be desired, and sears his soul.
Or else, caught in the toils of never-ending strife
That soulless men have made the thing that should be life,
He fails to feel the soul-destroying subtle stream
That bears him onward, till at length the sea is reached.
And there, engulfed in waters, cold and turgid,
Too late, he seeks his soul to save.....the mocking sea
For ever hides his soulless corse beneath the waves,
And earth and sky join in the chorus of the lost.

Harry Snell.

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Acid Drops.

What is sadly needed in connection with the controversy between Theism and Atheism, or between scientific Determinism and its opponents, is a work that shall clear away the mass of accumulated irrelevances, and place the problem before new readers in its essential terms. Anyone with time and ability to do this, would be performing a public service. But Theists so habitually misstate the points at issue, and writers and speakers so often follow them over a mass of irrelevances, that the essential question seldom emerges into a clear light. The consequence is, that critics of scientific Determinism are confirmed in their misstatements, and the newcomer is often inclined to give the whole thing up as hopeless.

Thus, in the *British Medical Journal* for September 15, there occurs a review of a work by Professor Haldane on *Organism and Environment as Illustrated by the Physiology of Breathing*. We have not yet read the work, but we note that Professor Haldane believes, "It is not from the data of physiology, and still more clearly not from those of the physical sciences that we derive our conception of God." So far, good. But we gather from the reviewer that Professor Haldane believes we can get from the facts of the conscious life some idea of Deity. Why? Because "the conception of life is just as inadequate in connection with personality as are the conceptions of matter and energy in connection with life." Now, this is an example of sheer irrelevancy. An Atheist may fully agree with what is said without his Atheism being in the least disturbed. Closer attention to the philosophy of science would have enabled both Professor Haldane and his reviewer to realize that our conception of matter and energy is intended to cover a specific group of phenomena, the conception of life to cover another group, and so on. To say, therefore, that one conception cannot do duty for another is to proclaim a mare's nest. And only ignorance or thoughtlessness concerning the nature of scientific conceptions can make such comments of importance. All it means is, that as "conscious personality" gives us a group of phenomena presenting new features, a new conception is required to cover all the facts. But that is true of every rise in the scale of natural complexity. It has simply nothing to do with the question of God.

Still, after that, we are not surprised at the reviewer ending his article with the banalistic remark, "The life of such a man as Charles Darwin is, in truth a standing proof of the existence of God." Why Charles Darwin more than Charles Peace? The personality of the one is no more baffling than is the other. We should much enjoy putting the man who wrote that sentence through a five minutes' examination. We do not think there would be much difficulty in showing it to be pure nonsense, nor would one be entitled to feel conceited over the performance.

Why is it that when men "find God" they repeat, like parrots, the stock "arguments" of the clergy? Mr. H. G. Wells is writing like a Christian Evidence lecturer, and Mr. Horatio Bottomley, who ought to know better, is "out-Heroding Herod." Referring to the risks from mines and submarines at sea, Mr. Bottomley adds that this takes place "in the year of Our Lord 1917—after two thousand years of Christianity—in the twentieth century of Human Civilization." Surely it is an insult to the general reader to presuppose that he has never heard of ancient civilizations. The present civilization is nothing to boast of, otherwise there would not be thirty millions of men ready to murder one another.

The Deanery of Windsor is the "cushiest" job in the Church of England, says the *Daily News*. The Dean has absolutely nothing to do except to preside over the Chapter (which also does nothing) and to supervise the chapel services. He has £2,000 a year, and a capital house in the very Garden of England. "Blessed be ye poor!"

The Australian Young Men's Christian Association has leased the Aldwych Theatre, and high-class plays and operas will be produced. An up-to-date canteen and cinema and orchestra will be among the principal attractions. Old-fashioned Christians will rub their eyes and wonder if the Y.M.C.A. is not treading the primrose path to perdition.

"Bread is by no means an essential food," says Dr. Reinhardt-Rutland. The clergy will hasten to assure us that the expression, "Give us this day our daily bread," means something else.

"R. H. C.," who is on the staff of the *New Age*, is a consummate egotist. In his article on "Readers and Writers," which appeared in the issue for September 6, he girds with great vehemence at the Rationalists, and particularly at the works published by the R.P.A. He finds such writers as Mr. Arnold Bennett and Mr. Eden Phillpotts "unfortunately limited by a nineteenth century Rationalism," which Rationalism he pronounces dead. Mr. R. B. Kerr declares, on the contrary, that "the twentieth century is even more rationalistic than the nineteenth." "R. H. C." is bound to admit that there are Rationalists even to-day, but he charges them with being old fashioned. In the estimation of "reasonable observers," they are said to have lost "atmosphere." That "R. H. C." has "atmosphere" goes without saying, though there is nothing in his articles to indicate his possession of it.

"R. H. C.'s" article betrays either deliberate dishonesty or crass ignorance. He either does not know what Rationalism is, or he intentionally misrepresents it. When he says "what has alone distinguished the great Rationalists has not been their reason, but their hostility to every other faculty than reason." That is a wickedly mendacious statement. No great Rationalist has ever been so unutterably foolish as to despise all mental faculties other than the intellect, and certainly neither Mr. Eden Phillpotts nor Mr. Arnold Bennett has been guilty of such folly. It is a pity that a publication of such high literary merits opens its columns to such unpardonable trash.

The poor bishops are always declaring that they spend their stipends in keeping up their positions, but the Bishop of Hereford is more frank, and admits that he has saved enough cash to be able to dispense with a pension.

Speaking of a reformed Second Chamber, Lord Burnham suggested that "true leaders of Labour" should have a place there. It would be more to the purpose if he had suggested the removal of the bishops.

Mr. Vince, a well-known local Free Churchman, died in the pulpit while preaching near Reading. Had he been a Freethought lecturer there would have been a terrible moral.

Father Bernard Vaughan has been speaking at Dundee on the need of a higher birth-rate. He forgot to mention that the Roman Catholic Church had filled Europe with monasteries and nunneries.

Dr. Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe, says "the world is sick of this accursed war and of the hypocrisy that surrounds it." Yet Christian ecclesiastics consecrated the regimental colours and christened the battleships.

A newspaper paragraph advertises Rochester Cathedral crypt as a raid shelter. What Secularists those Christians are! In moments of real danger the last thing they think of is the value of prayer.

Modern Palestine cannot be said to be flowing with milk and honey, but a member of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force writes that "cigarettes are cheap, and each man is allowed a small quantity of beer." If a man does not like the food, he can buy from "a wide assortment of tinned luxuries." There is also "a small lending library." It all sounds so tempting that there seems some risk of a new crusade.

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Newspaper editors have been making headlines concerning a munition-maker who earned £12 a week. The editors do not make headlines on the subject of bishops' salaries.

"If the war lasts another fifty or sixty years," says Mr. Justice Darling, "there will be no priests or ministers left." Why not? The dear clergy are very tender of their precious skins.

The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, is an exceedingly resourceful man, who leaves no stone unturned in the attempt to draw people to his church. Recently he spent a whole Sunday with "the outsiders," visiting streets, parks, public-houses, and cinemas during the hours services were being conducted in churches and chapels. He found all such places, except the public-houses, crowded with all sorts and conditions of people. He entered seven or eight cinemas, all of which were simply packed. The very sight of such throngs made his heart heavy with regret and pity. Of course, in thus spending the day, "he left the preachers and the saints severely alone and consorted with publicans and sinners." The sinners he first noticed were the Bohemians, who "were there in their thousands, knowing and caring nothing about the churches, and with no regard whatever for the Sabbath or for worship." Them he characterized as "the gipsies of our modern civilization," and the questions he asked were: "Are these the pioneers of the future, or the waste, the by-product, of the past? Do *they* represent the England that is coming, or is the true England in and of the Churches?" We know what *his* answer would be.

Mr. Phillips conversed with many working-men and women, and "found no doubt at all about God or religion. No working-man had anything but good to say of the churches," though he never darkened their doors. With how many working-men did the reverend gentleman get into conversation? If he addressed himself to more than two or three, we should doubt the accuracy of his report. We know thousands of working-people in London who are positively hostile to the Churches; and it is well known that the workers of Woolwich vigorously opposed the Anglican Crusade recently held there.

A writer in the *Star* says, "Frederick the Great and Bismarck have imposed upon them (the German people) a hideous religion of force." There is some confusion of thought in the remark. Frederick was a Freethinker and imposed no "religion." Bismarck was a Protestant, but was concerned with politics, even in his encounters with the Jesuits. Protestantism in Germany is derived from Martin Luther, and Catholicism is "imposed" from Rome.

Over ten million books and magazines have been sent to the troops through the generosity of the public and by the agency of the Post Office. If these are all read by the soldiers, it does not seem probable that the millions of Bibles are perused also.

"The world still is God's and not the Devil's," says a writer in the *Daily Mail*. The sentiment is familiar in the sermons of the Bishop of London, and in the utterances of Negro theologians.

Much spiritual meaning has been read into the red triangle sign of the Young Men's Christian Association. It is therefore, amusing to recall that the trade mark of Bass's beer is also a red triangle.

The great religious revival which the clergy said was to be the outcome of the War is conspicuous by its absence. There is, however, a great increase in petty thefts by new offenders, and the Courts have been kept unduly busy with cases of war-time pilfering.

The Vice-Chairman of the Council of St. Anne's Home, Bridlington, the institution in which the soldiers revolted against the regulation compelling attendance at a religious service twice daily, with the alternative of going to bed, has written a defence of the Home to the *Yorkshire Post*. His defence is that the Home has been established for forty years, and all inmates know the rule. We do not see that this quite meets the case. If the Home is kept going for the purpose of doing good, and if the soldiers were received there—with a payment from the Pensions Committee—because they had been wounded in the country's service, compulsory attendance at religious service is an act of tyranny. If the Home is an attempt to force religion upon people under the guise or bribe of philanthropy, then its pretence of doing good is an act of hypocrisy.

The Vice-Chairman seems to think he has justified the Home when he says this has always been the rule. Sensible people will reply that it is high time that it was abolished, and that age in such a connection is no recommendation. And let us say quite plainly that to assume men and women who can justify such a rule have any real regard for liberty, or that they are intelligently concerned in a war for freedom is in the highest degree absurd. People who can champion or submit to such a regulation have not yet mastered the alphabet of real freedom.

The glorious free press of England is going from bad to worse, especially in the pandering to public ignorance. The tales of angels in Essex are obviously inserted for the mere purposes of sensationalism, without the slightest regard to truth. If this sort of thing results in increased circulations, we may expect further developments, such as "Cherubs in Cumberland," "Seraphs in Surrey," or "Fiends in Fleet Street."

From Mr. H. G. Wells' latest book, *The Soul of a Bishop*, it appears that the author considers that these ecclesiastics are of little use in war-time. Judging by the bishops' votes in the House of Lords, they are of no use in peace time either.

The Rev. Alfred Brandon, a former Baptist minister, has attained his 101st birthday, and the editors have been busy making headlines concerning the centenarian. Some of the Bible patriarchs were trundling hoops at that tender age.

We wonder who is responsible for plastering over the pedestal of Cleopatra's Needle with war posters? It surely marks the limit in stupid vandalism. The Houses of Parliament, or Buckingham Palace, we could have understood, but why the Needle? If the spirits of ancient Egypt hover round that ancient monument, how they must smile! And they might well wonder whether the advance between their day and ours is really worth talking about. We are a civilized people! An artistic people! See how readily we cleared the museums and art galleries! And how ready we were to economise on education! And, above all, we are a Christian people! That is the most significant thing of all.

Most of the London Churches are altering the hour of the evening service so that it may be over before air-raid time. Some have given up the evening service altogether. One could understand this policy in relation to a secular meeting, but to go to Church to demonstrate one's trust in the providence of God, and then close the service early in case Providence is not able to protect its devotees against air-raids strikes one as peculiar. The Bishop of Birmingham denies that God has anything to do with the weather. We know that he has nothing to do with many other things; one wonders what on earth he really does. Perhaps some Christian will explain?

We should have had no objection to giving a free advertisement to a day of "United Prayer" which was held at the Queen's Hall on Tuesday last. But we observe that there is to be no evening meeting, and we suggest that a good chance of proving the efficacy of prayer would be to arrange for prayer-meetings on fine moonlit nights, and pray for the absence of German aeroplanes.

"Have we anything to be thankful for?" was the subject which a Croydon minister used for a sermon. We wonder if he referred to the exemption of the clergy from military service.

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To Correspondents.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 7, Failsworth; October 14, Leicester; October 21, Manchester; October 28, London; November 4, Abertillery; November 18, Birmingham.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—October 7, Birmingham; October 14, Swansea; November 18, Manchester.

J. T. Hellwell.—Yes, we think we have "a splendid staff of contributors." We venture to think it is the subject that brings the best out of them. And we have plenty other good contributors in reserve.

Bristolian.—It is almost impossible to answer your question in a paragraph. The relation of objects to consciousness is fundamentally a consciousness of the relation. Any construction of the external world must be based upon sensation primarily, and this applies to "reality." "Reality" can mean no more than a hypothetical basis of experience. Its use is justifiable, so far as it serves, to make experience intelligible, but no farther.

A. Wildman.—Hope you will be successful in forming a Branch of the N.S.S. in Southampton. If we can help, please let us know.

S. Edmonds.—We are proud to have the warm support of a reader of twenty-four years' standing.

G. H. Murphy.—Sorry we cannot recommend anything of the kind you require. It is out of our line, but as an outsider we would suggest that studying the technique of masters in the art would be the best guide.

J. H. Rollins (Dublin).—We have read Benjamin Swift's book and intended writing on it, but other things got in the way. Have we your name correctly?

W. G. Harris.—Glad to know you had a "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon and Evening" at Mr. Cohen's Birmingham lectures. May you have many more.

J. Lloyd Jones (Capetown).—Our congratulations and compliments to your wife.

G. Gilleti.—Good wishes are always acceptable. Yes, mental courage always was, and, we suppose, always will be, rare.

J. McManus.—There are no direct grants of State money to the Church of England now. But the Church does receive an indirect grant of money in the shape of release from taxation, and many grants have been made for the purpose of Church building. Tithes, mining royalties, etc., also represent, in many cases, examples of State aid. When compulsory Church rates were abolished, a sum of money was often paid out of the rates in the shape of commutation.

Jas. Railton.—We are flattered by your opinion that we have "put new life into the movement." Thanks for subscription.

A. G. Lye.—Yes; a record, as you say.

R. Morris.—The *Freethinker* has never had the circulation it deserved, but if we possessed the means for advertising it, we haven't the ghost of a doubt we could make it very much larger than it is.

Remiat.—Translation received; shall appear.

Arthur King.—Your letter to the Archbishop was very much to the point; but you could hardly expect him to receive it gratefully.

A. Spencer.—We don't know of any English translation, but there may have been one. There is no Society now in the place you name.

A. J. Reid.—Certainly, if the press and our public men had greater moral courage, the hollowness of modern religion would soon be plain to all.

D. Goudie.—We noticed the error, but thought it best to acknowledge as written. Thanks

J. Gibson.—We cheerfully take the will for the deed, and in introducing the paper to new readers you are doing us a real and valuable service. You know our motto with regard to readers—You find, we keep.

Mr. A. W. B. Shaw, in sending subscription to our Sustentation Fund, writes: "It is gratifying to see that the subscriptions are coming in so well, and I hope you may soon be relieved of all anxiety about matters financial. It is no easy task to edit such a paper as the *Freethinker*, which is better each week, and to have to look after the business side as well."

W. Gregory.—We are pleased to have the appreciation of your Branch for what you call our "noble work." All we can say is it is enjoyable work.

F. W. Walsh.—It is more than good of you to send from your sick bed your mite towards the Sustentation Fund. We appreciate your good wishes and support more than we can say.

A. J. Marriott.—It was quite a question of space, and we hope all correspondents will bear in mind that this is an editor's constant consideration. We quite agree that it is ridiculous to suppose that reprisals will stop air-raids. Besides, the Allies are bombing wherever they can. Our newspapers publish daily reports. Of course, little is said about civilians being killed; but the German papers are equally silent about the killing of English civilians by their raiders.

J. Thompson.—It is very good of you to have secured so many new readers, and to try for more.

Jno Hudson.—Pleased to hear from you. The paper is making many new friends—and keeping them.

H. Kennedy.—Certainly, a corner will be found for the anecdote.

H. L. Voight.—We hope you will be able to resume your old activities when the War is over. Pleased to know that you take up so impartial an attitude in your business relations. We wish that all followed your example.

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.

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"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

Fourth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £246 7s. 4d. A. G. Lye, 5s. Jas. Railton, 2s. 6d. K. Palmer, 2s. Four Well Wishers of the New Century Club, 10s. Mr. and Mrs. J. Neate, 10s. J. Mac, 5s. C. Masson, 4s. J. Y. B., 10s, A Friend, 15s. Mrs. G. W. Foote, £1 1s. Kingsland Branch, N. S. S., £1 1s. H. Boll, 5s. Eva and J. Fothergill, 2s. 6d. Four Friends in Sterenton, Ayrshire, per A. Millar—Robert Reid and Son, 4s.; James Bow, 4s.; James Fergurson, 2s.; Matthew Ferguson, 2s.—Total, 12s. A. W. B. Shaw, £5. D. C. Drummond, 10s. H. Kennedy, £2 2s. A Taxi Driver, 10s. R. C. Proctor, 10s. W. J. Beeton, 2s. 6d. Pte. J. Scott, 2s. Two Freethinkers in Barrow, 5s. Jno. Hudson, 10s. P. M. W., £1. J. Robinson (fourth subscription), 1s. F. W. Walsh, 2s. 6d. A. J. Marriot, 2s. 6d. Total: £263 8s. 10d.

Chapman Cohen.

Sugar Plums.

In spite of the brilliant summer weather of Sunday last, Mr. Cohen had two capital meetings at Swansea on Sunday last. On each occasion the hall was crowded—uncomfortably so in fact—but all present appeared to enjoy themselves. The members of the new Swansea Branch have worked with a will, and their efforts fully deserved the success achieved. The Branch has a very energetic secretary in the person of Mr. B. Dupree, and we congratulate the local Society on having so capable an official.

To-day (October 7) Mr. Cohen lectures twice, afternoon and evening, in the Secular School, Pole Lane, Failsworth. Manchester friends will please note.

A new departure is being made in Birmingham by the local Branch of the N. S. S., which has taken the Repertory Theatre for a course of four lectures. The first lecture will be delivered this evening (Oct. 7) by Mr. J. T. Lloyd. If the meetings receive the support they deserve, they will be continued beyond those already arranged. In any case, we hope that all Birmingham Freethinkers will see that Mr. Lloyd gets the audience he deserves. It is a capital opportunity to introduce an inquiring Christian friend to the meetings. The lecture commences at 7 o'clock.

An Edinburgh correspondent complains of the irregular delivery of his paper by the local newsagent. We can

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only say that the delay is due to no fault at this end, and where we receive complaints we do all we can to remedy them. We hope our friends will do all they can to help by applying pressure at their end. The same gentleman writes that he was told the *Freethinker* had been charged to him by the wholesale agent as a threepenny paper. Perhaps he thought it was well worth it.

From the *Cape Argus*:—

> A young lady witness in a charge of theft, dealt with by the A.R.M. at the Second Criminal Court yesterday, declined to be sworn. "I am an atheist," she declared, "and will speak only the truth."

The lady in question is, we are proud to say, the wife of one of our readers. We hope her example will have its proper influence on all members of the "sterner" sex. She is, certainly, a fine example to her own.

The *National Weekly* had no less than three quotations from the *Freethinker* in a single issue of recent date. We are glad to note this as an indication of the way in which the press boycott is being slowly broken down. The *National Weekly* was a sixpenny journal, but is now under new management, and has been reduced to twopence. It is characterized by a breadth of view and sanity of utterance much to be commended. We say this because we feel it to be deserved, not from any ulterior motive.

Encouraged by the success of their last winter's meetings, the North London Branch are continuing their debates on Sunday evenings at the St. Pancras Reform Club, 15, Victoria Road, Kentish Town, at 7.30. An interesting little syllabus of fixtures up to Christmas has reached us, from which we learn that several well-known Freethought speakers and writers are taking part in the discussions. Admission is free, and every member of the audience has an opportunity of presenting his or her view. The subjects will be announced in our Guide Notice every week, and we wish the venture the success it deserves.

A young Dublinite, from whom we hope to hear more, writes:—

> I have to smile when I read your outbursts against British molehills of superstition. Have you ever been in Ireland, holy Ireland, where, even at the present moment—in this year of science, 1917—our numerous shops of piety display postcards of a soldier miraculously reinvested with speech and hearing, last August, in one of our hospitals, through the God-sent intervention of the "Little Flower"! Ireland, where a word against the supreme pontiff produces, on the part of females, undue displays of the whites of the eyes: Ireland, where a fictitious freedom is demanded by slaves blinded to a greater thraldom, a greater need? Your columns are as empty of notes on Irish progress—I say progress, for a worm will turn and a snail ascend—as our shops are empty of your paper. I know but one shop that sells it. Truly we are a rich pasture, watered by a divine hand! Really, I think, you should do something for our regeneration. Yet what could you do? Were all hoardings to display propagandist leaflets, were every person the recipient of pamphlets, the only result would be the indignant assertion of divine authority and its sympathetic reception. Come over to Ireland and help us. You could include our chief cities in your itinerant lectures—but no, don't do that; the time for martyrdom is not yet. For a first attempt, perhaps, this letter is a trifle long, but I cannot refrain from adding that the *Freethinker* affords me genuine pleasure, reminiscent and anticipatory, and a feeling of fellowship I have never yet known.

We do not in the least complain of the length of this letter. Nor will our readers. It is too racy for complaint. The only part of Ireland we have lectured in is Belfast. And our experience there was quite gratifying.

"Arley Lane" writes a two-column descriptive account of Mr. Cohen's evening lecture in the Birmingham Town Hall on September 23rd. The report is well done, and is written in "Arley Lane's" well known racy and reflective manner. He notes that the audience was large, attentive, appreciative, and, he adds, possessed the quality of being early which proved an interest, and sat eager and attentive during the lecture.

New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

V.—More Healing and Preaching.

A group of grey-bearded Jews came to Jesus and salaamed, and said politely,

"We beg you to do a favour to our Roman friend, the Captain of the Hundred. Though he belongs to the nation that conquered us, this centurion loves our Hebrew nation, and he has even built us a synagogue in this city of Capernaum. He has a sick servant whom he wishes you to save from death. Sir, we beseech you to do this."

Jesus set out for the Roman officer's house. He had nearly reached the door, when two or three people came out to say the Captain felt he ought not to trouble the Master of the Jinn to enter; for just as he—a Roman officer—was readily obeyed by his men, even at one short command, so the sickness demons would fly if Jesus would but speak one masterly word.

"Do you hear that?" asked Jesus of the crowd who followed him. "This man has more faith in my power than any Jew has."

The servant was able to shake off the demon the very next moment.

The day after, Jesus went into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. From the city gate came forth a sad procession, following a bier, on which lay a young man dead. The dead man's mother wept. She had lost first her husband, and now her only son.

When Jesus saw her, he had pity on her, and said, "Weep not."

He touched the bier. The bearers stood still.

"Young man," cried Jesus, "rise!"

The dead sat up, began to speak, and embraced his mother.

"A prophet, a prophet!" shouted the people. "Praise God! A great prophet has come among us!"

From village to village, and from Galilee in the north to Judea in the south, the report of this wonder flew.

John the Baptist heard the story. He was now in prison. He had dared, in his plain, blunt way, to rebuke King Herod Antipas for his bad deeds. The King's answer was to clap the pioneer in jail. And John the prisoner sent two of his friends to put the question to Jesus,—

"Are you the Mighty Prophet who will baptize folk with fire, and fan the evil chaff away from the good wheat?"

They followed the Master of the Jinn from place to place, watching his acts of power; and then returned to tell the prisoner how the blind eyes saw, deaf ears heard, lame legs walked easily, lepers lost their impure skins, and the dead sat up on their biers.

Alas for the brave pioneer! We saw him, as a baby, named Heaven's Gift (John). We saw him living in the desert. We saw him baptizing in Jordan's stream. We saw him rebuke a king. And the last scene takes place in the prison cell. By order of Herod Antipas, the valiant and honest John is beheaded. When old Zacharias smiled for joy, and sang the hymn of triumph, and called the child "The Prophet of the Highest," he little thought John would die a martyr's death in the darkness of a royal jail.

One day, a Pharisee invited Jesus to eat with him. But he supposed that Jesus, being a sort of peasant-prophet, and not a gentlemanly scribe, would not care for the usual good manners. So he brought no water to wash his feet; he gave him no kiss of welcome; he sprinkled no perfumed oil on his guest's hair.

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An outcast woman—not poor, but not at all respectable—entered the dining-room, for such rooms had open doors, and passers-by might enter without being thought rude.

She knelt beside the couch on which the Prophet sat, and she cried, and her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped the drops with her long hair. She opened an alabaster box of ointment, and poured the sweet scent upon the feet of the teacher whose words she loved to hear.

A grimace and a frown from the Pharisee made Jesus say,—

"Simon, my friend,"—

"Yes, master?"

"It may interest you to hear what a man did to two debtors, neither of whom had a penny to pay the debt with. One owed 500 silver pence, the other 50. He let both go free. And which do you think loved him most for his kindness?"

"The 500 pence debtor, I have doubt."

"Just so. And now look at this woman. She is a sinner, and has lived a life not at all respectable; while you, friend Simon, have been genteel and correct. She is the 500 debtor, you the 50. You gave me no washing-water, no kiss, no perfumed oil. She, in her thankfulness, gave me her tears, pressed a kiss upon my feet, and anointed them with oil. And her many sins are forgiven."

The genteel and correct persons who sat round the dining-table looked disgusted. Jesus quietly told the woman to go in peace.

She had heard him tell how the kingdom was open to those who, as honest trees, bare honest fruit. Even if sinners sinned they could repent; they could step out on a new road; they could become good trees. She was glad.

Thus, some folk, like Simon the Pharisee, paid little heed to the Prophet; others, like the crying woman, admired him, and listened with respect to his words. He made all this clear to the people one day by reciting a simple story:—

> A sower went out over a ploughed field to sow his corn seed; and the field had different sorts of soil in it, and different things happened to the seed. Some grains fell on the beaten path, trodden hard by the feet of men, and of course they could not sink into the earth. Birds swooped down, and ate the grains. Some seeds fell on rock, where there was but a slight layer of soil; and the corn plants, unable to strike deep root, grew but a little while, and then withered away. Some grains got scattered among thorn bushes, and the bushes choked off the growing corn. Other grains fell on splendid soil, and sprang up in fine, healthy plants; and the ears of corn were full of grain, yielding a hundredfold profit to the farmer.

That is to say, some people were poor scholars, and did not take in the teacher's lessons; others took in the grains of wise teaching, and bore fruit in plenty, by leading a kindly life.

When the crowds of villagers, fishermen, and all the rest had gone home, Jesus would chat with his twelve Missionaries (Apostles), and show them how to interest the people by such stories. For it was of no use to bore the folk with dull and harsh sermons. They must tell lively and charming tales, or parables. A man (said he) who wants to light a room, must put his candle on a candlestick, so that it can throw its rays on all sides of a room. A good story-teller threw a light that cheered and helped. But dull and stodgy preachers, who told no happy tales, were like silly men who put the candle inside a pot, or under a bed, where none could enjoy the blessed light.[1]

[1] So I interpret Luke viii. 16, 17.

It was at this time, when Jesus began his parable-telling, that a message was brought to him. His mother, Mary, and his brothers, wished to come and talk with him; but, so great was the crowd that gathered to listen to his stories, his family were not able to get near. He called to the people's mind his tale of the sower who sowed words of wise teaching, and then he exclaimed,—

"Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? All who hear the word and do it as well as hear it,—these folk I count as my mother and my brethren."

* * * *

In the time when the Gospels were written (second century), people believed many stories of rising from the dead.

A Greek myth told how a lady, named Alcestis, so loved her husband that she gave her own life to the Death-god in order to save that of her beloved. As she sickened, he got stronger. As she died, he felt quite well. He placed her body in a vault. Just then, who should call at his house but his friend Herakles, the lion-killer? When Herakles heard what had happened, he offered to fetch Alcestis back from the tomb, and he stepped into the vault just as Death came in to bear the heroic woman away. Herakles gripped hold of Death, and would not let him go until he promised to spare Alcestis; and she sat up, and began to speak, and returned to her husband.

Another Greek story is that of the musician Orpheus, who went down into the shadow-world of Hades, hoping to bring back his dead wife. His music on the stringed lyre so pleased the queen of the Underworld that she allowed Orpheus to take his wife away with him on condition that he did not look at his beloved until they reached the upper world and the sunlight. He could not wait; he looked; and she fled away down, and he saw her no more. In the Gospel times, people formed Orpheus societies, or Orphic societies, and worshipped the Raiser of the Dead, and sang songs, and repeated prayers to Gods and Demons; and they claimed to know what happened to souls that passed into the Kingdom of Death. They delighted in pictures of Orpheus, holding his lyre, and surrounded by beasts which had once been wild, but had been tamed by the sweet power of his music. The lyre of Orpheus could even make rocks and trees move and dance to the charming tunes.

F. J. Gould.

The Myth of God.

The idea of God is a myth. It is a "false hypothesis" put forward as an explanation of the origin, constitution, and continuance of the universe.

Ever since the feelings of awe and wonder were evolved in man, the human mind has endeavoured to explain the phenomena of existence in harmony with those feelings. But, unfortunately, awe and wonder have often proved too strong for man's desire for accuracy, and the emotions have been allowed to usurp the place of reason. As man has looked out upon surrounding objects, and as those objects have made certain impressions upon his sense-organs, he has felt in varying degrees a desire to formulate some sort of explanation of the origin and nature of things. Idea after idea has been put forward to account for the universe; theory has followed theory; and philosophy has given place to philosophy, as regards prominence in the minds of men, until the whole sea of human thought is seething with conflicting systems of science, philosophy, and theology.

It has been impossible, and is likely to continue to be impossible, for man to live without trying to frame for himself some hypothesis concerning the universe, and

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particularly the earth on which we live. It is only natural that it should be so. Life would, indeed, be sordid to many of us if we did not at some time or other exercise our minds in trying to solve the perplexing problems with which we are surrounded.

Not the least prominent among the theories put forward to explain universal phenomena is the idea of God in all its variations. Many of us have come to the conclusion that there is no evidence of the existence of a supernatural being in objective actuality, and corresponding to any one of the myriad variations of the God-idea with which the minds of men have been troubled; but the field of thought has yet to be cleared of a great deal of confusion which has gathered around this question.

The days of mythical thinking have not yet passed away, nor are there signs that they are likely to do so with any great rapidity. Men of the twentieth century can evolve myths as easily as they were evolved by the ancients. No doubt modern myths often differ in form from those of passed ages, but they are to be found in every branch of literature. Much of our thinking will appear to be as mythical to future generations as ancient stories of gods and nymphs appear to us now.

We must learn to accustom ourselves to the idea that a myth is not necessarily a story that was told in the early days of man's history. It is not necessarily something gross and unseemly, or something foolish and fantastical said about an ancient deity. A myth may be an argument that is considered to be one of the most profound and acceptable arguments put forward to account for some phenomena, religious, sociological, or otherwise. An argument or belief which finds wide acceptance is mythical in proportion to the degree of fallacy which it contains.[1] One of the greatest tasks before those who are engaged in guiding the education of the world is that of training the human mind to avoid creating myths. This would be difficult enough if there were no ideas about supernaturalism to be contended with; but with such ideas holding vast sway the work is colossal.

It is interesting, yet often saddening, to note the various forms which have been given to the God-idea as man has tried to frame some conception of a being more mighty and wiser than himself but after his own image.

That the idea of God has had only one mode of origin is a position that is not capable of being proved in view of the fact that while we are able to obtain a great deal of information concerning the early development of religious ideas, it is impossible to be accurate in every detail.

Corpse-worship was, no doubt, one origin of the God idea. For some time the mind of early man would not realize that a dead relative had fallen into anything more than a sleep, from which he would ultimately awake and return to his daily toils. For a few days he would be looked upon as someone acting mysteriously, and his awakening would be anxiously looked for. But as the sleep continued, the relatives of the dead man would begin to form new ideas concerning him. They would gradually realize that he was no more to join them in their daily tasks. Probably it would be recollected that when the man was awake he was usually active, and was able to speak and make signs to his fellows. But it would now be observed that for the past few days the corpse had been motionless; it had neither spoken nor made signs. The mystery would thus be increased, and lacking the spiritualistic theory, those to whom the dead man belonged might feel disposed to worship the corpse. If the dead man were loved and respected by his kinsmen during his life, he would be worshipped with feelings of love; but if he had been a tyrant, then fear would be the motive for worshipping the corpse. As the corpse decayed and vanished, it might occur to those who loved their now dead relative that he must be living somewhere, as they cannot bear to think he has ceased to exist. And those who feared their former tyrant might think that the tyrant had tricked them, and having got up again was now going about in a mysterious manner trying to do them harm. Gradually the worship of the corpse might evolve into the worship of something spiritual.

In other tribes dreams were probably the germ of the God-idea. During sleep we have subjective experiences which are often similar to our experiences in everyday life. To primitive man his dream experiences would be proof that he was able to live apart from his body, and confirmation of this would be given when several members of the same tribe related their dream experiences. In this way belief in another life would be evolved, and the deification of a relative or friend would be made possible. When it was found that the departed spirit of a dead person did not return, as after an ordinary sleep, it might be thought that he had gone to another land where he might be of importance. This being so, he must be communicated with by prayer, and useful things must be sent to him by being placed at or in his grave. Sacrifices must be made to appease him if he is feared, and to do him honour if he is loved. In time beloved and highly respected persons would become family or tribal gods.

It is probable that some tribes of early man formed their first God-idea by reflecting about the heavenly bodies. These would be looked upon as mysterious beings who could influence mankind for good or evil, and, therefore, would require to be prayed to and offered sacrifice by all who desired prosperity. In this way the sun has been worshipped as the god of light and warmth —the God of fertilization and giver of all life. The moon has been rendered homage as the queen of heaven or spirit of the night, while the planets and stars have been reverenced as the guardian gods of various departments of life, and as influencing the destiny of individuals believed to be under their power.

Fetish worship, or the worship of natural and artificial objects, has held sway over the minds of many primitive men, and in many places has not lost its sway up to the present time.

The fetish worshipped by men of primitive culture was made of wood, stone, and the bones of animals, or, perhaps, a drop of water was taken from a sacred river and carried about by the person who had taken a fancy to it. The fetish was believed to have some magical power by which it protected its devotee, but if it failed to do this, the worshipper often took the liberty of throwing his little god away. Man often judges and condemns his God while professing to be a most devout worshipper. It is to be feared that fetishism has been much more wider spread than we are usually prepared to admit, as we not infrequently meet with people, living amidst modern civilization, who carry on their persons relics of fetishism in the shape of a cross, an anchor, or some other charm or symbol.

Another widespread belief was that men were under the influence of good and evil demons to whom prosperity or failure in life was largely due, and at death the souls of men were escorted either to heaven or hell by good or bad demons. Among so-called Pagan peoples the demons were believed to be in the service of the gods, a belief transmitted to both Roman Catholic and Protestant

[1] See J. M. Robertson's *Christianity and Mythology*, Intro., pp. 18-19, (1910 ed.).

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Christians who believe in God and his kingdom of angels and the Devil with his progeny of imps.

Animals, rivers, trees, etc., have also been objects of worship owing to their usefulness to man. Or, in many instances, nothing but a peculiar fancy for a certain animal, river, or tree may have been the origin of its ultimately becoming the god or goddess of a tribe. So, too, natural objects have been looked upon as being under the guardianship of gods, and the imagination of superstitious man has filled pantheons with flower-gods, river-gods, rain-gods, tree-gods, fire-gods, storm-gods, and gods of the hills and dales, with a host of corresponding goddesses, and a multitude of nymphs and fairies. Virtues and vices have been deified, hearth and home have received their protecting and sanctifying gods and goddesses, and nations have been advised, guided, and reproved by a supernatural ruler.

In this way has the human mind tried to explain the many problems presented to it by the mysterious phenomena of nature. Man has professed to see, in what has been going on around him, evidence of the existence and constant activity of supernatural power. Sometimes this power was thought to belong to many gods, at other times it has been attributed to two or three gods, and a portion of the human race has believed in one Almighty and solitary governor of the universe. But Monotheism is a no less mythical attempt to explain universal phenomena than Polytheism, as we shall discover if we examine the various and often-learned arguments put forward in support of Monotheism. There is no reason why we should apply the term "myth" to the false ideas and beliefs of antiquity and not to those of modern times. This being so, we should not hesitate to describe as mythical any modern idea of God which can be proved to be untenable on grounds of reason. Let us turn our attention to some of the chief arguments for belief in the existence of a wise, loying, and all-powerful God, who is father to all mankind. As Dr. James Orr has said in *The Christian View of God and the World:* "If God is a reality, the whole universe rests on a supernatural basis." On the other hand, if God is a myth, then the universe is natural in its origin, constitution, and continuance. Here the theologically minded, and all who take a purely natural view of things, come to the parting of the ways.

E Egerton Stafford.

(*To be concluded.*)

"We Don't Want to Fight, but".....

We are covered with shame. We apologise. We abjectly apologise. We sit in sackcloth and ashes. We have suggested that the clergy are patriotic, but not to the extent of risking their skins. Again, we apologise. We have been brought to a realization of facts through reading "Our Correspondence Column" in *The Dawn of Day*, a magazine published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. This column purports to answer "Questions commonly asked about the Bible or Church, or other religious matters.....provided they are of sufficient general interest," and it is significant that two of the answers are to such questions as "Why do not the Clergy fight?" and "Why do French priests fight?"

We had thought that the clergy did not fight because they did not want to, but we were mistaken. We are informed "that the clergy are under orders, in their case 'Holy Orders,' and it is their duty to obey their bishops .....but the bishops have felt bound to keep the old rule by which the clergy are forbidden to fight."

Bishops did not always respect the rule not to kill with the sword, to the extent of avoiding battle, but with a fine reading of the law went into battle with a very serviceable weapon—the mace. The name of Morton, Bishop of Ely, in the Lancastrian plots; or Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, afterwards Cardinal, suggests much; while the warlike tendencies of the clergy are strongly emphasized by the four abbots who led the "Pilgrimage of Grace" to defend their incomes.

The answer, however, discovers that some priests still have fighting blood, so "when a priest has found himself impelled by conscience to offer himself as a combatant, and the bishop is satisfied that arrangements can be made for carrying on the parish in his absence, leave to go has been granted in a number of instances."

Notice that artistic touch, "a number of instances." Beautiful! Considering that those who want to fight are breaking a rule, ordinary mortals would conclude that the fighting parsons would require to satisfy the bishop as to their conscientious desire to fight. But 'tis not so.

Next we are informed that, "Of course, it might happen that the State called up every man to fight, including ministers of religion; then the clergy would gladly go." This reads well, but it is rather unfortunate that the answer to "Why do the French priests fight?" should be, "They are compelled to fight by a law of the French Republic, which was introduced as part of a deliberate policy of persecuting the French Church. This should not be quoted as a model for imitation by the British State."

In other words, the clergy would gladly fight if they were forced to, but for goodness sake don't force them. Extraordinarily courageous are the clergy—*The Dawn of Day* says so.

But, again, we must apologise. "The young priests generally have felt that their right place is where the young men of the country are, and so nearly all have offered their services as chaplains to the Forces, though it has not been possible to accept all who volunteered."

There are only two slight omissions here which necessitate the insertion after services of, "well behind the firing line," and after Forces, "with officers' emoluments." The desperate plight of the clergy is shown in these two replies. They have lost the power to gull the mass of the people, and they know it. The unquestioning attitude of the people has gone, and with it the power of the priest. It is, indeed, the dawn of day, of the glorious day when the scales shall have dropped from the eyes of man; and, he, seeing, cease to flounder in the morass of superstition, but struggling to the path of Reason, move quickly to the goals of Humanity, Intellectual Freedom, and Economic Equity.

John Macmillan.

Correspondence.

PREJUDICE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I should like to thank Mr. W. Mann for his courteous reply to my letter. Upon the main question we must, I fear, agree to differ—by which I would not be understood as saying that I regard the survival of personality as a proven fact, I merely suspend judgment; but his letter introduces a very interesting side-issue, upon which I would welcome the opportunity, with your permission, to say a word or two.

"Nobody," Mr. Mann writes, "condemns a man for being prejudiced in favour of morality and virtue." I did not, I think, say anything in respect of condemning prejudice; I said only that prejudice appeared to me to be inconsistent

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with free thought. I say it again; and I would not be prepared to qualify that opinion in any way, to allow excuses or exemptions on whatever account, to grant to the Freethinker special dispensations in favour of certain ideas embodied in certain words. He must bring *everything* to the unfettered tribunal of his intellect. A particular face value has grown upon such words as "morality" and "virtue"; but that does not relieve every intelligent man from his individual responsibility to enquire into the basis of that value; he is not entitled comfortably to imbibe it with his mother's milk and leave it unexamined. For my own part, I think that a standard of conduct, roughly—though only roughly—corresponding with that which in modern civilization is called morality, is necessary and desirable in the interests of orderly social life. That is not a prejudice; it is the fruit of elementary reason.

If our minds are held in the thraldom of prejudice in the respects which appear to Mr. Mann to be excusable, we are debarred from changing or modifying our ethical code to suit changing conditions. Let us take out a single instance. It is a principle of morality that a man shall have only one wife. It is a principle that has suited the majority of people, and which, therefore, on the whole, has worked fairly well, though some of us may have thought that it was unwisely and unjustly overstrained in its application. Now, assume, for argument's sake, that this War lasts for four or five years longer and denudes the world of twenty millions of young men from the white races. If we are "prejudiced in favour of morality and virtue," the monogamous principle must stand, in spite of that denudation; our minds are not free to deal with it, we cannot modify it, however desirable, and otherwise, such a course might appear to be in the interests of society, or of a particular nation. I believe that if even fifty millions of young men were lost, such a frankly prejudiced man, for example, as Lord Halifax would be found standing upon the disappearing remnant of the white world, proudly waving his flag of opposition "to the very utmost of our power," while the submerging waves of black, and brown, and yellow gathered round it. Mr. Mann, logically, would have to stand with him.

Hubert Wales.

ATHEIST OR AGNOSTIC?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—May I set out, as shortly as your valuable space demands, the reasons why, even after reading your able comments on my letter in to-day's issue of the *Freethinker*, I still prefer to call myself Agnostic?

The difference between us seems to lie in our different ideas as to what is conceivable and what is not. About the word "God" by itself, we agree that it means nothing, and therefore, as you well say, "neither belief nor disbelief can be admitted." But where I differ from you is in your reply (to use your own words—italics mine), "I *disbelieve* in any such existence," to a Theist who assures you that "there exists a God who is omnipotent, or omniscient, or is a 'First Cause,' or who is 'pure mind,' etc." These adjectives, "omnipotent," "omniscient," etc., tacked on to the word "God," evidently bring it, for you, within the limits of conceivability, so that you can definitely say, "I disbelieve."

In my view, this is not so. Any special God, such as the God of the Christians, is still for me the word "God" with certain attributes—"infinitely good," "omnipotent," etc.—attached to it; and these attributes do not interest me: to have any meaning at all, they must themselves be attached to something with a meaning. The question for me is, *What* is it that is omnipotent? and to this I can get no reply. So my answer to your Theist would still be not "I disbelieve," but "I am an Agnostic—one who does not know what you mean." But if anyone chooses to call me an Atheist, they can do so. I certainly do not use the word "Agnostic" as a sop to the foolish bigotry of the pious.

September 30. J. Blair Williams.

At Tarleton Church women are employed as singers. May we describe them as church belles?

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.

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INDOOR.

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OUTDOOR.

Battersea Park Branch N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.15, George Rule, "Gospel Contradictions."

Regent's Park Branch N. S. S.: 3.30, a Lecture.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Yates and Dales; 6.30, Messrs. Swasey, Saphin, and Shaller.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, J. T. Lloyd, "Humanism *versus* Christianity."

Failsworth (Secular School, Pole Lane): Chapman Cohen, 2.45, "Morality Without God"; 6.30, "Christianity, Before and After the War."

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Views and Opinions.

God's Opportunity.

"Providence" has had many chances during the past three years of vindicating its existence. Putting on one side the credit it might have gained by preventing the War altogether, there was the affair of the *Lusitania*, the torpedoing of hospital ships, the bombing of hospitals, the slaughter of women and children during air raids, all of which might have been prevented in such a way as to make the workings of God clear to all. Last of all there was the failure of the Papal peace note. That having failed, as it was bound to fail, for the Pope dare not denounce his Catholic supporters, and Protestant Christians naturally looked askance at Roman Catholic interference, "Providence" again had its chance. Some spectacular move might have been attempted. We do not say how; it is not within our province to advise omnipotence. But something might have been done. For, after all, the problem is really God's problem. We are all his children, and when the children fall out it is a parent's duty to make peace—if he can. But all we are certain of is the bald fact that "Providence" has shamefully neglected its opportunities. It is leaving the War to be finished by purely mundane methods, and if sensible people draw a logical conclusion from the situation Providence will have only itself to blame.

* * *

The World With and Without God.

We Londoners have sat night after night listening to the roar of guns and the crashing of bombs, with the realization of all the misery and horror these sounds implied. And many, as they sat quite helpless amid the infernal din, may have reflected, as we did, that this was the year of our Lord 1917, that this brutal warfare was not being waged by "Heathen" or "Pagan" peoples, but by the foremost Christian nations of the world. These nations have "enjoyed" Christian teaching for centuries. They have been energetic in fitting out missionary societies to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth—or, at least, such parts of the earth as promised some kind of commercial return. Churches have been planted everywhere, Bibles distributed with almost the profusion of tradesmen's circulars, while parsons wander about by the thousand. Whatever else Europe has lacked, there has been no shortage of religion. And so we sat and listened to the roar of guns and bombs, and wondered how much worse the world could have been had it never heard of Christianity. It is easily conceivable that it might have been better. It is hardly likely that it would have been worse. Christians are fond of saying what *will* happen if the world gives up its faith in Christ. Well, the world retains its faith in Christ, and we know what *has* happened. We can place the fears of interested prophecy against the evidence of recorded fact. The world with and the world without Christianity. We know what it is in the one case. It doesn't seem to demand extraordinary courage to risk what it may become in the other eventuality. It *might* be better. It could hardly be worse.

* * *

Is God Dead?

"God," said the Bishop of London, the other day, "is not dead." "If 'no sparrow falls to the ground without your Father'.....then no life in this great city is unwatched and unmarked by God. It is not his will that one of his little ones shall perish, and therefore it is blasphemous to say or think that bombing defenceless women and children is according to the will of God." But if there is no life unwatched and unmarked by God, by whose will does it happen that women and children are bombed? How can anything happen without his will? He can change men's hearts—that is the true significance of the Christian doctrine of grace. Why doesn't he change the hearts of the German High Command? And if these things happen against God's will, are we to believe that God's will can only be done if the Kaiser and Hindenburg and Von Tirpitz agree with it? Is Providence a dependency of Germany? God knows all about it; he marks every life in this "great city"! Well, *we* know all about it. The Government knows all about it. But this gives precious little satisfaction. Nay, the people are shrieking against the Government because adequate steps have not been taken to prevent these raids. Can it be wondered at if God is included in the same condemnation? God, says the Bishop, is not dead. Maybe not; perhaps he has only retired from active service. If not, will some Christian be good enough to tell us what God is doing in this War? America has joined the Allies. Japan has come to the help of Christendom, and the followers of Confucius have decided to prevent Christians butchering each other without end. Europe sent China Christian missionaries to teach her Christianity. She retorts by sending us help to recover decency. It is a magnificent reprisal. What is God doing? If, with the power to do something, he does nothing, is he not helping the wrong against the right? God is not dead. That is the Bishop's opinion. But he is impotent. That is a fact—at least it is the only conclusion consonant with elementary decency.

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What the War Does.

Is it to be wondered that, when people reflect on all that is going on, they end by dismissing a God who, while knowing all and marking all, does nothing? Says "Vexatus," in the *Sunday Chronicle*:—

> There were preachers who affirmed that we needed this war as a regenerator. They are now, I hope, disillusioned. War is not a regenerator. It is a brutalizing curse.
>
> This war has revived the jungle instincts and dragged us back. It has shown us the profiteer, pitiless as the shark or the tiger. It has made vast numbers of people Atheists. It has inflicted unspeakable agony on humanity, and destroyed the noblest of our kind.

We agree with all this; it is only what we have ourselves said many times since the War commenced. But we do not understand why the making of people Atheists should be associated with a process of brutalization. For it was not Atheists who made the War; it was not Atheism that led up to the War. They were Christians who prepared the War and who made it possible. All the brutality, the greed, the lying that have been expressed during the War were fostered before the War actually began. This War began in a world saturated with Christianity, and if it ends with a world in which Atheism is more pronounced, there will be small cause for regret. Men cannot be more like the shark and tiger as Atheists than they have been, and are, as believers in God. Of course, the War is making many Atheists. That is undeniable. But this is not due to the brutalizing effects of war, but because the War has opened the eyes of thousands to the utter uselessness and falsity of religion. The "Providence of God" is an insult to human intelligence in the light of the last three years, the "Heavenly Father" an outrage on human decency when mumbled by a well-paid Bishop over the bodies of newly slaughtered children.

* * *

Missing His Chance.

This War has been for God a period of lost opportunities. Nothing has been done to end it that could not have been done without him. Belgium was overrun by Germany, and he did nothing. Serbia was laid waste, and he remained quiescent. Poland was ravaged, and he remained silent. Towns were bombed and children murdered, still he gave no sign. More, over and over again on the Western Front the British advance has been stayed, and the German defence helped, by a sudden change in the weather from fair to stormy. And we have a right to expect better treatment. For in this War we are God's Ally. The Bishop of London and hundreds of clergymen have told us so. More, Mr. Bottomley has told us so; and, as Omar says, "He knows, He knows." We have a right to demand that God shall do something to prove that he is not leaving his Allies in the lurch. If we are to trust Mr. Harold Begbie, he has sent angels to cheer up the wounded on the battlefield. Let him send a few to paralyse the arms of German gunners, or blind the eyes of raiding airmen. There are scores of ways in which God might help; there is not a single way in which he does help. Men and women are learning the moral of the situation. We live in strenuous times, and we have no use for a God who does nothing. And whether he cannot or will not help, he does not. God does nothing. *We* knew it before the War began. Thousands have realized it since. To them the War gave God a superb chance for vindicating his power. He failed to rise to the occasion; and in the minds of multitudes the Deity's epitaph has been written, "Died of lost opportunities."

Chapman Cohen.

A False Apology for God.

The Rev. John A. Hutton, D.D., of Glasgow, is a Presbyterian divine of world-wide reputation, who is in great demand both as preacher and as writer of semi-theological articles for the religious press. In the *Christian World* for October 4, he discusses the subject of "Repentance and Reconciliation" in a style peculiar to himself. He begins by declaring that in these times of terror there is only one thing that needs to be said. With much truth he avers that in his own view, "the one thing which seems to touch the seat of the present misery is that the dominant peoples of the earth are not at one as to the Nature and Will of God." A truer and more pertinent observation was never made. There never has been among mankind anything like unanimity of belief as to the nature and will of God. Not only is the German conception of the Supreme Being different from the British conception, but scarcely any two persons in any nation are theologically at one. Dr. Hutton himself admits that to men of the world this diversity of views on God is "an abstract and impalpable cause with which to associate such concrete and disastrous things as hatred and the shedding of blood." He makes another admission:—

> Men of the world will even go so far as to say that the idea of God is one that never occurred to those who were responsible first and last for the present outrage.

So far as the argument is concerned, it is wholly immaterial who are responsible for the War, the fact being that any nation's Deity is its own character objectified—nothing more and nothing less. Carlyle pointed this out long ago in his *Heroes and Hero Worship*, and Matthew Arnold elaborated it in several of his works, particularly in *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible*. Of the existence of any other Divinity there is no evidence whatever. Dr. Hutton contends that "the things which have greatest influence with us are the things which work unconsciously," which may be perfectly true; but, surely, if there were a God, he would make himself known, and exert the wholesomest influence consciously. It is easy enough to say "that it was the absence of any controlling thought of God which made it possible for nations to harden into such a condition of hatred and suspicion and fear that open war becomes a kind of relief to them"; but it is not so easy to explain why the Christian God, if he exists, did not exercise such a controlling influence upon his children as to prevent their hardening into such a deplorable condition. If there be no God, the War is no mystery; but if there is, he is fully as incomprehensible as the Athanasian Creed represents him to be.

Of course, Dr. Hutton is professionally bound to retain and defend the idea of God; but his method of doing so is open to serious criticism. He says:—

> The putting away of God, the neglect to cultivate that delicate apprehension of the Unseen which is at once the strongest and the weakest thing in man, is followed inevitably not by an indifference towards God, but by an attitude of deepening hostility to all the ideas about life, about the nature of man, about our task here in this world, about the secret treacheries of our human nature, ideas which found their reason and source in the great idea of a Holy God. The denial or neglect of God is not the end of a process, on attaining which man may continue his journey with some slight adjustment of himself to the new outlook. The denial of God, sooner or later, comes to be the denial of the ultimate decency of the Universe.

That extract is eminently worthy of the parsonic mind. Every statement in it is false. It is utterly untrue to say that all ideas about life, about the nature of man,

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and so forth, find "their reason and source in the great idea of a Holy God." That may accurately be said of all *Christian* ideas about man and his destiny; but there is no escape from the conclusion that all natural ideas find their reason and source in Nature itself, being the direct products of the evolutionary process. Ideas do not descend from above, but ascend from beneath. It is quite true that Atheists maintain an attitude of deepening hostility to all ideas of an alleged supernatural origin, and towards that religion "whose heart is in the other world," their belief being in this world alone. The crowning falsehood of the extract is in the closing sentence: "The denial of God, sooner or later, comes to be the denial of the ultimate decency of the Universe." The natural inference from that statement is that at present the Universe is in a state of lamentable indecency, which, surely, cannot be creditable to the God Dr. Hutton so enthusiastically champions. Is not an indecent Universe the complete negation of a God of infinite power, justice, and love? And yet, in spite of his faith in such a Deity, who sits on the throne as invincible Sovereign, the reverend gentleman is unable to announce anything better than the *ultimate* decency of the Universe.

Without the belief in God, Dr. Hutton does not see "how in the long run men and nations are to continue to live in harmony, or are to continue to be able to resist the predatory instincts of licentious human nature"; but is he blind to the fact that when the belief in God was strongest there was the least harmony in society? Has he forgotten the Thirty Years' War, which was waged simply because men did believe in God, but could not see eye to eye as to the best method of serving him? Again and again has the belief in God been made the pretext for war in Christendom. Dr. Hutton knows as well as we do that the tendency of religion has always been, not to unite, but to divide mankind into opposing factions, and so cause all sorts of decimating conflicts. And yet he has the audacity to predict that the denial of God would make an harmonious human life impossible.

The curious thing is that nations which pretend to be at peace with God are now at war with one another, and that they all claim God as their invisible but effective Ally. Germans, Austrians, Bulgarians, and Turks are sure that God is fighting for and with them, and will eventually give them a glorious victory. All the powers on the other side cherish the like conviction and hope, and are buoyed up thereby. Now, Dr. Hutton assures us that without repentance can we have peace, neither with God nor with one another as individuals or as nations. He claims, and rightly claims, that we have all done wrong, that we have a hundred causes for self-abasement, that we have permitted and have honoured courses, and policies, and sayings of the most ignoble character, and that the only way to permanent peace lies in repentance and reconciliation. All this is, doubtless, only too true; but to drag the name of God into it is to proclaim God's dismal failure as Governor of the world. When Jesus was born the legend says that the angels were heard singing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." The legend further declares that when he faced the end, he exclaimed: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." We know that neither the angelic song, nor Jesus' prediction of his own triumph, has been fulfilled; and the unavoidable inference is that the religion of the Cross, lacking all reality as a supernatural factor, has mainly served, in the hands of its priests, as an instrument to raise them into a position of iniquitous lordship over the minds and consciences of credulous people. Survey the history of the Church and assert, if you dare, that there ever has been a time when Christianity proved itself to be a supernatural force for the world's redemption. We frankly admit that the Church has been a tremendous power in the world, and that many Christians have been exceedingly good and useful people, but, at the same time, we do not hesitate to characterize the Church as an institution that has never justified its own claims, or to affirm that the excellent character displayed by many professing Christians is a purely human product. Neither God nor Christ has ever demonstrated his existence by any interference in human affairs.

Dr. Hutton does not know what a world without God would be like; and yet China, according to the testimony of those who know it best, is a highly moral country, in which there are millions of beautiful, almost ideal homes, though, to all intents and purposes, it has never had any definite doctrine of God, nor felt the need of the Christian religion. The same thing is true of Japan also. Is it not also true that even in Christendom the conditions of life have improved in proportion as the Christian faith has declined? A hundred years ago Great Britain was more religious than it is to-day; but would Dr. Hutton like the country to revert to the moral, social, and political state which then prevailed?

J. T. Lloyd.

The Exodus from Houndsditch.

Miching mallecho—this means mischief.
—*Shakespeare, "Hamlet."*

Uplift thy cross and go. Thy doom is said.
—*Robert Buchanan, "The Wandering Jew."*

Charles Bradlaugh who was, in his own characteristic way, a keen theologian, declared that religions did not die, but they changed; and Christianity itself is undergoing a transformation. The alteration has been taking place so quietly that it appears to have been wrought with the complete unconsciousness of clergy and congregations alike.

In England, the lamented Canon Farrar and other clergymen seem to have been the prime movers in this silent revolution. With quiet persistence they persuaded a very large number of their co-religionists that "hell," contrary to belief, was slightly less monotonous than "heaven" itself, and that everlasting punishment meant only an eternity of unpleasantness. Blood and brimstone were eliminated from the dictionary of the educated clergy. After that came the deluge, which has brought upon its flood undogmatic religionism and the rest of the beautiful nonsense which now passes for the religion of Christ. This dilution of dogma has had its disintegrating effect upon all the Churches. Painful Sabbaths have been replaced by pleasant Sunday afternoons. String bands and soloists take the place of leather-lunged preachers. Labour Members of Parliament, lady preachers, and other notorieties, threaten to oust the very parsons from their pulpits. This can have but one meaning; it is the secularizing of Christianity. Some time since, at a leading London Nonconformist place of worship, a well-known actor and a famous contributor to *Punch* occupied the pulpit to pronounce eulogiums upon a world-renowned Freethinker. The great queue of people outside the chapel gave the finishing touch of comedy. It was magnificent, but it was not Christianity as taught for twenty centuries. It shocks one; it is like meeting one's pet dog in the form of sausages.

Nor is this all. The Prayer Book itself has suffered. Changes have been made in the hallowed volume, and barbarous portions of the Psalms eliminated. It has

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even been suggested that the "strong language" in the Marriage Service is to be toned down. "Angels and ministers of grace defend us." If this sort of thing goes on, the Holy Bible and the *Winning Post* will be the only publications untouched by the dainty blue pencil of the censor.

The Christian superstition is crumbling. Never was there so little religion, never so much Secularism, as at the present day. Never have men attended churches and chapels so little; never have they attended hospital and philanthropic meetings so assiduously. Christianity is being absorbed by Secularism. The supernatural element in Christianity no longer satisfies, for no faith can satisfy which is based upon outworn ideas and outgrown ignorance. The mind of man is vigorously bestirring itself. Scepticism means approach to the truth, and truth cannot consort with the superstitions of the past. Men nowadays no longer accept upon mere trust the religious misbeliefs of their remote and ignorant 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." For nearly twenty centuries the Churches have been praying "Our Father," and the day of human brotherhood seems farther off than ever. Secularism does not pray, but it works for the ennobling service of man for man, which will lead ultimately to the elimination of Christian superstition and to the glorification of humanity.

Straws show which way the wind is blowing. A statement of the task of the Free Churches after the War, published recently in the *Daily Chronicle*, shows clearly the Secularistic tendencies of the Nonconformist Churches. It mentions that the Free Church Council represents the local councils, to which 10,000 Free Churches send delegates, and then adds:—

> The local councils are composed of men and women who are peculiarly interested in the exemplary behaviour of the people, in the education, welfare, and health of the children, in fair wages, in sound housing conditions—in a word, in religion.

In this precious definition of religion the empty dogmas of orthodoxy have become of less importance than the snows of yesteryear. Nor, in the particular circumstances, is this so entirely surprising. Such awful facts as the world-war, with its attendant horrors, must make thoughtful men and women pause in reciting the Christian shibboleths. Few, we imagine, feel inclined to refer to a Heavenly Father at the moment when the conception implies that he is devouring his own children by hundreds of thousands. Their hands would be less inclined than usual to go up to "that inverted bowl we call the sky." Such unspeakable horrors as this world-war are hard to reconcile with any consolatory scheme of religion.

And, mark you, who hears the pathetic cry of humanity in anguish? Is it the thorn-crowned Messiah with his thousands of angels, or the Divine Mother with cohorts of cherubim, who come to succour the unhappy victims? Not at all! Mankind is left to its own resources, and it is to the ready sympathy of other men and women that the victims have to turn in the bitterest hours of sorrow and disaster.

Such a spectacle brings home to everyone the growth and change of ideas. Knowledge has widened in ways never dreamed of in the Eastern philosophy of the Christian religion. New tones have grown into human sentiment. All the lights and shadows of life have shifted, and its whole surface has been dyed in different colours. Naturally, we are progressing beyond the reach of outworn ideals. They voice different views which men have outgrown. They can make no direct response to them. At their note their minds and feelings rouse to no movement except amazement. They come like the "horns of Elfland, faintly blowing," and men realize that they were meant for other ears than ours, and are but an echo from the far-off days of ignorance and bigotry. The conscience of the race is rising above dogmas. A new impulse is at hand to make men join hands and hearts. This impulse is Secularism, which marches to certain victory under the glorious banners of Liberty and Fraternity.

Mimnermus.

Light on the Present Crisis.

An orthodox friend of long standing, who believes the Bible from cover to cover, has the habit of enclosing, whenever he writes, a religious tract for my especial benefit. Most of these have been of the usual character; but the last to come to hand relates to the War, and bears the title, *Light on the Present Crisis*. It is a small sixteen-page pamphlet, written by the Rev. Leonard Newby, of St. Julian's Vicarage, Shrewsbury, and furnishes a good example of the War being a fulfilment of prophecy. The "light" which this reverend gentleman sheds on the present crisis commences as follows:—

> And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; *see that ye be not troubled: for all must come to pass, but the end is not yet.* For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the *beginning* of sorrows (Matt. xxiv. 6-8).

The italics are the reverend's own, and in case the reader should not perceive that the foregoing is really a "light" upon the subject, the Rev. L. Newby undertakes to expound the passage and make the matter clear to him. He says:—

> The prophetic period to which the words of the above passage refer has *now* arrived. Nation is rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and the sword is being bathed in human blood to an extent which hitherto has been unknown in this sad and weary world's history. Men and women are propounding questions one to another to which they can find no satisfactory answer, *and no wonder*, for the vexed question of the hour can only be answered by *intelligent students* of the prophetic Word.

Here we see that the Rev. L. Newby naturally ranks himself among "the *intelligent students* of the prophetic Word" who are adepts in the correct interpretation of prophecy. He assumes as a matter of course that the so-called "prediction" of the destruction of Jerusalem, from which the foregoing three verses are taken, was uttered by an historical Jesus about the year A.D. 30. But, as an "intelligent student" of Gospel history, he ought to have known that this grand "prophecy" could not have been written until after the event to which it refers had taken place. The reasons for the conclusion are many. I will only say here that there was nothing in the history of the Jews up to the year A.D. 66 (when the war with the Romans commenced) that could lead anyone to suppose that such a terrible and unforeseen event was ever likely to occur. Neither could anyone who lived in the time of Jesus know that in A.D. 65 the emperor Nero would send such an unjust, tyrannical, and senseless creature as Gessius Florus to be procurator of Judæa; nor could anybody know that it was the bullying and injustice of this man that goaded the Jews into taking up arms against the Romans. This great war was not foreseen in the time of Jesus. Matt. xxiv. is not a prediction, though written in that form. The writer could with perfect confidence say that Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed; for he wrote after

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A.D. 70. We know, also, that this great "prophecy" is a purely literary composition, modelled upon passages selected from the Old Testament and Apocryphal writings, and was never spoken, as represented.

The reverend gentleman then goes on to say: "It would be impossible to answer a tithe of the questions which perplexed men and women are asking concerning this great European War; but by God's grace I will try and answer five questions, not out of my imagination, but out of the Word of Truth."

Here it may be necessary to reassure the reader by saying that I have no intention of going into those "five questions"; the first will be sufficient. This reads:—

> Does not this terrible war with its unnameable atrocities justify us in fearing that there may be no God after all? If there was a God, would He not stretch forth His mighty hand and confound the politics and frustrate the knavish tricks of those whose creed is that might is right, and that the weakest must be crushed?

The mere fact that such a question is propounded by a clergyman may be taken as indicating that it had been seriously asked by professing Christians in his district. But whether there is, or is not, a being called "God" in some part of the Universe is a matter of very little importance. One fact, however, is certain: as far back as human records go, this God, if God there be, has given no sign of his existence. Wherever it is possible to verify ancient history, events ascribed to the action of this Being are found to be either fictitious or due to natural causes. Hence, whether a God exists or not, he never speaks, he never acts, or in any way makes his presence known; neither does he interfere in human affairs.

Leaving this matter, let us now see what is the Rev. Newby's answer to his own question. That reverend gentleman, in reply, says that if the great European War "had not come sooner or later, God's Word would have been falsified, for the prophetic period described as '*the times of the Gentiles*' is rapidly running out."

Here it should be noted that the words in italics are an addition to Matthew's version of the grand "prophecy" inserted by Luke (xxi. 24) apparently on his own authority. Continuing his "enlightening" remarks, the Rev. L. Newby says:—

> Instead of this war proving that God does not exist, it is rather a testimony to His faithfulness, and an overwhelming reminder that *not a word* He has spoken shall fail to come to pass.....The European war writes the fact in large letters "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."....But if there were a God, would he not intervene at a crisis like this? My answer is He Will. Read the second Psalm—"the Lord shall have the nations in derision.....He shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Thus, when the British, French, and Americans, with an overwhelming number of men, guns, and aeroplanes, have broken the German armies, and have driven them out of Belgium and France, the Lord God will intervene in order that his words in Matt. xxiv. and Luke xxi. shall not be falsified. This is really amusing.

Let us now look at the three verses in Matt. xxiv. which the Rev. Newby quotes as a prediction of the present War. He does not tell us how he knew them to be such; he merely says that the fact could only be known to "*intelligent students* of the prophetic Word"—of whom "by God's grace" he was one. This is, no doubt, interesting; but, like everything connected with religion, it requires verification.

In Matt. xxiv. the disciples drew the attention of Jesus to "the buildings of the temple," whereupon their Master said, "Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another." Shortly afterwards the disciples asked him, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The reply of Jesus to the first question—When shall the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple take place?—is given in Matt. xxiv. 4-28; the events relating to his second coming and the end of the world occupy the remainder of the chapter.

With regard to the first question, Jesus might have said, had he possessed foreknowledge, that the holy city and the temple would be destroyed forty years later; but the method he adopted was that of naming a number of supposed notable events which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem. Now, during those forty years prior to A.D. 70, the first notable event specified is the appearance of many false Christs; after which comes the passage under consideration, that "nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom," etc. This event was therefore to happen many years *before* the destruction of the holy city—say about A.D. 35. Yet it is this statement that the Rev. Newby quotes as a "prophecy" referring to the present European War. Anyone with a grain of sense will see that this so-called "prophecy" *must* refer to wars between A.D. 30 and 70, *and to no other period*. Even if *no* such wars of nations occurred during that interval, as history shows to be the case, those falsely predicted wars could not be shifted to any later period. Our "intelligent student" of prophecy is thus shewn to be hopelessly blind, and "as wrong as wrong can be."

Again, the writer of Matt. xxiv. had no idea that there ever could be such a war as that now in progress; for he says that the Jewish-Roman war was "such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, *nor ever shall be*."

Furthermore, the writer of Matt. xxiv. says that "*immediately after* the tribulation of those days" all the tribes of the earth "shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels.....and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds," etc. There could thus, according to the prediction, be no European War in 1914-1917. But as the "Son of man" did not come to judge the world "immediately after" the destruction of Jerusalem, as he had promised, then the so-called "Word of God" which gave that promise is undoubtedly "falsified," whether the Rev. Leonard Newby may think so or not. The question, in this case, is simply one of fact

Abracadabra.

Home Our Heaven.

Dublin people have reason to be inordinately proud of their splendid slums, but when they boast that their poor have quite the worst dwellings in the world, as a superior slumologist, I must beg to differ. In every country I have honoured with my presence, I have always chosen my home among the the most wretched habitations, for experience has taught me that a rotten house is invariably cheaper than a good one, and society has ever decreed that even the cheapest was always too dear for me.

Leaving the States out of the question, and confining our attention to Europe, some real rotters of houses may be found in what my wife, with excellent reason, called La Smell France. Oh, Nantes, where is thy stink? The lovely Loire, with malodorous melancholy more niffy than the Liffey, flows past the stately maison from the *cinquieme etage* of which we had to descend *en bas* to a loathsome cellar where water trickled down the walls, and rats nestled lovingly in the canopy over

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our bed. We sought not the shelter of the cellar for our children fearful of bombs, for those were days of "peace," but the country being in flood, the law of supply and demand (and the rapacity of the Bretons) made dry, habitable rooms expensive. We got rather friendly with the rats, who had decidedly anti-Malthusian principles. One patriarchal old chap with a white beard was a particular friend of mine. We called him Tolstoy, and on maturer acquaintance Leo. He had an ugly weal on his left posterior, some militant Christian, doubtless, taking a mean advantage of Leo's attitude of non-resistance, having endeavoured to make a sacrifice of him.

Ah, me, the beauties of Brittainy are vividly brought back to mind on reading the Mesopotamia report!

The essential difference between the poor of France and those of Dublin is that the *etageries* of the Republic throw their refuse out of the windows—readers of *Candide* are aware of this—while the Dublin tenementers, not having achieved their republic yet, still retain their respectability, and store all their waste products in a whited sepulchre called "the yard."

Now, lest readers wonder what all this has to do with Freethought, I hasten to assure them that one's method of worshipping, or one's attitude towards creation, is very largely bound up with the manner in which garbage is disposed of. In Scottish tenements the rule is that the "bucket" must be carried out to the street in early morning. Many a cold winter morning in my fifty-storey garret (nine stories from the back) have I cursed Protestantism, hygiene, flights of stairs, and the east wind of Edinburgh. Frequently I have lain awake all night, oppressed by thoughts of that ghastly bucket, and the early advent of the muck cart, when the previous evening, I could have shot the contents out of the nine storey window, and then enjoyed sweet repose.

Now, Scottish Presbyterians admit that the accumulation of egg-shells, potato parings, and ashes, is a corollary of civilized Christian life, and think highly of one assiduous in the emptying of buckets, provided always that the rite is performed orderly, and at an early hour, and with becoming gravity.

On the contrary, Catholics making a virtue of ignorance, it is in keeping with their Agnosticism about life generally that they could not discuss the subject, and as for throwing rubbish out of the window—why that would not be decent; and, though we may be poor, we are all respectable in Dublin. First, we have no rubbish, then, if we have just a little, we, with becoming Catholic shame furtively convey it to the bin in "the yard." There our responsibility ends. Occasionally, when the landlord has been nearly "gassed"—by the vegetable matter outside the house—while endeavouring to collect rent from the human vegetation inside, he deputes "a boy" to "do" the yard.

This youth—an old age pensioner—sets about cleaning the Augean gables. He wields a brush charged with whitewash—Ireland's emblem of purity—and is said to possess miraculous powers, for by his gestures effluvium is exorcized, the yard is "done," and we may again resume our offerings.

True, if it were not for the yards and their abominations, infant mortality might not be so high in Dublin; but then we would not have the ministrations of elderly spinsters who visit us for our health, and tell us that "John has rickets, Margaret adenoids; take Malcolm to Dr. Sawbones to get hacked about to see what's wrong with him; baby ought to have been weaned last Wednesday—must be taken to hospital to be weighed; kill all flies, keep that window open to let in fresh air" (from he yard!), etc.

I like a joke, and these social workers (salaried) sometimes amuse me; but I am no mathematician, and when they ask conundrums about cubic space, I am sarcastic to them—that is, I tell them to go to hell. Now, although "To hell with the King" is chalked outside our house, and similar sentiments are commonplaces in Dublin, the slum-dwellers are extremely docile and respectful, and take meekly all "insolence of office." The ladies of the locality, in friendly badinage, occasionally characterize each other as the illegitimate offspring of an ensanguined female of commercialized passion; but that merely shows their veneration for the sacrament of matrimony. The poor, I regret to say, are a disappointment everywhere, and in Dublin they are particularly subservient. Poverty, as a passing phase, I can endure, with an utter disregard of the conventions, a frank acceptance of all the makeshifts required to keep in life, and a healthy hatred of interfering busybodies; but poverty as a permanent condition, with a "dud" suit, celluloid collar, a reputation for respectability, and a wife who has to char—well, I wouldn't look quite as contented as Murphy. Confound the fellow; so long as he smiles, we will never make any progress.

After all, morality is for the poor. Let us congratulate them on their cleanliness (fancy a man being pleased that his wife was thought clean!), commend them for their thrift, admire them for their honesty (meaning their acceptance of the principle of being stolen from), insist, of course, on their humility (a "humble person" is frequently advertised for in Dublin); then, if we want to finish the job properly, let us turn the priests on them with all *their* lies, and they are now at our mercy, to use for our political ends, to exploit for our economic aggrandizement, to experiment on their dirty bodies that we may have knowledge to patch up our bodies, and to foozle their minds that they may always remain fools.

A Scottish bailie of my acquaintance once told me a touching story of Andrew Carnegie. The millionaire was having a pow-wow with some parochial body on the cadge. "Ah," said Andrew, unctuously, as his eye lighted on the text, "Heaven our Home," "now that's just my philosophy, only I would express it differently, and make it 'Home our Heaven.'" I expressed wonder to my friend that that doctrine had not carried conviction in America, for I had heard of quite a large number of Carnegie's workers who, during a labour dispute, suddenly left this world, at the sound of firearms; probably they had interpreted the text as "Heaven our Homestead." The bailie called me a blaspheming ruffian, and a man incapable of any right feeling.

Truth to tell, I agree with the Laird of Skibo. I do believe in making our home—however mean it may be, a temple of love and joy. And, believing as I do that this life is all, I am tremendously keen on seeing that my children shall enjoy all the really good things of the world. If the inhabitants of slums only felt debased and degraded by their vile environment, and longed for something better, and were prepared to fight everything and everybody that stood in their way, there might be hope. But they have neither imagination nor vision to think a full and beautiful life. A room passes for a house, window-boxes in lieu of a garden, floorcloth for carpet, and an annual half-day in the country for the children's "fresh air"; for, to the poor, all thing are poor, as Bernard Shaw would like to have said.

I may be told that the housing problem is an economic one, and I do not lose sight of that factor. I do not accuse the Church of being the basic cause of the slums in Dublin. This, however, I do say, that wherever Catholicism flourishes (look at the "Irish" quarter anywhere), there also is squalor, degradation, and ignorance; and *the Church always strives to perpetuate poverty*. Here

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and there we may find a priest of "forward" social opinions; but, just as the Church takes advantage of the Sinn Fein Movement *up to a point*, she knows full well that republics on earth don't usually think kindly of kingdoms in heaven. That is how it seems to a rationalist mind; but to the complex, scientific, nay, supernormal intelligence of Mr. Holy Ghost Wells (B.Sc.), it appears simple to visualize an invisible monarch of an unearthly Republic. So, whenever there is any agitation about Dublin slums, the priests will get the wire to butt in, but should there be the remotest chance of any drastic change for the better, rest assured they will resist with all their strength; for with better housing, more leisure, and increase of knowledge, a spirit of independence and fearlessness would be created, and the priests would soon find their occupation like that of Othello.

J. Effel.

Acid Drops.

The War has shaken the faith of a great many people; it appears to have affected even that of Mr. Bottomley. "Never again," he says, "if there be a God, can there be such a Devil's Holiday." "If there be a God"! Can it be possible that after solemnly assuring everybody—on the guarantee of an increasing circulation—that there is a God and a future life, that Mr. Bottomley is beginning to have doubts? May we suggest that, if there be a God, the War ought never to have happened at all? And if God couldn't prevent it in 1914, what reason have we for believing he will or can prevent another war in, say, 1924? Still, it is good to note the evidence of a chastened spirit. Mr. Bottomley has even promised not to prophesy any more. He solemnly announces that he has "discarded the mantle of the Prophet." This, he explains, is not because his data was wrong, but because other people prevented his prophecies being realized. That is really the funniest excuse we have ever seen for the non-realization of a prophecy.

The other Monday morning a Swansea fruiterer displayed a box of large mouldy plums bearing the inscription "In affectionate remembrance of the Swansea Council and the Sunday Observance Act of 1676." We congratulate the shopkeeper on his wit. It is too much to hope that it will have any effect on Swansea Sabbatarians.

Unconscious humour is often excellent. Mr. Horatio Bottomley has been advertising on a large scale a series of articles on the War, and a prominent part of the notice was occupied by a portrait of himself, with the words underneath in large type, "Somewhere in Hell."

Tales of angels having been seen at Grays and Waltham Abbey have been current, but a real specimen was brought into a case at Willesden Police Court. A woman, asking for a summons against her husband, told the Bench, "On Saturdays and Sundays he's a little angel, but the rest of the week he isn't worth living with."

A boy, who had been placed on probation at the Home for Working Boys at Maida Vale, was charged at the Guildhall with failing to attend church. He was ordered to attend church in the future. If he does not, we presume he will be punished. If he does, he will be forgiven. So, as a first step in the process of moralizing, the Alderman proposes to make him a hypocrite.

A forty-line paragraph appeared in the press describing the "coolness" of the Archbishop of Canterbury and other clergy in conducting an induction service during an air-raid. There is nothing very heroic in their action, for the church in which they officiated is a substantial building. Far greater heroism was displayed by tens of thousands of poor mothers and children in small, jerry-built houses; but ordinary folk do not have press agents.

When the Zeppelins raided the Metropolis the Bishop of London cheered us up by saying that the present War was a "day of God," and that we ought to thank God for being "allowed the honour of a little danger." We think everybody has had enough honour during the past week or two, and the honour's list, in the shape of casualties, is unpleasantly large. The Bishop is now not quite so certain on the matter, but he still says of the recent raids that "this is our lot of danger" and we should "be proud of it." We really don't know what there is to be proud of. We have sat for nights with the guns roaring and bombs bursting all around, and we did not feel in the least proud. The Bishop says each murdered child is being carried one by one to Paradise. We wonder how he knows. And we wonder how many parents will be comforted by this stupid cant? If the "white wings of the Holy Ghost" would protect the children from bombs, we are quite sure that parents would prefer it to those same wings being used as transport waggons to heaven.

When Christians are in a tight corner they act much as other folk do. In view of the air-raids a large number of churches altered the time of their evening services. This shows the decay of belief in the efficacy of prayer.

A Sunday paper published recently an article on "Oriental Fictions." No mention was made of the fairy tales of the Bible.

Christ said "Swear not at all," but Christians almost invariably swear in courts—and elsewhere. Court "swearing" is not so simple as it appears, for Mr. Herbert Nield, K.C., recently uttered the reproof, "A police-officer ought never to say 'I swear by the Almighty God,' as though there were many deities, and they were choosing one." This was sufficient to make the poor policeman turn as blue as his uniform.

The Rev. P. J. Kelly, a Yorkshire vicar, has resigned his living and joined the Royal Garrison Artillery as a gunner. The living is worth £500 a year, and a gunner gets about a shilling a day. The reverend gentleman's example should be emulated by the thousands of clergy of military age.

A writer in the *Daily Chronicle* states that "it wasn't war that first brought death into the world and all our woe." Surely, a most chaste reference to Eve and the apple.

The *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans) of September 2, reports a striking case of the effects of ardent preaching. The Rev. G. J. Kelly delivered two sermons one Sunday, and returned home thinking out a new sermon on the text "Slay Utterly." He went to bed, but was unable to sleep. After a while he rose and went out towards the house of a family named Moore. As he approached the house he heard a voice saying: "Go in and slay utterly." He found an axe, and went into a room where four children were sleeping. Then came the voice again: "Suffer little children to come unto me." Kelly replied: "Lord, they're coming now," and killed the children. He then entered another room, found the mother and father asleep, and killed them. Of course, Kelly was insane. But equally, of course, there is nothing worse than religion for ill-balanced minds. And well-balanced minds have no need of it.

Pious folk always had a sneaking fondness for profiteering, and it shows itself in their hymns, as, for instance, in the lines:—

> Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee
> Repaid a thousandfold will be;
> Then gladly will we give to Thee
> Who givest all.

"Scholar and saint" is the way in which a *Daily Telegraph* reviewer describes the Rev. R. F. Horton, of Hampstead. "Scholar" is a very elastic term, and we are quite willing to concede the title of "saint." Many better men than he have been called that. And we remember that this saint

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once openly professed the opinion that all people who did not believe in immortality bestialized life, and ought to be shut out from human society. We do not suggest that this conviction is incompatible with saintship; far from it. Men of a most "saintly" character have before now been notable for extreme narrowness of view, and even savagery of persecution. It is often, in fact, the saint that spoils the man. On the whole, we incline to the opinion that the world has suffered more from its saints than from its sinners.

A Spiritualist, of Grimsby, was summoned the other day by his charwoman for maintenance of her illegitimate child. The defendant said he had consulted the spirits, and they had denied that he was the father of the child. The testimony of spirits evidently does not count for much in Grimsby Police Court, as the magistrate made the usual order. A foolish girl, and a designing rogue.

The congregation was singing—

God is our refuge and our strength:
n straits a present aid;
Therefore, although the earth remove,
We will not be afraid.

The Church officer—a wag—to test their faith, put his head in at the door and shouted "Fire!" In the rush for the exits the parson led.

The *Midland Daily Telegraph*, of October 1, contains an account of the prosecution of twelve boys charged with stealing from the Market Hall, Coventry. The Chairman of the court said it was a most painful thing to find such boys becoming thieves in view of the fact that most of the boys were attending Sunday-school. Some of the thefts were committed by the boys on their way from Sunday-school. Now, if they had been attending schools where religious instruction was non-existent, we have no doubt the Chairman would have delivered a homily on the evils of Secular Education. As these boys were getting plenty of religious education, no moral was necessary.

From the *Christian World*:—

> Rev. W. Pedr Williams visited an Essex town on Friday to preach at the harvest thanksgiving service. But Mr. Williams had just got to close grips with his subject when warning of an air-raid was received, *the gas failed*, and the audience quietly dispersed.

Italics are ours. We have been wondering whose, or what, gas was it that failed?

The *Daily News* quotes the following from a morning paper:—

> AIR-RAIDS.—Peaceful country rectory, Hampshire, well out of danger zone, can receive three or four paying guests. Large garden, beautiful scenery, high, bracing. Simple life. £1 0 each weekly. References exchanged.

It may be a simple life, but evidently not a very simple parson.

The *Daily Mirror* says that on an ocean liner leaving port the other day, it was observed that a number of passengers threw pennies into the sea. This was done in the belief that it would secure immunity from submarines. Students of folk-lore will see in the action a survival of a primitive form of sacrifice, and also how little removed from the primitive mind is the intelligence of a large number of our "civilized" fellow-beings.

Private Woodhouse, of the King's Own Lancaster Regiment, is said to have had his life saved through carrying a New Testament. He was shot through the arm, but a bullet failed to enter his breast owing to his carrying God's Word. We are glad to hear it, but we would remark that some of our readers who have carried the *Freethinker* into action have never been hit at all. Now, if every soldier carried a copy of this paper with him ——

A little Acton girl, who had been much impressed by a visit to the "pictures," rose from her knees at her bedside, looking unusually thoughtful. "What is the matter?" asked her mother. The unexpected reply was: "I was just thinking, won't God laugh when Charlie Chaplin goes to heaven!"

The President of the Free Church Council, Rev. W. B. Selbie, says that 85 to 90 per cent. of the men in the Army are out of any vital relation to the Christian Church. But he doesn't believe the Church has failed. We wonder what Dr. Selbie would consider failure. If, with all the generations during which the Churches have controlled life, they can now claim only 10 per cent. of the people. What greater proof of failure is required?

Some of our schoolmasters appear to be men of robust faith. The Rev. J. Gow, of Westminster School, says, "I believe in miracles, and by prayer miracles more wonderful than those of long ago are being wrought every day." We do not recall any contemporary instances of persons being raised from the dead, or even of cases of thousands of people being fed with a few sardines and rolls, but perhaps the reverend gentleman will narrate his experience. The nearest approach to the miraculous that we remember are the cases of the angels at Mons and elsewhere—and they were bogeys.

The Rev. Principal Selbie says that "the Church is more self-sacrificing than ever." Have the dear bishops and leading ministers forgone part of their salaries, or are they deciding that the clergy shall take their share of military service?

The commercial side of Christianity is emphasized in the transference of Sir A. Yapp from the Young Men's Christian Association to the Food Economy Campaign. So smart was he at gathering subscriptions on behalf of the Y.M.C.A. that wags insisted that those letters stood for "Yapp's Money-Collecting Association."

Parish magazines, like all other mundane things, change with the times. Even in their treatment of Freethinkers, Christians are becoming more polite. In the *Crown Magazine*, edited by the Rev. G. E. Thorn, of Peckham, there is a reference to Abraham Lincoln: "He was a man of strict morality, abstemious, and familiar with the Bible, though not a professed member of any Church." We wonder how many innocent readers of this magazine will realize that Abraham Lincoln was a Freethinker? For our own part, we prefer the bad manners of older days to the nebulous and unctuous insolence in use to-day.

The *Daily Chronicle* announces that "the Free Church Council contemplates a great 'push' throughout the country during the autumn and winter." It would be far more to the purpose if the Free Church Council released all able-bodied Nonconformist ministers for active service in the real "push" abroad.

Church congregations are not the brainiest folk, but surely it was unnecessary for the Rev. C. Hutchinson, Rector of Rayne, Essex, to ask his parishioners not to bring wheat and corn to church for harvest festival decorations this year.

A brand of matches bears the fascinating name "Adam and Eve." It is a happy title, for it suggests an ancient attempt at match-making.

The Romish Church appears to possess an excellent press agency, for paragraphs are always appearing in the newspapers. A recent paragraph mentions the names of converts, one of whom is the Rev. R. A. Knox, youngest son of the Bishop of Manchester. This conversion will scarcely undo the work of the Protestant Reformation.

Father Bernard Vaughan has been poking fun at Mr. H. G. Wells and his "brand-new God," and says that in *The Soul of a Bishop* the popular novelist "has created a brand-new Jesus Christ of his own. The Jesus of Mr. Wells has given his followers neither a creed nor a morality, neither a Church organization, nor a priesthood." Father Vaughan is in too much of a hurry. Rome itself was not built in a day.

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To Correspondents.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 14, Leicester; October 21, Manchester; October 28, London; November 4, Abertillery; November 18, Birmingham.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—October 14, Swansea; November 18, Manchester.

A. M.—"If God does anything, he does everything. If he does not do everything, he does nothing." In another form the idea belongs to Goethe. But an idea is one's own when one has thoroughly assimilated it.

A. Wildman.—The General Secretary, Miss Vance, will write you on the matter.

F. F. Cornell.—Papers are being sent.

A. G. Barker.—We should say that this particular author regrets having tried to boom his own book. Unfortunately, there are many writers whose chief concern in writing is not whether a subject in itself is worth writing about, but whether there will be a demand for a book on that topic. And more harm is done in this way than in any other. Beware of the writer who has always a book ready for every passing phase of opinion.

H. R. Swift.—We are never "bored" with the experiences of Freethinkers such as yourself. We get many such letters, and our only regret is that we cannot make all public.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Rosetti, in sending their contribution to the Fund, write. "It is the only way in which we can attempt to discharge a debt of gratitude towards so admirable a paper. We hope our little son may grow to have as much pleasure in reading it as his father and mother have had." We sincerely hope so.

J. H. Minett.—Pleased you find "Views and Opinions" so much to your taste.

F. C. Wykes.—We do not intend increasing the price. Thanks for appreciation.

J. Goudie.—Appeared in the *Freethinker* some years ago.

H. Robson.—We saw the report. The stupidity of the Bishop of London commands almost admiration—it is so near perfection of its kind.

J. Sanders.—Thanks. We sincerely hope that things will be brighter in the near future.

Mr. G. W. Ogilvie thinks the *Freethinker* "deserves to be in the highest niche in the temple of literature." Well, it already holds a high place in the esteem of thousands of intelligent men and women. And the only way to command the unthinking is to sink to their level.

T. Fisher.—It seems to be part of a pseudo-philosophical and very verbose book in defence of Theism. But the pages are not very appetizing.

Adelaide Gray (Toronto).—We have received letter enclosing a one-dollar bill; but you do not say to what purpose you wish this put. Will you please instruct us on the subject?

G. Lunn.—Yes, the ready help of our readers has been very gratifying. Pleased to know you regard it as a means by which readers can record their thanks for anything we may have done. And to help the Cause is the kind of thanks we value most.

T. H. How.—It is nothing new to find "leading" men expressing the views voiced by Freethinkers years ago. Mr. Asquith's remarks, which, we cited, are, as you say, a case in point.

W. Birdon.—Will write on the subject you name when an opportunity presents itself.

Miss Vance, General Secretary N.S.S., would be glad to hear from any Freethinker, resident in Bristol, who could find time to visit "one of ours" home from the front and awaiting an operation, in the Southern General Hospital, Bristol Royal Infirmary, who is a long distance from his own home and friends.

H. Dawson.—Doan's *Bible Myths* is, probably, the book you mean. It is published by the Truthseeker Co., New York.

T. C.—We quite agree that the sentence was a monstrous one. Four months' hard labour for a boy of sixteen seems a capital way of manufacturing a criminal.

R. Stirton.—Glad to know you think the *Freethinker* worthy of its best traditions.

B. Dunlop and H. Irving.—Next week.

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.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

Fifth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £263 8s. 10d. J. Higgins, £2 2s. W. Fitzpatrick, 10s. J. S. N. (Bedford), 10s. D. Richards, 2s. W. Milroy, 5s. J. Milroy, 5s. R. V., 2s. 6d. R. M., 2s. 6d. G. W. Ogilvie, £1 1s. A. J. Watson, 2s. 6d. C. Jortan, 1s. H. W. and E. B. Side, 10s. Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Rosetti, 10s. F. C. Wykes, 7s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Minett, £1. G. F. Shoults, £5. J. N. Williams, 1s. F. Gray, 2s. 6d. S. E., 2s. H. B. Harrison, 2s. 6d. W. Mather (second subscription), 10s. H. Dawson, 5s. E. E. Donat, 10s. R. R. Goodman, 2s. 6d. W. Lamb (Bedford), 5s. J. T. R., 2s. 6d. J. Blackhall, 2s. 6d. Joshua Ratcliffe, £1 S. E. Owen, £1 1s. F. C., 2s. 6d, George Brady, £2 2s. T. Johnson, 3s. R. Stirton and Friends (Dundee), £1 10s. G. Lunn, 2s. 6d. J. Robinson (fifth subscription), 1s. D. Woodstock, 5s. W. Mendez, 10s. J. Keily, 5s. "Ernest," 10s. Per Manchester Branch, N.S.S.—H. Black, 5s.; Mrs. Bayfield, 2s. 6d.; G. Brown, 1s. Total: £285 15s. 10d.

Chapman Cohen.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures this evening, October 14, in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. His subject is: "Why Men Believe in God, with Special Reference to Mr. H. G. Wells."

To-day (October 14) Mr. Lloyd lectures, afternoon and evening, in the Elysium, High Street, Swansea. This is Mr. Lloyd's first visit to Swansea as a Freethought speaker, and we hope to hear that he has had the audience he deserves. Freethinkers will do well to bring their Christian friends and acquaintances to the meetings. We venture to predict that they will be pleased they attended.

We have a whole batch of letters from soldiers awaiting notice, and while we cannot quote from all, we think our readers will be interested in the following. From a South African reader we get this:—

> I was born and brought up a Freethinker, so I suppose there is no particular credit due to me in that I am an Atheist. I have signed on on three separate occasions since the outbreak of the War. On the two first occasions there were no objections raised when I asked to affirm instead of taking the oath. But on the last occasion, at Potchefstroom, when they were filling in my attestation form, they asked the usual question, "What religion?" and when I said nil, the sergeant said I must have some religion or they wouldn't be able to accept me as a recruit. Thanks to the *Freethinker*, I knew my position exactly, and told him he couldn't possibly refuse me on such grounds. I was then taken before the C. O. of the regiment. He also was of the opinion that unless I took the oath I wasn't eligible as a recruit; but after I had explained matters to him, he had my papers filled in and sent me to the Staff-Colonel to be fixed up. The Colonel, who is a Roman Catholic, tried to bully me into changing my mind. He went so far as to suggest that I would be put on all sorts of unpleasant fatigues while the rest of the regiment were on Church Parade when I got over on this side. But I stuck to my guns and in the end I affirmed.
>
> I have since found that there is at least one avowed Atheist with us, and there are several who call themselves Agnostics, but they are all down as Church of England.
>
> I am, naturally, rather notorious in the regiment, and several pious gentlemen have made it their duty to try and convert me. But although not too well lettered, I have found that a good memory, combined with regular reading of the *Freethinker*, is all that is needed to squash all their arguments.

Pte. J. Scott writes:—

> Nothing cheered me up more in France than the *Freethinker*. I had six Freethinkers in my push in the last fight at Ypres. It is all rot about a religious revival after the War.

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> Men are more willing and ready to listen to Atheism than religion in France. I have been four times wounded, and been through most of the fighting, but I never experienced any fears about a future life, nor did I get hardened to the awful and hellish sights of war. The person who writes about the glory of war is a fool, or has some ulterior motive.

This correspondent points out what an important factor the weather is in this War, and also how frequently the British advance has been prevented, and the Germans favoured, by the weather. In Arras, "we had grand weather up to the morning of the battle, and then it rained all day. At night it snowed, and in the morning there were four inches of snow, and thousands of poor wounded lay out in it all night." Other instances of the same kind are given, and Pte. Scott concludes:—

> Now, both sides pray, and I suppose both believe in an answer to prayer. If I did believe in God, I should say he was certainly on the German side.

Which seems a not illogical conclusion. Indeed, some of our own clergy, it will be remembered, have dwelt on the way in which the weather has helped the Germans in order to reprove our sins, and have asserted that it was God's method of bringing us to a more religious frame of mind.

Mr. G. Brady writes:—

> I have great pleasure in enclosing two postal orders, value £2, being subscription to the Sustentation Fund (sounds rather "Free Kirky" to a Scotsman), and trust the amount, when realized, will prove a record. I cannot help thinking the *number* of contributors is very small, but probably that is accounted for by the sadly abnormal times. In conclusion, let me add my congratulations on the manner in which you are proving yourself a worthy successor to our late wise and valiant leader.

With regard to the latter part of the letter, we can only say we have done our best. As to the first part, we would remind our correspondent that all have not yet contributed who intend doing so. We have every confidence that the number will be materially increased, and the sum realized will go a good way towards meeting the loss during the present year.

Mr. E. B. Side writes on behalf of himself and brother, two members of a united freethinking family:—

> Your road has been all uphill, and sheer courage in what you know to be a righteous cause is taking you slowly but surely to the summit.
>
> If others could only imagine what is at the other side of that hill, then the milestones would present the appearance of a graveyard.
>
> I have sent many copies of the *Freethinker* to various military and naval depots during the War, and have received pleasing results from same.

H. Dawson sends the following reminder of our early days:—

> To the pale-faced, curly-headed youth who, years ago, "beneath the spreading chestnut tree" at Wood Green, faced a howling, half-demented Christian mob unmoved, and declared, "I came here to deliver an address on ——, and I am going to deliver it, with or without your sanction." And he delivered it, and many others; and has ever since, fine weather or storm, fought the same battle against the enemies of mankind, with the same conquering composure. I am just getting out of the results of a twelve months' ago accident, and can testify that in the months of grave danger I never for a moment had a doubt of the wisdom of my position as an Atheist. Please put the enclosed dollar to the Sustentation Fund, and accept thanks; and every good wish to you and yours in the almost herculean task of making our Society what it should and can be.

We are pleased to learn that the Birmingham experiment in the Repertory Theatre opened with a very successful meeting on Sunday last. Mr. Lloyd was the lecturer, and there was a good audience, and, we need hardly say, a good lecture. It is hoped that the meetings will be continued beyond the present course; and they will be, if local friends do their duty. The next meeting will be held on October 21.

The author of *A History of Penal Methods*, Mr. George Ives, M.A., whose valuable work was reviewed in these columns some few months ago, opens a discussion on "The Treatment of Crime" for the North London Branch this evening (Oct. 14). Mr. Ives is well qualified to speak on this subject, and should attract a large audience. For further particulars, see our Guide Notices.

We are asked to announce that the Whist Drive originally arranged by this Branch for members and friends for Wednesday, October 3, and postponed in consequence of their engagements clashing with those of the German air-raiders, will now be held on Wednesday, October 17, at 7 p.m. Tickets, price 1s., may be obtained from all Branch Secretaries and direct from Miss H. Lane, 29 Burton Street, W.C.1. For the information of the nervous, we may say the St. Pancras Reform Club, where the Drive will be held, has a concrete and commodious basement.

We were pleased to see in the local press an appreciative notice of Mr. S. M. Peacock, of South Shields, whose obituary appears in another column. Our acquaintance with Mr. Peacock goes back now about a quarter of a century, and we desire to take this opportunity of paying our tribute of respect to a brave and single-minded soldier in the Army of Freethought. All Freethinkers in South Shields looked upon him as their leader, and we never knew him as aught but worthy of their respect and confidence.

The Secretary of the South Shields Branch writes, that it was felt there remained so much that could not be said at the graveside of its former leader by those more or less intimately associated with him in his over thirty years' service to Secularism, a special meeting should be called to consider the above and other matters in connection with the movement locally. Hence a meeting is called for to-day, Sunday, October 14, in order to give those a chance who were unable, owing to the call of work or business, to attend the funeral.

We are asked to announce that the South London Branch inaugurates its winter meetings with a Social Evening on October 14, to be held in the Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W. The function commences at 7.30, and the nearest Tube station is Kennington Gate. The hall may also be reached by tram or 'bus.

The senior member for Northampton is Mr. C. A. McCurdy. The other day this gentleman visited the works of the the Integral Propellers Company, and, in introducing the M.P. to the workmen, the manager said that Mr. McCurdy represented a constituency which returned one of the greatest friends the working classes ever had. We can only hope that the present representative acts up to the example set by his great predecessor.

Our readers will be pleased to see the pen of "Abracadabra" once more active in these columns. Various causes—among them, we regret to say, ill-health—have prevented his writing of late; but in the future we hope to see his pen more regularly employed in the great war against superstition.

Death of S. M. Peacock.

Tyneside Freethinkers have lost a widely known and well-respected worker by the death of Samuel Morley Peacock, of South Shields. For very many years—dating back to the earlier Bradlaugh days—Mr. Peacock had been well known as a Militant Freethinker, and one who had also taken an active part in the public life of his adopted town. During the days of the old School Board he sat for many years on that body, and the respect in which he was generally held, in view of his active identification with Freethought propaganda—says much for the sterling worth of his character. Unlike

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many public men, his Freethought was an avowed part of his public life. At the beginning of his career he encountered a deal of prejudice, but his strength and independence gradually wore this down. Everybody knew him for what he was, and his efforts at personal propaganda were sustained and vigorous. His interest in the *Freethinker* and the cause it represented remained unweakened to the end.

The funeral took place on Saturday, October 6, at Harton Cemetery, in the presence of a large and representative gathering, which included the Mayor, Alderman Allen, a number of members of the Council, and representatives of other public bodies. A prior engagement prevented Mr. Cohen being present and conducting the service, or he would certainly have paid this tribute of respect to so old and esteemed a worker. In his absence the service was read by the Branch Secretary, Mr. R. Chapman, and a speech was made by Alderman John Taylor, ex-mayor, of South Shields, who dwelt specially upon Mr. Peacock's services in connection with the School Board, and his continuous and ungrudging labours in everything that concerned the school life of the town.

Singularly destitute of personal ambition, Samuel Morley Peacock played a valuable part in that movement of ideas which ultimately weighs heaviest in the world's affairs. His death has robbed Freethought of a staunch friend, and an indefatigable propagandist. The deepest sympathy will be felt by all with Mrs. Peacock, his constant and unfailing associate, in their long and happy married life.—C. C.

The Story of the Sugar Industry.

In 1850 the price of sugar in England was 7d. or 8d. a pound, and, as the years rolled by, it steadily fell to 1½d. or 2d. It was universally assumed that this commodity would never again become either scarce or dear. The consumption of sugar in our Isles and in the United States was, in 1913, per head of population, nearly three times that of France or Germany, while it completely dwarfed that of most other European countries. Italy's average consumption of a mere 6·7 per head was very different to the British consumption of 78·7 lb. per unit of population.

With the world in arms, the prices of most necessaries of life rapidly rose, and the grocers' shops have been besieged by the exasperated housewife in her frequently frustrated search for that now precious sugar which had long been so plentiful that its constant supply was taken for granted everywhere and practically by all.

Until sugar became almost unprocurable, few people realized its real value as an article of diet, or possessed any adequate idea of its importance as a preservative. Yet the use of sugar, like that of tea and coffee, is comparatively modern, and our rude forefathers had no direct sweetening substance save honey. The sugar, so plentiful and inexpensive, and of a quality so excellent, until the great catastrophe led to a scarcity which is almost a famine, is a striking example of what Sir William Tilden describes as "a practically pure chemical compound which serves as an important food-stuff, and is very rapidly assimilated when taken into the stomach."

Sugar is a common constituent of plants. It occurs in many of the grasses, notably in the sugar-cane, a gigantic grass, of which several varieties exist in a state of cultivation. Sugar is found in the sap of numerous forest trees; in various roots and seeds; in sweet fruits, and in the honey of flowers. Thousands of years ago the sugar cane was cultivated in India, and from that country the knowledge of sugar spread to adjacent lands. The classical writers, Herodotus, Strabo, and Seneca, among others, refer to sugar as "honey of canes," or "honey made with human hands." The Chinese admit their debt to ancient India for their acquaintance with the sugar-making art. Two passages in the Hebrew Bible prove that old Israel had heard of sugar canes. Its culture seems to have disappeared with the downfall of Pagan civilization in Europe, to reappear when the Arabs began to grow the cane in their Mediterranean colonies; and by the tenth century of our era the Moors had established their plantations in Spain. At a later date Egyptian cane sugar became an article of commerce which was shipped by the Venetian merchants to London, from which port English wool was sent in exchange.

After the discovery of America in the fifteenth century, the cane was grown and its juices elaborated into sugar in the Spanish and Portuguese settlements in the West Indies and Brazil. In 1563 that bold seaman, Hawkins, brought sugar from San Domingo to England, while our own planters were cultivating the cane in Barbadoes.

In addition to the cane, sugar-beet, sugar maple, and sorgum are grown for the sugar they yield. The cane flourishes best in warm, humid countries, where sea-breezes prevail, and in which there occur fair intervals of sunshine. In these the plant is extensively raised. The stem of the various varieties of sugar cane ranges from 6 feet to 14 feet in height. The cane is propagated by placing pieces of the stem in the soil, and the new plants arise from the buds which grow out of the stem. Once planted, the cane throws up from its underground "stoles" or roots new plants every season, sometimes for a score of years, when replanting becomes necessary. When ripe the rind of the cane is covered on its exterior with a waxy substance. The interior of the cane contains the cells holding the sugar juice, and there also are found long bundles of fibres whose function it is to send from the soil the nutriment and moisture essential to the growth and maturity of the plant. A most important office is served by the leaves which, in the presence of sun-light, absorb carbonic acid from the atmosphere. And it is this assimilation of carbon by the plant that, in combination with the water conveyed by the fibres, elaborates the invaluable compound which we term sugar.

In the full vigour of its growth the plant's stem from base to apex is adorned with huge tropical leaves, and the cane is crowned by a mass of verdure spread before the sun. When ripe the slender cane is richly stored with choice sugar. Harvesting is expeditiously conducted, for when the cane is cut down and the tops cast aside, it is loaded up on waggons and despatched without delay to the factory. When mature the sugar content demands prompt attention as it deteriorates very quickly. Primitive methods prevail in Formosa and elsewhere, but those growers who supply the world annually with its 7,000,000 tons of cane sugar utilize the resources of science in preparing their commodity for human consumption. The successful cane cultivator is now as much concerned in his tropical home with the problems of soil, moisture, fertilizers, and the chemical constituents of this or that variety of cane as his stern competitor the sugar beet grower in the temperate regions of the globe.

The East and West Indies, British Guiana, and Queensland are all noted for their cane sugar. During recent years, however, the beet sugar industry has proved a serious rival to that of the Indian planter.

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Curiously enough the rise of the beet trade was incidentally due to the Napoleonic campaigns. As a consequence of these wars Continental Europe was deprived of the West Indian product, and the several countries were driven to extract sugar from the beet which is so readily cultivated in Europe; Belgium, Austria, Hungary, Northern France, Southern Russia, and Germany all materially increased their acreage of sugar beet. In the British Isles the plant was not grown, although our climate is favourable to its culture. Owing to this and other circumstances, when the present War came we were practically dependent upon Germany, France, and the Netherlands for two-thirds of our imported raw sugar.

The Board of Trade returns for 1913 sufficiently indicate the vast imports of sugar into the United Kingdom in normal times. Apart from molasses, glucose, jams, confectionery, etc., nearly forty million hundredweight of sugar itself (loaf, crystal, and powdered) valued at £23,000,000 was imported into Britain.

Our best white sugar is mainly a mixture of cane and beet sugar which is chiefly manufactured for table use in Germany, the Low Countries, and Austria-Hungary, our leading sources of supply. There is no warranty for the prejudice against beet sugar which many still cherish. As Professor Tilden, the eminent chemist states:—

> Forty or more years ago there was substantial foundation for the prevalent objection to beet sugar which in those days retained.....a peculiar evil smell and an appreciable quantity of potassium chloride by which its sweetening power was sensibly diminished. With the removal of these impurities by the processes of refining, sugar from whatever source it is derived has, like every other definite chemical compound, specific properties of its own by which it is always distinguished from every other chemical compound. Hence until it has been shown that sugar derived from beet differs from sugar obtained from the cane in crystalline form, in its action on polarized light, in solubility in water and sweetening power.....there is no justification for the suspicion that they are not identical" (*Chemical Discovery and Invention in the Twentieth Century*, p. 412, 1916).

It is interesting to observe the profound changes which have occurred in the course of the evolution of the modern sugar industry. Sixty years since London was our chief sugar centre. Half our imports were unloaded on the Thames, the other half being distributed on the Clyde, in Liverpool, Bristol, and other ports. In 1860 nearly all imported sugar arrived in a raw state, and the later refining processes were conducted in this country. In 1900, 63 per cent. of the commodity came to us fully prepared for use. The total imports of sugar were, in 1860, the raw article, 434,776 tons; refined 13,303. Forty years afterwards imported raw sugar had risen to 661,747 tons, while foreign refined sugar had bounded from 13,000 to nearly one million tons.

These remarkable changes are explained by the fact that in 1860 our sugar was mainly imported from British possessions, notably the West Indies, Mauritius, and India. The other chief sources of supply were the Spanish Indies, Manilla, and Brazil. In those days the Metropolis was the principal centre of the then very important sugar refining industry, which manufactured nearly all the loaf sugar consumed in Britain. The "sugar houses" formed the staple industry of the East End of London. In the words of George Martineau:—

> From Whitechapel eastward to Mile End, and southward through St. George's-in-the-East to the gates of London Docks, their chimneys were to be seen on all hands. The London Docks and the East and West India Docks were full of raw sugar destined for these various refineries.

Great waggons drawn by fine horses, each loaded with six hogsheads—about five tons of sugar—largely from Jamaica, rolled near the Jamaica Road to the score of busy refineries of the district, while smaller vehicles were actively occupied in delivering the finished commodity destined for the use of the consumer.

Better machinery and improved methods of manufacture then led to a great advance in the art of sugar refining on the banks of the Clyde. From 1854 to 1880 the total production of refined sugar at Greenock and Glasgow increased more than fivefold. A period of stagnation then supervened, and then a rapid decline set in. Despite the enormously increased consumption of sugar, the business of the Clyde refiners had dwindled in the period 1897-1900 to about half that of the 'eighties.

Bristol's once world-famous sugar refineries have all passed away. The leading port for the Brazilian trade, Liverpool, was long celebrated for its sugar and its syrup, but its former glories as a sugar centre have become dimmed. Manchester had at the head of its once noted refinery the versatile Alfred Fryer, the inventor of Fryer's concretor and the recognized spokesman of the British refiners in their conflicts with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Half a century ago there were twenty refineries in London, and now two alone survive. After the closure of Duncan's great factories at Clyde wharf at the London Victoria Docks in 1886, another remarkable man arose in the person of Henry Tate, who seized the occasion to place cube sugar on the market, and this he accomplished with triumphant success.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

The Myth of God.

II.

(Concluded from p. 637.)

It is affirmed by theologians that in the existence of the universe we have a presupposition of the existence of a being who is the necessary basis and cause of the universe. Nothing with which we are acquainted through the study of natural phenomena is independent in its existence; everything is at all points dependent upon something else. This being so, the universe is not made up of self-subsistent parts. Therefore the universe, as a whole, is not self-subsistent. Everything around us is in a state of fluctuation; we see nothing that is permanent and so constituted that it can be relied upon to continue in existence throughout externity, and act as basis for the existence of other parts of the universe. But, continues the theologian, the human mind, by its very nature, is not capable of believing that there is no necessary being existing as a foundation for all the interdependent parts of the universe of which we have knowledge. The mind must consequently draw the inference that there is a self-existent being which is the everlasting basis of the universe. That is, there must be something upon which all things else can depend, or the human mind can only conceive of everything as in a state of chaos.

Such is the theological argument. It is admitted, however, that this line of argument is not strong enough of itself to prove that there is a God in the full religious sense of the term. Still, when the theologian has proved to his own satisfaction that we cannot escape the conclusion that the existence of many interdependent beings implies the existence of a self-subsistent being, and when

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he has assumed that the self-subsistent being must be outside of the universe, the first step towards creating a God of a highly abstract type has been taken.

It is true that, by a process of strictly logical thought, the human mind works its way back to the idea that the transitory parts of the universe had their origin in something that is by nature self-existent. Nevertheless the religious use of the argument is unwarranted by facts.

The fallacy of the argument, as developed by the theologians, lies in the assumption that the universe cannot be self-existent, and, therefore, we must seek for its origin in some being apart from itself. This, however, is not necessary. The fact that the various parts of the universe, as seen by us, are not permanent and self-existent, is no proof that the universe as a whole, in its fundamental reality, is not self-existent and eternal. The individual parts of the universe, which we distinguish as being separate from and yet dependent upon each other, and which appear to be subject to destruction, are only so with regard to form. The various forms which the underlying reality or real substance of the universe takes on are transitory; but it must be remembered that a change of form is not a destruction of reality beyond that of form. This being so, the term "universe" stands for the sum-total of an indestructible reality, which is eternally in motion and is perpetually taking on new forms. And until it is proved that there was a time when the substance of which the universe consists was not in existence, or, if in existence, was not in motion and ever changing its forms of manifestation, it is not necessary to assume that there is a being of which we can speak as the cause and basis of the existence of the universe. If, as far as we are able to ascertain, indestructibility is at present the inherent nature of the fundamental substance of the universe; if only the forms under which things appear can be destroyed; and if we have no evidence of the possible non-existence of the universe, then it is unreasonable to assume that the universe was created. Whatever can be created can also be destroyed, and we are contradicting the theory of the indestructibility of matter and motion when we affirm that the existence of the universe was caused by some eternal being distinct from the universe. The ideas of the indestructibility of matter and motion cannot be reconciled with the idea of a being that is the cause of all things. If we accept the indestructibility of matter and motion as facts, they destroy the idea that there was a time when matter and motion were not, and this latter idea is essential to the idea of a creator.

Perhaps the most popular of the arguments put forward in support of belief in the existence of a Divine Creator is the Design Argument, now so often tricked out in an evolutionary guise. It may be summarized thus: In organisms we see an adaptation of means to ends, just the same as in human art. The variations in organisms are not indefinite; they occur in the direction of producing given organisms of a higher order. As one theologian puts it, an ear does not appear where an eye has begun to develop, because a ground plan is adhered to in the midst of all variations. The whole evolution of the universe gives evidence of order, plan, harmony, and beauty; and this leads us to conclude that there is a divine mind at work in the universe.....

Any attempt to draw an analogy between design in human art and design in Nature, for the purpose of proving a designer of Nature to be in existence, must be inaccurate. In the case of human art, there is ample opportunity for someone to see not only the art, which gives evidence of the existence of a designer, but also the designer himself. But we know of no possibility of man being able to go to the back of Nature in order to look at some God employed at the task of executing his designs. Until this can be done, the analogy is false. We know that men make things according to design, and therefore we are justified in concluding that a designer has been at work whenever we see something like the things which we know men design and make—that is, unless we have evidence to the contrary. But we do not know what a god would be likely to make, so we are not justified in concluding that Nature has a god for its author because we see many things that *seem* to have come into being according to a plan. That certain causes have worked towards the production of a particular effect must not be taken as evidence of design unless the probabilities of design being necessary are greater than the contrary, or unless it is possible to produce the designer. Given a quantity of matter in a state of motion, and *something* must result; but it is illogical to infer that there is a mind directing the movements of the matter, because every atom of it has contributed its quota towards bringing about the result.

Not infrequently human beings are considered to be the chief causes of events which they did not design. When intending to secure peace, a statesman may, by an unfortunate remark, bring about war. A careless person, without designing it, may set a building on fire by throwing down a lighted match. Without planning to do it, a business man may ruin himself by a single speculation. Yet in these cases there may be at first sight an appearance of design; but experience has taught us that results are not always to be relied upon to indicate whether they were designed or not.

As to Dr. Orr's remark that an ear does not come where an eye has begun to develop, and that a ground plan is adhered to in the midst of all variations, one would like to ask the learned theologian whether a ground plan is adhered to when an eye incapable of seeing is produced, and, if so, wherein lies the wisdom of his divine and all-wise Designer? That ears should not develop where eyes have begun to grow is, no doubt, a very useful arrangement; at least, some of us would look rather funny if ears did develop in so capricious a manner.

It is sometimes argued that the presence of reason in man, and in Nature at large, bespeaks the existence of an absolute thinker, who is the fountain from which all thought flows. But there can be no absolute thinker in a universe where there are many thinkers, because the existence of more than one thinker implies relativity. And with regard to reason in man, and in the order of things around us, we must note that at best man's reason is not perfect, but is continually struggling after accuracy of thought, and is comparatively small when placed in contrast to the vast amount of unreason in humanity; while we too often suffer from the habit of projecting our own reason into Nature around us, and then imagining that we see things developing according to a very rational method. But the method of which we are often conscious is in our own minds, and is reasonable in proportion to the degree of reasonableness of our own thought. A person with a distorted mind may see in Nature around him nothing but chaos, while a man of sound mind sees a sequence of events, which he may call reasonable according to his conception of what constitutes rationality.

Theologians are not satisfied with a wise and powerful God; they desire one who is moral, and able to take care of humanity in a fatherly way. The desire is laudable enough, but it increases the theologian's difficulties. The presence of conscience as man's indwelling representative of a divine being who is entitled to impose his will upon us, is adduced as evidence that the universe is evolved on moral lines, and, therefore, must be the product of a moral God. By the assumption that

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conscience is the representative of a God, a halo of mysticism and mystification is thrown around an otherwise harmless word. Conscience, which is nothing more than a feeling that we ought to do what we believe to be right, and ought not to do what we believe to be wrong, has developed with human society. As men have experienced pain and pleasure, and realized that they do not like the one, but desire the other, they have developed a feeling that they ought not to treat their fellows so as to cause them pain, while they ought to try to give them pleasure, if they themselves desire their fellows to avoid giving them pain, and to act so as to give them pleasure. Actions causing pleasure came to be acknowledged as duties, and actions causing avoidable pain were looked upon as the opposite to duty. In this way conscience developed, as reason discovered what was right and what was wrong, and classified our actions accordingly. In some men, conscience, or the sense of doing right and avoiding wrongdoing, developed until it became imperative, or nearly so. But in others it evolved to a lesser degree of authority, and throughout the world the power of conscience may be observed to vary with different individuals, and in many persons seems scarcely to exist. Not only so; but many of us need only to reflect on our past experience to discover that our own conscience is less imperative when we are about to do one kind of wrong than when we are about to do another. In some people, conscience is very imperative when they would stay away from church; but in the same persons it is not imperative when they wish to pervert the truth.

The fatherhood of God is a mere fiction in face of the misery, poverty, disease, injustice, and all kinds of suffering which are in this sorrow-stricken world. The coming into the world of millions of people who will never be adequately provided for; the ignorance of millions who should be educated, and who desire to be educated: the slow and often unnecessarily painful process of both individual and social development; the wreck of empires when a high, though as yet imperfect, stage of civilization has been reached, are facts which indisputably contradict the doctrine of the fatherhood of God.

In spite of all that may be said against the idea of God as an explanation of the universe, it is still put forward as the best working hypothesis for theological thought, or as an adequate explanation of philosophical and religious problems. But the idea of God is mythical, as we are unable to discover an objective reality corresponding to the idea; and so far as our knowledge of the universe goes, the idea of God is an unnecessary hypothesis, which adds to the difficulty of our problems, the solution of which can only be attained by the exercise of unfettered reason, to which the God of modern theology is as much a myth as any of the gods of the ancients.

E. Egerton Stafford.

Correspondence.

ATHEIST OR AGNOSTIC?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—With reference to the recent correspondence on the above subject, it may be of interest to see Coleridge's opinion:—

> Little do these men know what atheism is. Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind, or goodness of heart, to be an Atheist.

In this connection, the old philosophical question seems pertinent:—

> Is the difference between a difference in kind and a difference in degree, in itself, a difference in kind, or a difference in degree?

E. B.

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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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INDOOR.

Mr. A. D. Howell Smith's Discussion Class (N. S. S. Office 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Oct. 19, at 7.30.

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7, George Ives, M.A., F.Z.S., "The Treatment of Crime." Open debate.—Wednesday, Oct. 17, at 7, Whist Drive.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W.): 7, Social. Music, singing, and addresses.

West Central Hall (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.30, Monsieur M. Deshumbert, "Our Ideal" (in French).

OUTDOOR.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Ratcliffe, and Kells.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Leicester (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, C. Cohen, "Why Men Believe in God." With special reference to H. G. Wells.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): 7, J. Hammond, "Secularism: its Principles and Objects."

South Shields Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, 2nd floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, "Secularism and Secularists." With special reference to the late Mr. S. M. Peacock.

Swansea and District Branch N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, "Elysium," High Street): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Self-Reliance versus Trust in God"; 7, "From Pulpit to Secular Platform."

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Views and Opinions.

The War and a Future Life.

Has the War really intensified the interest people feel in the question of a future life? For our own part we see no reason why it should have had this effect, and certainly no evidence of it is observable. Some of those who have always believed in a future life may have more energetically asserted their conviction, but those who did not are where they were. Naturally, the clergy, like the rest of the army of profiteers, do their best to exploit the War. For some time after the War began they talked about the revival of religion, and this was kept up until the presence of evidence to the contrary became too strong for even the "Black Army" to resist. Again, on the face of it, there is no reason why the War should excite a belief in a future life. Death is not peculiar to war time—there are only more deaths in a given period. And death must always be an individual matter, bringing its keenest sorrow to individual circles. Finally, we have the consideration that there is, so to speak, a saturation point in human emotion. And the War has lasted so long, the death roll has been so gigantic, that the edge of feeling has been blunted. We are all more callous to death than we were. One does not start or shriek in the presence of the usual, and death is now an everyday affair to all.

* * *

Spiritualism and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The other day Sir Arthur Conan Doyle delivered an address before the Eastbrook Brotherhood, Bradford, and in dealing with his belief in Spiritualism he said:—

> When the War came it brought earnestness unto all our souls, and made us look more closely at our own beliefs and reassess their values. In the presence of an agonized world, hearing every day of the deaths of the flower of our race in the first promise of their unfulfilled youth, seeing around us wives and mothers who had no clear conception whither their loved ones had gone. I seemed suddenly to see that this subject with which I had so long dallied, was not merely a force outside the rules of science but that it was really.....a breaking down of the walls between two worlds.....The objective side of it ceased to interest me, for having made up my mind that it was true, there was an end of the matter. A new revelation seemed to me to be in course of delivery to the human race.

We may well be excused preferring Conan Doyle, the novelist, to Conan Doyle, the philosopher, for it appears from this that Sir Arthur's convictions as to the truth of Spiritualism is little more than a sudden yielding to emotional tension. And there is a certain ingenuousness in the confession that the objective side of the phenomena ceased to interest him, seeing that it is the objective aspect that is of crucial importance. For if the phenomena is subjective, all question of fraud might be set on one side; it would still leave Spiritualism unproven. True, Sir Arthur remarks later, that the "physical phenomena" "had been proved up to the hilt for all who cared to examine the evidence," but to that one can enter a flat contradiction. Many people have examined the evidence and found it quite inconclusive. The same evidence, produced before the same audience, has left some entirely sceptical, and even antagonistic. And this represents a clear line of demarcation between the evidence for Spiritualism and normal scientific proof. A scientific demonstration duly and properly carried out is conclusive to all normal minds. It is a peculiarity of the evidence for Spiritualism that while it convinces one here and there, it leaves the majority as they were.

* * *

Religion and Death.

It has been part of the talk of the pulpit since the War opened that our soldiers are nerved to face death by their belief in God and a future life, and that those who remain are consoled for the loss of those dear to them by the belief in a continued existence elsewhere. One regrets to find Sir Arthur Conan Doyle descending to the same kind of chatter. For both statements are essentially untrue. It has been our lot—as it has doubtless been the lot of others—to come into contact with both Freethinkers and Christians whose sons—sometimes an only son, and sometimes an only child—were reported killed. We have tried, honestly tried, to detect a difference in these parents that could be attributed to their views on religion, and have been unable to do so. Differences there have been; but these are all explainable in terms of temperament of character, of training. The religious ones have used a religious formula in expressing their feelings, as one might expect; the non-religious have expressed their feelings in another way. But apart from these superficial and accidental differences, there was a substantial and deeply underlying identity. The religious belief has not consoled; the absence of it has not led to undue or intensified depression. Indeed, those who looked below the surface could detect an underlying community of heartfelt sorrow in the presence of an irrecoverable loss. And well it is that it should be so. It is well that in the face of so great and universal a fact as death, mankind should realize its own unity, even though it be but a momentary

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glimpse seen through tear-dimmed eyes over an open grave.

* * *

Facing Death.

And of those who actually face death, whether in civil life or in the fighting line, what is to be said? Is there any difference here? Those who are in the fighting line will best appreciate the absurdity of the question. The soldier, like the civilian, dies as he has lived, and the thought of a future life troubles him not at all. It is not that they all have definite opinions on the subject; they have not. It is simply that the future life does not enter into their calculations. Here, for example, is a letter published in the *Spectator* of a recent date. It is written by a boy who was killed on his twenty-first birthday:—

> My dear Dad,—This letter is being written on the eve of our "going over the top" in a big attack. It is only because I know by this time what are the odds against one's returning unhurt that I write it. It will only be sent in the event of my being killed in action. You, I know, my dear Dad, will bear the shock as bravely as you have always borne the strain of my being out here. Yet I should like, if possible, to help you to carry on with as stout a heart as I hope to jump "the bags." I believe I have told you before that I do not fear death itself; the "Beyond" has no terrors for me. I am quite content to die for the cause for which I have given up nearly three years of my life, and I only hope that I may meet death with as brave a front as I have seen other men do before. My one regret is that the opportunity has been denied me to repay you to the best of my ability for the lavish kindness and devotedness which you have always shown me.

Now, that is not what would be called a religious letter; but it is better—it is a manly letter. It is written by one who is resolved to do his duty as he sees it. He is more concerned for the sorrow his death will cause to those he leaves than he is about his own fate. And the man is built of poor stuff indeed who would not rather see his fellow man facing death in this spirit than with his mouth filled with the traditional jargon of religion.

* * *

Affection and the Grave.

We detest, far more than we can express in mere words, this exploitation of a great human sorrow in the interest of this or that particular superstition. The endeavour to minister to a mind distressed, we can all, we hope, understand and appreciate. The comfort that may be derived from a friendly hand-clasp or from human association, we all admit. But to claim that the inculcation of a belief in a future life dulls the edge of grief, or reconciles a parent to the death of a child, is sheer cant. It has no such effect; it never has had any such effect; it would not be well that it should have such an effect. Human affection is centred as much on the fact of death as on the fact of life. The grave that takes, gives; and human mortality is the ultimate condition of human love. And I am certain that even though men and women, without exception, believed in a future life, the main currents of human joy and sorrow would remain the same. It is this world that remains dominant. And while we shall, we hope, never see the death of our friends without sorrow, we may all learn to face death in their case and our own without fear.

Chapman Cohen.

We hear much of martyrs and confessors—of those who were slain by the sword or consumed in the fire; but we know little of that still larger number who by the mere threat of persecution have been driven into an outward abandonment of their real opinions, and who thus forced into an apostasy the heart abhors, have passed the remainder of their life in the practice of a constant and humiliating hypocrisy.—*T. H. Buckle.*

One Horizon, or Two?

The Rev. Professor W. M. Clow, D.D., was for some years a regular contributor to the *British Weekly*, and is now a writer in *The Life of Faith*. He is an exceedingly orthodox divine who avails himself of every opportunity to defend the faith once delivered to the saints. In an article, entitled "Spiritual Issues in the Light of the War," which appeared in *The Life of Faith* for September 26, he admits that "this world-wide War is not only raising questions which trouble our minds and vex our hearts," but is also "setting the things which have been most surely believed on their trial." Like all his brethren, he feels quite sure that the ultimate effect of the War on religion will be in every sense beneficial. Already "it is opening men's eyes to the value and the power of the solemn certainties of the Christian faith." We are assured that "the Christian certainties are being purged from the alloy which trivial interpretations have mingled with them, and the pure gold of the truth in Jesus is shining out before men's eyes." Many chaplains at the Front, and not a few clergymen at home, find no justification for Dr. Clow's optimistic conclusions. Indeed, the Professor contradicts himself in the very article just mentioned. He says:—

> This War, with its merciless cruelties, its coarse passions, its callous wrongs, and its pitiful hypocrisies, is the handwriting on the broad page of history which proclaims that men have ceased to live in the fear of God.

What about "the Christian doctrine that every man, as a spiritual being and a child of God, has two horizons?" It is probably true that to such a doctrine "the whole New Testament bears witness," and that Paul recognizes its truth and sums it up when he speaks of "things seen and temporal," and "things unseen and eternal"; but the fact remains that the majority of mankind live with only one horizon, and are quite content. Professor Clow cannot close his eyes to the truth that—

> To-day the sea of faith which was once at the full is now
> Retreating to the breath
> Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
> And naked shingles of the world.

For this serious decline of faith the Professor assigns three causes, namely, our over-absorption in this present world, the haze which has fallen upon the great certainties, and the failure of the witness of believers, the chief of which is the last. We are confidently assured that "if Christian men and women were living supernatural lives no man would doubt the supernatural." As a matter of fact, no human being has ever lived such a life. Christians profess to have been supernaturally born the moment they gave their hearts to Christ; but not one of them has ever shown the least evidence of such a birth. It is in their professions alone that they are superior to other people. To talk of the failure of their witness is, therefore, sheer folly, for they cannot bear witness to that of which they have no experience. "We have but faith," says Tennyson; "we cannot know"; and everybody is aware that the irresistible tendency of faith is to decay. Even a veteran like Dr. Clifford recently confessed that to believe is the most difficult task in the world. Even clergymen often complain that, in spite of never-ceasing prayer, doubt assails them again and again, for which they hold the Devil responsible. Poor old Devil must have an extremely broad back to bear all the blame heaped upon it; but the truth is that nothing is more natural than to doubt the supernatural. The haze spoken of by Dr. Clow rests, not upon the supernatural, but upon the belief in it, the

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supernatural being, not a thing that exists, but a thing imagined; not an object of knowledge, but of faith.

Dr. Clow repeatedly refers to the Christian certainties, or the solemn certainties of the Christian faith. In reality there are no such certainties. Nothing is certain except the world in which we live. In Browning's poems we meet characters who are very sure of God and their own souls; but we have it on the authority of his intimate friend, Mrs. Sutherland Orr, that Browning himself was a thoroughgoing Agnostic, who professed to know nothing of any supernatural certainties. Dr. Clow alludes to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, of which he says:—

> The reader will remember that when he had closed the volumes of that marvellous history, where the very thought of God has been stubbornly excluded, the spiritual world had passed almost out of sight. The reader had become so engrossed by the splendid pageant of history, with its record of the proud ambitions of emperors, the achievements of statesmen, the tramp of armies, and all the lustre of those famous centuries, that God and heaven and the love of Christ had become a fading dream. In this time we are all absorbed by this present world. Never was it more interesting, more fascinating, more engrossing.

The Professor has not the hardihood to declare that Gibbon's history is inaccurate, or that its record of the ambitions, motives, achievements, and failures of men and women is not reliable; but he forgets that there was nothing in the falling empire that reflected credit on the justice and goodness of God, or upon the cleansing love of Christ. Does Dr. Clow really see much lustre or splendour in those dark centuries covered by Gibbon's history? Whatever God may be to the imagination of zealous Christians, it is incontrovertible that God has never been active in history, so that Gibbon was perfectly justified in ignoring him.

The Professor affirms that with most people faith is either an inheritance or a contagion. We are surprised that a scholarly man should fall into the error of regarding religion as an inheritance. Religion is no more inheritable than learning or carpentry. In no sense whatever can it be pronounced a legacy. A sire cannot bequeath his faith to his son, as he can a sum of money or a family heirloom. And yet Dr. Clow, ignoring or misrepresenting the great law of heredity, tells us again and again that there is a faith which is merely an inheritance, and that it is of but very little use. That religion is a contagion is beyond all doubt. Contagion means the communication of disease from person to person by contact, direct or indirect. In the overwhelming majority of cases the contagion occurs in early childhood, the agents being parents and teachers. Like many other diseases, the natural tendency of religion is to cure itself out of existence. Experience shows clearly how supremely difficult it is to prevent the faith from working itself out of a child's mind. Most of us retain vivid recollections of supperless nights as punishment for religious forgetfulness. Religion was not congenial to us; our very constitution rebelled against it, and often effected its ejection. Parents, Sunday-school teachers, and clergymen worked hard to prevent the religious virus from oozing out of us; and in numerous instances their efforts were defeated by purely natural causes. Religion is really a child's complaint, and those who escape it in childhood seldom take it after they have reached years of intelligence. Moreover, even those who remain religious in mature life know full well how often their nature revolts against the habit of prayer and so-called communion with God. Dr. Clow himself says:—

> The faith in the unseen is like a fire which burns low, a tide whose waters ebb, a light whose shining grows dim. There is needed, for every period of life as our years advance, *a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit*. We are all familiar with those times which may last for years, when the things once surely believed, the great and solemn certainties, seem to pale, and we are in danger of living with one horizon. This baptism may be ours almost for the asking. It cannot be ours unless we ask.

That extract supports our contention that the belief in the supernatural is foreign to our nature, that religion is a disease which our constitution is ever trying to throw off, and that if we are true to ourselves we will have nothing to do with horizon number two. One horizon at a time is sufficient. This world is all we need, and more than many of us are able to put to the best advantage. Dr. Clow gives his whole case away when he states that the Holy Spirit will do nothing unless he is asked, and that we must become what we ought to be before we are entitled to ask him. In reality, we must be our own saviours while giving God all the credit and glory.

J. T. Lloyd.

Swinburne's Literary Father.

> The stormy sophist with his mouth of thunder,
> Clothed with loud words and mantled in the might
> Of darkness and magnificence of night.—*Swinburne.*

Thackeray, in the beginning of his famous lectures on the "The Four Georges," makes affectionate mention of an old friend whose life extended back into the eighteenth century. "I often thought," he says, "as I took my kind old friend's hand, how, with it, I held on to the old society." Even such a link with the past is Walter Savage Landor, whose virile writings bridge the gulf between great Freethinkers at the commencement and the end of the nineteenth century.

Shelley, who died whilst the century was yet young, was an enthusiastic admirer of Landor; and Swinburne, the most golden-voiced of our recent poets, sat at Landor's feet and found inspiration in his wisdom. How lovingly Swinburne refers to the elder singer:—

> I found him whom I shall not find
> Till all grief end,
> In holiest age our mightiest mind,
> Father and friend.

Nor was this a mere tribute of affection. Landor cast the spell of genius upon all who came near him. Robert Southey, who had so many opportunities of judging, has left a magnificent tribute to his memory. De Quincey, Dickens, Emerson, and Charles Lamb have all combined in their various ways to render affectionate tribute to that "deep-mouthed Boetian," as Byron called him. Robert Browning dedicated his *Luria* to Landor. It is given to few to inspire such love among friends, or fear among enemies. Carlyle, visiting him in old age, found him "stirring company; a proud, irascible, trenchant, yet generous, veracious, and very dignified old man; quite a ducal or royal man in the temper of him."

Landor's literary activity extended over seventy years. He was a poet embodying revolutionary aspirations in classic language. He was a literary dramatist of great power, and, above all, he was a critic in the widest sense of that much abused word. The *Imaginary Conversations*, on which competent judges have bestowed unstinted praise, is his masterpiece. There is nothing like it in the range of English literature. It is a great panorama of historic persons, and includes such famous characters as Plato, in far-off Greece, to our own Porson; Hannibal, of old-world Carthage, to David Hume; Seneca to his own friend, Robert Southey. He has painted them all with masterly touches; kings, and greater than kings, statesmen and fair ladies, philosophers and prelates,

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writers and scientists, of all ages and of all types. Epicurus discusses philosophy in his garden; Montaigne smiles at the worthy Scaliger; Melancthon reproves Calvin.

How perfectly, too, has Landor caught the relation of the French Court and the great lying Church in the bitterly ironic conversation between Louis XIV. and Pere La Chaise, when the monarch confesses the most heinous crimes and the courtly and obsequious confessor imposes the most trifling penances. Scene succeeds scene, each richer and fuller than its predecessor, supplementing one another, and all go to make a magnificent picture of "life, like a dome of many-coloured glass."

When Landor is at his best, not many are so perfect as he. There are few things more pathetic than his portrait of the unhappy Anne Boleyn. He represents the pious and hypocritical Henry coming disguised to see Anne in the condemned cell. Very touchingly does he express her womanly desire to see her child, "Could I but kiss her once again, it would comfort my heart or break it."

For long Landor's work was "caviare to the general." His masterpiece was venomously and ignorantly described as "the adventures of seven volumes, which are seven valleys of dry bones." This lack of contemporary appreciation is the more remarkable because Landor was a real and remarkable genius. In nearly every page of his writing there is high thinking and rare eloquence. Indeed, a well-edited selection of his works would be one of the most beautiful books in the language. Although Landor addressed a small audience while he lived, he looked confidently to the future; "I shall dine late; but the drawing-room will be well-lighted, the guests few and select."

The chief of Landor's other books is undoubtedly *Pericles and Aspasia*. Another of his works, *The Citation and Examination of William Shakespeare for Deer-Stealing*, evoked Charles Lamb's happy epigram that it could only have been written by "the man who did write it, or he of whom it was written." Landor's poetry is not bulky in quantity, for few poets have won such recognition with such a small nosegay of verse. The exquisite lines on *Rose Aylmer* have found their way into many anthologies and many hearts, while the sympathetic lines on the death of Charles Lamb are an exquisite tribute to a splendid genius and an heroic man. The single stanza, in his own inimitable manner, prefixed to one of his last books, epitomizes his life and aims in four lines:—

> I strove with none, for none was worth my strife.
> Nature I loved; and next to Nature, Art;
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

For those who care for concentration and restraint in literature, Landor's writings are full of delight. As a man he was dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, the love of love. Withal, he was a typical Englishman, with an appetite for the heroic. He showed this when, on Napoleon's invasion of Spain, he went over, and, with his own energy and money, raised a regiment, with whom he marched to the seat of war. A man of letters, he was also a man of action.

Landor has been called a grand old Pagan, and his sympathies were always secular rather than religious. The eternal arrogance of priests always roused his opposition, and he never forgot Milton's advice that "Presbyter is priest writ large." There are many sceptical thrusts in his writings. Writing of the Bible, he makes Melancthon say of Calvin:—

> The book of good news, under your interpretation, tells people not only that they may go and be damned, but, unless they are lucky, they must inevitably.

And, again, referring to religious persecution:—

> The unsoundness of doctrine is not cut off nor cauterised; the professor is. The head falls on the scaffold, or fire surrounds the stake, because a doctrine is bloodless and incombustible. Fierce, outrageous animals, for want of the man who has escaped them, lacerate and trample his cloak or bonnet. This, although the work of brutes, is not half so brutal as the practice of theologians, seizing the man himself, instead of bonnet or cloak.

In another page he returns to the attack:—

> There is scarcely a text in the Holy Scriptures to which there is not an opposite text, written in characters equally large and legible; and there has usually been a sword laid upon each.

He has some sly hits at spiritual intoxication:—

> At last the zealot is so infatuated by the serious mockeries he imitates and repeats that he really takes his own voice for God's. Is it not wonderful that the words of eternal life should have hitherto produced only eternal litigation?

One of his "conversations" closes with the magnificent words: "There is nothing on earth divine besides humanity," and that was the keynote of his writings from the time when, at college, he was dubbed "a mad Jacobin," until his death, when he had made an imperishable name for himself. A Warwickshire man, he was cradled in the same county as Shakespeare, and there was something of "the Master" in Landor's genius. Carlyle said finely of one of Landor's best literary efforts, published when the "old lion" was over eighty years of age: "The sound of it is like the ring of Roman swords on the helmets of barbarians. The unsubduable old Roman!"

The last years of Landor's stormy life were spent in peace. On reading of Algernon Swinburne's visit to the old man shortly before his death, one is reminded of Turner's supreme picture, "The Fighting Temeraire," where the old battleship is being towed to her last berth, and transfigured by the last glance of day's expiring glory. The symbolism of that great painting is exalted in the harmony between the memories of brave old Landor and his abiding quiet, for whom for ever "All winds are quiet as the sun, all waters as the shore."

Mimnermus.

The Enigma of Death: A Solution.

Not very long ago, a friend who takes a great interest in Spiritualism sent me an article bearing the above title, written by Mr. J. J. Morse, the editor of *The Two Worlds*, which has been reprinted in pamphlet form. It is apparently an attempt to prove the survival of the soul after death on grounds quite apart from Spiritualism. As readers will doubtless perceive by the extracts here given, it is a chapter based upon big assumptions, and, as such, does not require much comment. I give all the main points.

> The torn and mangled bodies of men strew the blood-stained fields, and science has been prostituted to serve the most appalling methods of effecting separation between spirits and their habiliments of flesh (p. 1).

Here is the first big assumption, the object of the pamphlet being to show that the so-called "spirits" could separate from "their habiliments of flesh."

> Can we find the reason for the enigma death in the living organism?.....If we can find in the thing that IS the evidence of the thing THAT IS TO BE, then the enigma is solvable (p. 5).

Here, again, is the assumption of a soul or spirit that will survive the death of the body. Needless to say, we

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have no evidence of the existence of such a "thing" in the body.

> Is the dissolution of the body synchronous with the dissipating of that which we call self-consciousness. If the latter is *not* the case, by what means is self-consciousness continued after bodily death? (p. 7).

Here is another tacit assumption, and it is made without evidence of any kind that self-consciousness *can* survive the death of the body. It rests with those who assert that self-consciousness can survive to adduce some evidence in support of that assertion, or in corroboration of the belief.

> Is it conceivable that all this vast expenditure of time and energy on the part of nature in the making of a man has only resulted in the production of a mannikin to shuffle across the stage for threescore years and ten, and then at the end to be "cast as rubbish to the void"? If so, our man is but a mannikin, who jabbers and struts a space, and then falls to pieces (p. 8).

Just so; but is it seemly to speak in this way of rational men who know perfectly well that cosmic evolution in the past was not carried on for "the making of man," though the advent of the animal kingdom happened to be one of the results?

> My thought is on something we call energy, but which to my mind may more suitably be called God, and it is because of my belief in the inextinguishable nature of this, may I call it, Divine energy, that I hold not only that the human is not the limits for the expression of that energy, nor either the so-called material universe, that I claim that our survival of bodily death is an inevitable sequence of the mighty processes that have resulted in bringing man upon the scene (p. 9).

This is rather a long sentence, and somewhat mixed; but if Mr. Morse elects to call the energy in Nature "God" and "Divine," he is, of course, at perfect liberty to do so. This change of name, however, does not alter the character of the energy in any part of the Universe; neither does it give anything supposed to reside in the body—the "soul" or "spirit," for instance—the power to live after death. Even the claim that this survival is "inevitable" does not affect the matter in the least.

> Is this life a rudimentary state preceding further and higher stages of personal being? If so, the enigma of death is resolvable. If not, then death is dying in very truth (p. 10).

Here I would suggest that Mr. Morse should get on with his proof of immortality, and not ask so many foolish questions. This life is the only one known to science; the future state to which Spiritualists look forward is a lower one, in which people who on earth had sterling common sense speak the most outrageous nonsense.

> From the day of Anton Mesmer the world has had presented evidence of the functioning of consciousness along supra-normal lines of action.....There is abundant and irrefragable evidence that men can see without eyes.....that men hear independently of the ordinary methods of audation, that they feel independently of the ordinary process of sensation (p. 11).

The first statement here refers to the fact of a strong, masterful will dominating a very weak one; the second is a reference to clairvoyance and clairaudience, in which the medium professes to see and hold converse with "spirits" of the dead—which no one else present in the room can see. As an example, I take the case of Mr. Horace Leaf, Spiritualist lecturer and clairvoyant, who told a lady who visited him that he could see "a form called Elizabeth" behind her chair, and said that there were "a crowd of spirits" beside her, including "Grandfather Edward, Uncle John, and Maria." The lady informed the magistrate that not one of those "spirits" was known to her, either as deceased relatives or friends.

To another lady who came to him, Mr. Leaf said, "I see an elderly lady with grey hair behind your chair. I get the name of Annie or Anna Manning." Upon being told by his visitor that she did not know any such person, he said, "It must be a relative or something of that sort." Then, after a pause, he said, "I get the name of a man, a spirit with a short beard. He is brought in by the spirit of a woman, so that you may recognize the woman. I get Edward." His visitor said that she knew of no such deceased person of that name in her family or among her acquaintances. She gave him his fee—5s.—and left the premises. After hearing other witnesses, the magistrate fined Mr. Leaf £25 and costs, or two months in the second division. On the same day (Feb. 24, 1917) three other mediums were convicted of fraud—Madame Vox, Mrs. Fielder, and Madame Leslie—the first being fined, and the other two sentenced to two months' imprisonment. Not one of the four mediums was able to see without eyes or hear without ears, as they professed to do.

> If the supra functions exist they require organs adapted to their expressions. Then this supra organism must be in organized form, and will be emitted from the body at death in a corresponding form (p. 12).

Here we see that the claims made by clairvoyants and others are assumed to be conclusive evidence of the existence of "supra functions" in the body, which necessitate "supra organs" to perform those functions. Mr. Morse does not, however, explain how it is that science knows nothing of such organs.

> Andrew Jackson Davis has described what he observed of the process of dying.....He tells us that the central pivot (really the point of consciousness) emerged from the *superior* brain, and attracted it to the ethereal elements constituting the supra body. That these enveloped the head of the dying form, and presently this sunlike halo assumed shape and form. In appearance this form, Davis tells us, was human (p. 13).

"Davis tells us!" And who in the name of all that's sane is "Davis"? Mr. Morse does not tell us. The question, however, can be answered. Andrew Jackson Davis, also called the "Poughkeepsie Seer," was a religious crank in America of the Swedenborg type, who "held forth" in the early days of Spiritualism half a century ago. Having read that Paul was "caught up to the third heaven," he claimed to have clairvoyant visions of several heavens, one above the other, to which disembodied spirits rose as they grew in wisdom and love. He never, of course, saw anything of the kind; neither did he "observe the process of dying," as here stated. He fraudulently invented the latter scene, knowing that it could not be proved that he had *not* seen what he described. And it is to the inane utterances of this mendacious crank that Mr. Morse appeals in support of his ridiculous theories.

Having got nearly to the end of his pamphlet without being able to advance one single scrap of evidence in support of a future life, Mr. Morse is compelled at last to fall back upon Spiritualism. He says:—

> The facts of Spiritualism *do* establish man's survival. .....Our mediums are the present day living witnesses of the existence of the supra-normal powers to which reference has been made.....Their psychic faculties are the link between the normal world and the supra-normal world. Those faculties are the points of contact between the two states of life (p. 15).

Here, it will be seen, all the alleged "facts of Spiritualism" are entirely dependent upon the "psychic faculties" of the mediums. If the latter fail, there are no other Spiritualistic "facts" to put in their place. In the earlier forms of Spiritualism many of the mediums were detected in deliberate acts of fraud; but in the new

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forms of that "ism" the automatists, whether fraudulent or not, run little risk of detection—unless a fee is demanded of inquirers, as in the case of Mr. Leaf and others. The question then arises, Are the mediums of the present day more moral or more reliable than their "physical phenomena" predecessors? The answer is, that we have no reason for supposing that they are; neither have we any evidence known to science that there is a living entity in the human body which is capable of surviving death.

After reading this one-sided "solution" of what is called "the enigma of death," it has occurred to me that it might not be amiss to examine the Christian idea of immortality in the endeavour to see where and when it arose, what was actually believed, and what facts, if any, might be adduced in support of it. This I shall commence in the next paper.

Abracadabra.

"A Field Card to God."

How to begin to address you is in itself problematical—an enigma. You, whom nobody can define, and whose mysterious depths remain unprobed, are surely deserving of a title so exalted and so superb, even as no poet of the highest calibre has yet created. No mere majestic titles for you; these sink into an abyss of indignity and are, apparently, superficial before your vast greatness. And as I, poor little mortal, cannot coin the terms of sublimity soaring high enough into the empyrean such as befit your great immortality, I begin humbly as I would to one who has my reverence and deep respect, and trust that you, in your infinite greatness, will not think me too presumptive or familiar.

The few queries which I am about to submit to you—I deem necessary to acquaint you with the fact—are echoed and re-echoed in thousands of hearts; in hearts torn asunder with grief and sorrow; in minds turned by despair and misery. Tell me, O God, whether it is your wish that we were cast into this great inferno of war; whether you preordained that hell be let loose on earth and the Devil play havoc with the universe; whether it was your wish that death, grief, misery, despair, and heartrending sorrow walk hand in hand, reaping their rich harvest among mankind? Now, let us be logical.

The Bible teaches us that you are Almighty. So be it. Then you *could* have prevented this worldly scourge, and even never have fashioned it; wherefore, my little mind cannot comprehend why you *did* fashion it, and still permit it to continue. We are told that you move in a mysterious way. Aye, verily you do.

Merciful God, it surely cannot be your wish that your children die the awful death of the battlefield—to perish by the hand of man. Can it be your wish to sever limbs of multitudes of your own likeness and creation; to inflict pain and anguish broadcast, and to drown your own world in sorrow? If it *is* your wish, O where is your mercy? If it is *not*, where is your almightyness? I entreat you not to be angry with your humble child for questioning those properties of yours, which we are assured by the chroniclers of the Scriptures, that you possess. We do not understand, and *because* we do not understand, we begin to waver in our faith in you.

If it is your wish to punish offenders, show us a symbol that *you* are at work, so that they who have invoked your wrath may know that they are receiving their deserts justly, and at whose powerful hands; but *all* who have known the pangs of suffering, the tortues of hell itself in this great ordeal, are surely not invariably steeped in iniquity, deserving of your terrible chastisement.

We, who had implicit faith in your great power, and sought of you for guidance, as do the little children and the stricken blind, are we to be left to our own limited resources? Are we to be forsaken in the hour of need? O, surely not. Is not this the opportune moment for exhibiting your limitless power; for teaching us the power of God Almighty? Remember, O God, that millions are wavering in their belief in you. We are perilously near a brink from which you can save us. We are but frail humans, and blind tolerance has its limitations. This diabolical conflict has been instrumental in hurling thousands of believers in you into the gulf of doubt; and your stupendous unlimited capabilities, with which you are credited, are by many now only accepted with reserve. Symptoms of doubt are beginning to be entertained by many a brokenhearted woman smitten by the loss of a dear one. Staunch and devout believers in you heretofore are now uttering the question almost in the throes of despair, "Can there be a God to allow all this?" Behold! Open the gates of the city of refuge to your children; O respond to our cry with a token of enlightenment, guiding us in your Divine path.

I am writing from the scene of devastation, of destruction, and of annihilation of innocent manhood. I have witnessed death in cruel forms—limbless misshapes of beloved fathers, sons, husbands, and brothers—all lain low by the vile scourge of battle. The gruesomeness and tragedy of it all eat deeply into my soul—and set me pondering. Many a strange and fleeting thought passes me, and innumerable questions arise to my lips. Why? Why?

It has been said that the whole responsibility for this great happening is attributable to the wiles and evil desires of an individual. Many think that it is the actual work of the Devil. Others vouch that they are but synonymous. "Ha, Ha!" even in my bitterness I must laugh—though I am sure it is an offence to do so when addressing you seriously—for which I beseech your pardon. These puny mortals who profess to knowledge have surely forgotten that you are *Almighty*, and that an insignificant human—though he be a Teuton Majesty—is but clay in your mighty hands, to be moulded at *your* will. Do you not reign supreme? It is, therefore, unquestionably *your* will that all this be. Again occur a paradox and a question. *A merciful, just, and loving God has willed evil and destruction.* Again, Why? Why?

Perhaps there is an explanation, a solution to the bewildering mystery, which is denied us. But until we comprehend, we waver in our faith. So come, I beseech you, show us, teach us to know that there is a God, supreme, Almighty, merciful, and just. Vanish our doubts. Testify that God is not a mythological character, but of Divine existence. Then Atheists, Agnostics, and the multitudes of waverers will flock to you, O God, in all sincerity and everlasting hope.

"Somewhere" in Macedonia. Mark Roseman.

The Sphinx.

I saw the sphinx in a wasted land,
Broken and old and brown;
I followed its gaze with a steady hand
Where the skies go bending down.

I thought of the years those unshut eyes
Had stared away to the east;
I wondered if under the ancient skies
They had builded a man as a beast.

But the stone spoke not, it eyes were blind.
It gave neither sign nor nod;
Surely, I said, "our ancient kind
Have builded an image of God."

Cairo. C. W. R.

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Acid Drops.

Another attempt is to be made to induce the Prime Minister to agree to a National Day of Prayer. The World's Evangelical Alliance is to interview Mr. Lloyd George in order to find out why such a day has not, up to the present, been appointed. The reason seems obvious. It would have served no useful purpose. Mr. Lloyd George has said that various things were essential to winning the War, but he never mentioned prayer as a national necessity. The other day he did say we intended giving the Germans "Hell," but he said nothing about giving them prayer. A National Day of Prayer would be the one thing to make England ridiculous in the eyes of the world.

The crowning impudence of the proposal is contained in the remark: "The Prime Minister would be informed that a day of prayer was wanted, not merely by a section of the Christian people, but by all classes, not only in England, but throughout the Empire." Of course, if one sets out to tell a lie, it may as well be a "thumping" lie, and the Alliance must be more stupid than even we think it if it imagines that the Prime Minister will swallow such a story. He knows better. If all classes want a day of prayer they can easily have it by praying. No one will stop them. Besides, Mr. Lloyd George is a politician, and if there had been a general demand for a day of prayer he would have long since found that essential to winning the War. The real aim is to engineer a colossal act of mingled stupidity and hypocrisy. And, we observe, that the Alliance has cancelled its evening meetings on account of probable air-raids. Why not hold them, and trust to prayer for protection?

Writing on the subject of the work of the National Sunday League, Mr. Pett Ridge says, "The League extended the Sabbath day's journey which, under the old law, was limited to one mile." Just so. And the League also introduced a little sweetness and light into the English Sunday, which, until a few years ago, was devoted to spirituous and spiritual intoxication.

Speaking at the Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union, the Rev. Stanley Wicks said "children should not be pitch-forked into the Church at the age of sixteen after a talk with the minister in the vestry." This shows how Church membership returns are compiled.

Some controversy has arisen in the press as to whether Mr. Lloyd George, in a recent interview, used the expression: "We'll give them (the Germans) hell." Mr. George states that he has no recollection of using it, but the language was reproduced in several papers. After all, the sentiment is Christian, if not statesmanlike.

Theological prejudice too frequently mars the pages of the liberal and fair-minded *Daily News*. In a recent article, with the pleasing title of "Pan-Anglicanism," Bishop Colenso is referred to as "the arithmetical bishop who could not forgive Moses for having written a book of Numbers." The fact is that Colenso made a slashing attack on the Pentateuch, and thousands of people had their faith undermined in consequence of the bishop's criticisms. The religious world was too ignorant to know that most of Colenso's arguments were borrowed from Paine and other Freethinkers, but the Christians read the bishop when they would not have read the iconoclasts. To-day the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is discredited, and Colenso had his share in the work. As it was, it took the bright and brainy Christians many generations to realize that poor old Moses could hardly have written an account of his own funeral.

Some of the present-day novelists appear to be taking themselves very seriously on religious matters. Mr. H. G. Wells has "found God"—a brand new one—and now Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of *Sherlock Holmes*, announces "a new revelation," which makes religion no longer a matter of faith, but of experience. Sir Arthur's panacea is based on "psychical phenomena," which sounds suspiciously like our old friend "Sludge the Medium." Perhaps this outbreak of fancy religionism is the boasted "revival of piety" which the clergy so often speak of. If so, the novelists will be more pleased than the parsons.

"A U.F.C. Bishop" writes to the *Dundee Courier* in defence of reprisals. He argues that the policy is quite Christian, since God said "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." He conveniently forgets the saying attributed to Jesus, "Ye have heard that it has been said by them of old, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you, Love your enemies." If there is any meaning in language, that means a clear abrogation of the old rule. A reply to that is, we are loving our enemies when we correct their bad habits—which is exactly what the Germans say of us. We do not believe them, neither do they believe us. It will take a lot of argument to persuade Englishmen that German airmen are animated by a desire for our improvement when they drop bombs on London or Ramsgate; and it will be equally hard to convince the enemy that we are inspired by philanthropy in dropping bombs on German towns. And the cant of religion only makes a bad business the more detestable.

If we believe that the killing of English women and children by German airmen serves but to nerve us to more strenuous efforts to beat the enemy, one would like to know on what ground we believe that the killing of German women and children by English airmen will have any other result on the enemy? If we are not sending our airmen to attack women and children, but only to bomb munition works, etc., in Germany, then the killing of civilians is incidental—is not a matter of reprisals at all; it is part of the normal operations of war. If we really wish to kill German women and children, is it necessary to go to Germany at all? There are plenty in this country. If, again, the bombing of ammunition works is legitimate warfare, how many parts of Britain are there that could not be legitimately bombed? We are not arguing that German towns should not be bombed. We are only wishful for a little serious and straightforward thinking on the matter. The whole business of the War is, as we have often said, a competition in brutality. When one side used gas, the other was compelled to follow, or be beaten. And so with other things. One side sets the pace, and the other is compelled to follow. If we must have reprisals, let us have them; only do let us import courage and honesty into our doings.

The ancient wheeze of the camel and the eye of the needle will be recalled by the announcement that the late Rev. Sir V. D. Vyvyan, of Withiel, Cornwall, left estate to the value of £213,997.

Blessed be ye poor! £33,843 was all the Rev. A. Hanburg, of Bayswater, left of this world's goods, and the Rev. W. G. Walker, of Knockie, Salop, left only £22,253. Neither wished to leave it—they would have preferred to take it with them.

The most curious will we have seen for some time is that of the Rev. H. E. Robson, of Caversham, Reading. According to a *Daily Telegraph* report:—

> He desired that some of the principal arteries of his body shall be severed, to make sure life is extinct, and the doctor who shall do this operation is to receive £20 for such operation; and his remains are to be cremated and disposed of as the executors may determine, *and he directed that no religious rite or ceremony of any description shall be held over his uncremated remains.*

We do not know what this means—whether Mr. Robson was waiting until he was dead to let the world know his real opinions, or simply that he disliked ceremonies. It is a strange will—for a clergyman.

An apologist for the clergy says that parsons who fight run counter to Canon law. The point raised is purely ecclesiastic, for the clergy have no objection to consecrating regi-

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mental flags and christening battleships. Nor do they object to drawing decent salaries as Army Chaplains. In olden times priests were not so tender of their skins.

People who were allowed to shelter in a London police-station during a recent air-raid stole a clock, some boots, and provisions. At an East London Police-Court a thief stole the Testament. The last item shows that one of the thieves was pious.

The *Spectator* is responsible for the following addition to child-Scripture stories:—

> One little boy, told to write all he knew of Elijah, speaking truly for himself, wrote: "We do not know much of this holy man," and added: "But we know that he went for a cruise with a widow."

The Bishop of Bath and Wells has issued a solemn caution against using wafers at Holy Communion in place of even war-time bread. Bearing in mind that the food-controller prohibited the giving of bread to pigeons, we wonder he has not had courage enough to prohibit it being used for this kind of ecclesiastical tomfoolery.

Man, says the Rev. Bernard J. Snell, cannot do without religion. We have heard this before, and from many others beside Mr. Snell. Perhaps some of these gentlemen will one day set themselves the task of dealing with the fact that millions of men and women are without religion, and are none the worse for its absence. We fancy that all such a generalization means is that the clergy cannot get along without religion—and that is quite obvious.

Mr. Walter Winans writes a very vigorous article in the *Star* for October 8, on "The Horse in War-Time." Mr. Winans points out that cruelty to horses has been on the increase during the War, the number of half-starved-looking horses having greatly increased. We are not surprised at this, and it is one more proof of the brutalization that overtakes a world at war. Mr. Winans says he has received hundreds of letters from "all classes" joining in his protest against this cruelty to horses, and then adds:—

> I said "from all classes," but there I was wrong—I have not yet received one from a clergyman, nor has a clergyman come to my assistance when I have interfered in a case of cruelty.

This is a good example of the humanity encouraged by religion.

The "Divine-Human personality"—by which, we suppose, is meant Jesus Christ—"was never more strongly evidenced than in the War." So says the Bishop of London; and he knows as much about it as anyone else. This "Divine-Human personality," says the Bishop, saved the Worcesters in October, 1914; it preserved Paris and safeguarded the Channel ports, and stimulated "the miraculous outburst of national endeavour and sacrifice which had made the past years memorable." But the "Divine-Human personality" has very obvious limitations. It could preserve Paris—"Infidel Paris"—but not pious London. It could safeguard the Channel ports, but not Belgium or Serbia. It could stimulate sacrifice, but could do nothing to prevent the acquisition of huge profits by those who were gambling in the food-stuffs of the people. Finally, it could not prevent the destruction of thousands of useful members of society, but it could protect the Bishop of London and his kind. Really, it is time the work of this "Divine-Human personality" was handed over to a committee of level-headed men and women.

The inappropriateness of hymns is often so striking as almost to suggest a deliberate attempt at sarcasm. Thus, the *Daily Chronicle* reports that during the recent London air-raids a woman told her children to sing, "Hark, hark, my soul, it is the Lord," while the bombs were falling around. Of course, from the Theistic point of view, it was the Lord behind it all; but most people would be content to say it was the Germans.

"The Dean of Durham says the fearful experiences of the last three years have unsettled many beliefs and on many devout minds the dark shadow of doubt had fallen, and, he asks, who can wonder? Well, at any rate, the 'beliefs' existed during the time the war was fructifying, especially among the priesthood of Prussia. As far as the priests of Prussia are concerned, at any rate, we may ask not what effect the War has had on beliefs, but how far beliefs were responsible for the War. The 'belief' embodied in the phrase 'Gott mit uns' was certainly a formidable factor in Germany's preparations."—*The South African Review.*

The *Church Times* is very angry with the *Daily Telegraph* for having written a sensible article on the question of divorce. The *D. T.* had written that it sees no reason why "men and women who have unfortunately found in one another not the affinities they had hoped for but their very antipathies should not be able, after a proper interval of time, to try again in other quarters, if they feel disposed to embark upon such an adventure twice." That, we think, is a view that will commend itself to many; but the *Church Times* points out austerely that "marriage is not an appointment of the State"; all the State does is to legalize it, "securing to the married couple and their issue rights of property and inheritance and so forth. What the State has conferred it can withdraw, but it cannot touch marriage." This strikes us as being delightfully mixed. So far as marriage is the equivalent of the union of two people, it is a natural fact, and antedates both theology and the State. But so far as it is a legalized condition, it is essentially a State-conferred right, and nothing else. It is true that the Church claimed precedence of the State here, but it is precisely this claim that the modern mind rejects. The form of marriage—like all other institutions—must ultimately be determined by its effect on human welfare. There is no other test that will commend itself to common sense.

An organization, with the resounding title of The World's Evangelical Alliance, is attempting to arrange a Day of National Prayer to ask for a "victory over the Devil incarnate." The prospect is a terrible one for the clergy, for, if their request is granted, their occupation will be gone.

Jesus commanded his apostles to take nothing with them in the shape of gold and silver when they went on their journeys. But that is a long while ago, and they didn't know everything down in Judee. The American Episcopal Church is sending a real live bishop out to the War zone, and is appealing for five hundred thousand dollars for his maintenance. Luckily, this move is *not* a measure of the intelligence which America brings to bear on the War. If it were, we should wish her on the side of Germany.

We don't pretend to be at all interested or concerned over the question of Sunday Matins, and we haven't the slightest trace of respect for people who can discuss such a topic with gravity. Its intellectual value is no greater than that of a mob of savages discussing the value of some particular piece of primitive magic. But we note that day after day the *Times* is giving its space to a discussion of the topic, and this, with the constant assurance of the great danger fronting the nation, and of the need for economy, and for the intelligent direction of all our efforts, gives one occasion to think furiously. Men who can spend their time discussing such topics are of doubtful value to any community.

Mr. James Douglas, writing to the *Star*, calls Dr. Horton "a saint." The popular Nonconformist minister has one saintly quality: he cannot mind his own business.

Mr. Pett Ridge had a clever hit at the open-air evangelists who frequent the street corners with an harmonium and three lady friends. He parodies one of the orators: "I've broken nearly every one of the ten commandments over and over again. Sometimes I've done scarcely anything else. But, thank goodness, I've never failed, whatever was 'appening, to keep my religion."

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To Correspondents.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 21, Manchester; October 28, London; November 4, Abertillery; November 18, Birmingham; November 25, Nuneaton.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—November 18, Manchester.

J. Roberts.—The *Freethinker* has been sent regularly, so that the non-arrival is not due to any fault at this end. We are glad to know that the men look for it with such eagerness. Always pleased to hear from you.

Mr. S. Pulman writes:—"I enclose £1, to be placed to the *Freethinker* Sustentation Fund. The ready response to your appeal is in itself a great tribute to the high order of your editorship and the excellency of the matter contributed by your staff. Fifty years ago I became a reader of the *National Reformer*, and have been a constant reader of the *Freethinker* since its birth, under the auspices of our late President and Editor, G. W. Foote. If I may dare an opinion here, permit me to say that the contents of the paper to-day is all that can be desired."

E. Starling.—The local Secretary is Mr. J. Bartram, 107 Morley Street, Heaton. He will be very pleased to put you in touch with Newcastle Freethinkers. We note your remark about the Y.M.C.A. huts. Without at all detracting from whatever help they have been to the men, it is quite obvious that the organization has utilized the War as a great advertising opportunity, and of many of their operations we know there is a story to be told very different from that which appears in the press.

A. J. Marriott.—We quite appreciate your concern for the preservation of British liberty, and agree that while we are fighting for it abroad, we stand no small danger of losing it at home. We have pointed this out several times, and also that our own particular "Prussians" are making use of the War to that end. For our own part, we object to slavery, whether the collar be placed round our neck by German or Briton.

W. Mendez.—We have not seen the book you name, but if you think it worth our reading, we should be pleased to see the work.

G. R.—Pleased to have your opinion that the *Freethinker* is one of the few "fair and intelligent papers on the market." We do try to be fair, and we hope we are intelligent. We already had a couple of paragraphs written on the subject, but the cutting will be useful in other directions.

C. Harpur.—Sorry that the length of your letter prevented publication. All we can say now is, that there is not the direct antithesis between believing and not believing that you seem to infer. If I do not believe that Smith stole a watch, it does not follow that I believe he did not steal it. It may mean that I have no belief on the subject. Belief must rest on some sort of evidence, and where there is no evidence there should be no belief. To take your own illustration. I may not believe that Bacon wrote *Hamlet*, but I may also be without the belief that he did not write it. I may be without any belief on the subject either way.

J. W. Gilliam (Capetown).—Used, as you will see. Very pleased to add your congratulations to the store. The good wishes of friends are always welcome.

Ignotus.—Thanks. Shall appear shortly.

E. A. McDonald.—Have passed on the cutting. Perhaps the secret of the vogue of such articles is the fact that there is an enormous mass of latent superstition among the people, and an appeal to this, in however indirect a manner, arouses interest. And that is all the ordinary newspaper appears to care about.

W. M.—An edition of Schopenhauer's chief work, *The World as Will and Idea*, is published in three vols., price 31s. 6d. There are several volumes of essays published by Swan Sonnenschein at about 2s. 6d. per vol., and a volume of selected essays in Bohn's Popular Library at 1s. We know nothing of the Society you name.

C. Budge.—As you say, it is a game of sheer humbug. But that gentleman knows the kind of intelligence to which he appeals. And the humbug gets more flagrant each week.

H. Carrwey (Partick).—Sorry we have not the figures by us, but should say that the *Church of England Year Book* would give you as much information as is available.

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 (Oct. 21) Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures—afternoon at 3, evening at 6.30—in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester. Those who wish to obtain tickets for the meetings beforehand may do so from the Secretary, Mr. H. Black, 446 Great Cheetham Street, E. Higher Broughton; Messrs. S. Pulman, 68 Tib Street; H. Mountain, 50 York Avenue; R. Owen, 368 Collyhurst Road; G. Brown, 22 Fairfield Road; F. F. Greenhall, 34 Goulden Street, Pendleton; and Mrs. Bayfield, 61 Claude Road, Chorlton. We hope that Manchester friends generally will do their best to see that the hall is well filled on both occasions. To meet the convenience of visitors from a distance, arrangements have been made to provide tea between the afternoon and evening meetings.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (October 21) in the Institute, Abertillery, both afternoon and evening. Mr. Lloyd is always sure of a warm welcome, and we hope to hear the "Standing Room Only" notice has had to be utilized.

Mr. H. Irving writes in reference to the recent discussion on Atheism and Agnosticism:—

> In his debate with the Rev. W. T. Lee, at Derby, G. W. Foote, with a fine scorn for lexicographers, explained the meaning of Atheism *per se*; and fully detailed what Atheists meant by it, using the arguments of Charles Bradlaugh as a representative Atheist. The only difference between Mr. J. Blair Williams and Charles Bradlaugh appears to lie in the notice they take of the Theist's conception of God. Mr. Williams, like the raven with its eternal "Nevermore," reiterates to every proposition of the Theist, "I don't know what you mean." Bradlaugh exhausted thought to combat every conception of the Inconceivable put before him. The Atheist is without God. The Agnostic has less than a fraction of God. Where is the difference?

Miss Vance informs us that a number of N.S.S. members have not yet habituated themselves to the new rule that all subscriptions to the Society become due in January. At any rate, some who should have remitted have not yet done so. We are asked, therefore, to give all members a reminder to this effect, and we gladly do so. And we expect and hope to hear that all overdue subscriptions have been received. If those who send increase their subscription, by way of a self-inflicted penance, everybody concerned will be delighted.

On Sunday last the South London Branch inaugurated its winter course of lectures with a successful "Social" in the Trade Union Hall, 30, Brixton Road, S.W. An excellent programme of instrumental and vocal music had been arranged by Mr. Holland, and was thoroughly enjoyed by an appreciative audience. The members are highly pleased with their new place of meeting, which is both "cosy" and conveniently situated—being close to the Oval Tube Station, and the L.C.C. tram centre, Kennington Gate. There is also available another hall in the basement which would afford safe shelter during an air-raid.

At the Executive Meeting on Thursday last permission was given for the formation of a Branch of the N.S.S. at Goldthorpe, near Rotherham. We wish the new Branch every success, and we are hoping to see many more such Branches established in the near future. It can be done, if only Freethinkers resolve it shall be done. During the past two years no application for help has been refused to any area where there was a prospect of doing Freethought work. But it is obvious that local Freethinkers must bestir themselves first.

We understand that Mr. Heinemann has acquired the copyright in Swinburne's works published and unpublished. It will be good news to Freethinking lovers of the poet to know that there are in preparation cheap pocket editions of "Poems and Ballads" (first and second series), "Songs before Sunrise," "Atalanta in Calydon," "Erectheus," and "Tristan of Lyonesse." We are sorry that Mr. Heinemann cannot give us any definite date of issue.

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The following is interesting as a specimen of the other sort of warfare that is going on in the midst of the more material combat. It is the reply of a young man of eighteen in response to a letter from one of religious opinions:—

> Whether the War ends this year or not, the bare fact remains, and I hope the people will remember it, that the Church, *supposed* to be the greatest moral uplifting teacher in the world, has had nearly 2,000 years in which to teach the fact that wars can be averted and are useless, and has failed utterly and most awfully to do so: in fact, the clergy of the belligerents openly applaud and assist the ruthless slaughter of thousands of the children of God, as they smugly call them, from their secure pulpits. Do away with, if you will, this rotten system, and, I say with you, substitute sound moral and common-sense teaching culled from the greatest progressive thinkers and philosophers of the centuries, irrespective of their caste, colour, and religious thoughts, then, I believe, you will have a basis on which a grand democratic system of society can be built. The work of Jesus was, as you say, grand, but it stands out so distinctly simply because his was the first recorded of that type. Other men since his time have done as much, and more, for the welfare of humanity, even to laying down their lives in the cause they loved; but they have not been the victims of circumstances, prophecies, and such ancient superstitions as Jesus was in his time, consequently, their work has not been thrust forward so greatly. Set Jesus up as an example and a teacher, and set forth those of his teachings which would help to reconstruct society, if you like, but don't set him up as an impossible son of a impossible God, and you will get some good out of his work.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

I HAD intended this week fixing a very early date for the closing of this Fund, but refrain from doing so for several reasons. Last year it was complained that I closed the list too peremptorily, and so prevented many sending who would have liked to contribute.

There are always some who will not send until the last minute, although as I must soon name a closing date, I hope those who wish to subscribe will do so as early as possible. It will have been observed that the deficit on last year was very promptly cleared off, and a good step made towards meeting the weekly loss that must be regarded as inevitable during the continuance of the War. This, of course, makes the situation so much easier for me, and if the deficit is met in advance, it will do away with the necessity for borrowing the money, which I have had to do up to now.

Lastly, and this finally determined me to keep the Fund open for awhile longer, the outlook is none too cheerful. This month I have been compelled to arrange for a supply of paper at a still further advanced price, and, in addition to this, there is another increase coming in the wages of compositors. The men ask for an advance of six shillings per week, and the employers have offered three. The matter is still under discussion, and the advance will be something between these two amounts. In any case the advance is to date from the first of October.

The future, as will be seen, is very uncertain. I do not fear for the paper, readers may rest content on that head. I had thought of meeting these further increases by reducing the paper to twelve pages, but I have now decided to struggle along with the paper unchanged. But it *is* a struggle. The paper is still forging ahead in the matter of circulation—the increase is small each month, but it is steadily mounting. The disappointing thing is that every time one puts on a few extra shillings a week from sales, all of it, and often more, is swallowed up in increased cost of production. Still, it is promising for the time when conditions once more become normal.

But I am not in the least disheartened. I know I have the full support of *Freethinker* readers, and I have every confidence in our united ability to weather the storm. We must just keep smiling and keep fighting. Whatever sacrifice that fighting involves, we have the supreme satisfaction of knowing that it could not be made in the furtherance of a better cause.

Sixth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £285 15s. 10d. V. P. (Plymouth), £1. H. Tucker, 10s. D. Wright, 5s. W. W. Braddock, 7s. 6d. A. J. Marriott (second subscription), 8s. W. E. and A. W. Kerslake, 8s. J. C. B., 5s. J. Y. R., 5s. W. R., 2s. 6d. M. R., 2s. 6d. A. B., 2s. 6d. M. S., £4 10s. E. Reynolds, 5s. Tim, 2s. 6d. Postman, 2s. 6d. W. T. Newman, 2s. 6d. J. S. Buckle, 10s. G. G., 5s. Vera, 1s. F. Creswell, £1. J. Roberts (Boulogne), 1s. S. Pulman, £1. J. Weeks, 2s. 6d. B. Adams, £1. A few Friends, per H. J. Slack, 5s. 6d. J. Railton, 2s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Rosetti, 10s. F. E. Monks, 5s. E. Simpson, 5s. W. Mather (third subscription), 10s. G. R. Harker (second subscription), 10s. Per E. Pinder—G. H. Folwell, £1; S. Leeson, 10s.; A. B. Taylor, 2s.; E. Pinder, 5s.; C. Pell, 2s.; R. Wheatley, 2s.; H. Woolley, 10s.; G. Martin, 2s.; G. H. Hopkins, 2s. 6d. F. M. Grieg, 2s. Total: £304 1s. 4d.

Correction—"J. Hamon, £1," in our issue for September 30, should have read "J. O'Connor, £1."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Story of the Sugar Industry.

II.

(*Continued from p. 652.*)

THE once scorned sugar beet is an unassuming vegetable of northern lands. A near relative of the mangel-wurzel, a cattle-feeding root, the beet is an excellent pickle, and forms a decided addition to a salad. The plant's modest leaves absorb the rays of the sun; they serve to preserve the soil's moisture by hindering evaporation, while preparing the sugar, which is stored in the small bulging root, whose tapering rootlets are thrust into the earth in search of water and food. This seemingly insignificant plant, with a root weighing thirty-two ounces only, not merely furnishes man with half his sugar, but it supplies a larger percentage of the sweetening substance than is at present obtained from the opulent cane. Nevertheless, where soil and climate are favourable the sugar-yielding powers of the cane prove twice those of the beet per acre.

The most bountiful cane crops are grown where the plant is intensively cultivated. In the West Indies and other centres the crop is grown in one plantation for several years, but in Java and elsewhere it is cultivated as a rotation crop, and other plants occupy the soil in alternate seasons. While fifty years ago West Indian planters were elated when a couple of hogsheads (about one and a half tons) of muscovado sugar were yielded by an acre of land, to-day, in Java, the average return has risen to the gratifying total of over four tons per acre. Indeed, many Javan estates produce at least five tons an acre, an achievement which constitutes a splendid tribute to scientific agriculture.

Beet culture has been artificially stimulated by various States with serious consequences to the cane grower. The policy pursued by European Governments in developing the beet industry has been copied by the United States both with regard to the beet products of its own northern growers and those of the planters in the more tropical American possessions. As a result of this preferential treatment, the sugar industry has increased enormously in the Western Republic. Since the Brussels Convention of 1902, little sugar has entered the United States from Europe. But the internal

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resources of the States are sufficient to maintain a constant supply for American use. The total consumption of the States is about 3,000,000 tons, but its own sugar areas, with the assistance of Hawaii, Porto Rico, Cuba, and other American possessions, can easily furnish all the sugar needed. Cuba revels in the sunshine of Government preference, and that island's production of cane sugar has risen enormously in consequence. Cuban sugar is annually turned out to the tune of nearly 2,000,000 tons.

The coarse, unclean sugar, so long produced in Formosa for the Chinese stomach has been replaced since the Japanese occupation of the island by modern methods of manufacture. The Japanese first ascertained how the heaviest crops, both of beet and cane, were obtained. The native planters were then instructed in the art of successful cane cultivation. Various forms of waste were eliminated, suitable manures were introduced, and factories have been established for the purpose of supplying Japan with high grade sugar. Should this experiment succeed, and its prospects are good, it is probable that Japan will enter the world's markets as a sugar refining State to the detriment of Hong Kong refineries which have so long been predominant in the Chinese trade.

Even in Peru, a rainless land, some of the finest crops in the world have beea grown where the parched soil has been irrigated. And in the Sandwich Islands, in exceptional seasons, the yield of the cane has proved even more remunerative than the magnificent Javan crops. The flower of the cultivated cane so rarely sets its seed, that, until a few years ago, the plant was invariably propagated with cuttings. The wild varieties of the sugar cane, however, develop seed which is capable of reproduction. From plants produced from seed a selection has been made, and it is found that many of these are equal and sometimes superior to the cultivated kinds. There is, now, every prospect of a permanent improvement in the quality, yield, and disease-proof powers of the novel varieties called into existence by the magic voice of science. Now that the selective principle is at last being applied by planters, the cane is assured of a lengthy career as a sugar-producing crop.

In the Old World the evolution of the sugar beet has been in operation for more than a century. Magraff discovered sugar in the common beet in 1747, but its sugar content proved to be 2 to 4 per cent. only. Fifty years rolled away, when Archard, another German, succeeded in extracting this sugar from the root. In the early stages of the industry the beet was made to yield five or six per cent. of sugar, which has since increased to an average of 16 per cent. The year 1908 proved a record period, and the yield for the German Empire was about 17 per cent., while the Bohemian crop was even more generous. These remarkable results are almost entirely attributable to the scientific seedsman. Through a rigorous selection of the choicest seeds each season the nurseryman has obtained this invaluable advance.

Beet is a costly crop to the grower, and, unfortnnately, the seasons are frequently unfavourable to the plant's growth and maturity, and a dearth of beet usually means a serious shortage in the world's sugar supplies. There remains ample scope for a far larger acreage and productivity, both in cane and beet, if the requirements of the sugar consumers are to be permanently met. The yielding powers of the beet-raising countries vary considerably. While the German farmers raise between ten and fourteen tons of roots to the acre, the Austrian return is considerably below this, while Russia produces per acre some six or seven tons only.

The planters possess one important advantage over their beet producing rivals. Their crops are ripe at very various seasons of the year in the several cane regions of the tropical area. Cane sugar is, therefore, available for the refiner at different periods. In this respect it is quite unlike the beet product which is thrown on the market at a stated time. In one year two crops are grown in British Guiana, and these are gathered in May and October. The sugar season commences in January in the West Indies, save in Cuba, where it begins in December, while the Argentine is active in June. Java's crops are ready in May, Australia's sugar is ripe in June, and August is the harvesting time in Mauritius and Natal.

In primitive countries antiquated methods are still employed in extracting the juice of the sugar from the cane. But in the leading sugar fabricating centres modern machinery has followed in the wake of intensive husbandry. Half the juice was at one time left in the canes when the stems were simply crushed by rude rollers worked by human or animal labour. In Barbadoes windmills are still engaged in sugar manufacture. But this prosperous island is admirably adapted to the use of wind power which forms a fairly constant and, certainly cheap substitute for the steam utilized elsewhere. In districts where sugar is elaborated on a very large scale, the three roller mill propelled by steam power soon became the order of the day. About 60 per cent. of the juice was thus extracted, but further improvement became a great desideratum when the beet industry threatened the cane. The apparatus now in use is described as

> a combination of three of these roller-mills set tandem fashion, with carriers to convey the crushed cane from the first to the second, and from the second to the third. It might be imagined that when the crushed cane, called megass—or, in French, *bagasse*—issues from the third mill it has lost all its juice. Unfortunately, this is not so, and therefore other expedients have been adopted to still further reduce the quantity of sugar left in the megass. The rollers in the second and third mill are placed closer together in order more completely to squeeze the now attenuated strips of crushed cane. These mills are also driven at a slightly slower speed. But.....it was found that the first of the two crushings in the front mill did not do much more than break the outside rind of the cane, and that a larger quantity of cane could be worked with the same power if the cane could be cut or torn up to a certain extent before entering the first rollers.—(Martineau, *Sugar*, pp. 27, 28, 1910).

Cane cutters and other contrivances were therefore adopted, and more sugar was extracted. But further economy became necessary, and more efficient methods were devised. Still, even now there remains considerable scope for further improvement.

As previously stated, the delicate sugar cane must be promptly harvested when ripe, and its subsequent treatment admits of no delay. The hardy beetroot, on the contrary, does not readily lose its sugar-yielding powers, and may be delivered at the sugar factory in prime condition weeks after it is removed from the soil. When completely cleaned, with its rootlets cut away and its leaves shorn off, the root is ready for the refiner's hand. Formerly the beets were pulped in a machine, and the juice driven out of the pulp by hydraulic pressure. This wasteful process was at one time considered the acme of perfection. But some doubted, and Robert, an Austrian refiner, introduced a new system of beet juice extraction, known as the diffusion method. Robert's reform was so revolutionary that within ten years his process was everywhere in use throughout Austria and Germany. Both from the scientific and industrial standpoint, the

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diffusion principle has proved so extremely important that a brief description of its applications will be appreciated by the thoughtful as attractive and informative alike.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be continued.)

Critical Chat.

Some New Swinburne Poems.

I was once afflicted with a freethinking friend who successfully disguised a distaste, I may almost say a contempt, for English poetry under a yeasty enthusiasm for Swinburne. I must confess to have been taken in by his rampant eulogies until one day he began to anoint with unctuous adulation the head of another freethinking poet—or shall I say poetess?—who is known to the illiterate on both sides of the Atlantic as the "divine Ella," and as Mrs. Wheeler Wilcox to those who have the misfortune not to be numbered among her admirers. But that is neither here nor there. What I want to suggest, without, I trust, giving needless offence to any serious and well-meaning person, is that an admiration for Swinburne unqualified by reservations unmistakably points to a want of critical balance. I yield to no one in my appreciation of the poet's superb lyrical gift, his passionate hatred of tyranny and hypocrisy, and, on the technical side of the art, his discovery of new and wonderful verse-rhythms; but I do not agree with some of my friends who seem to think that his most flamboyant anti-clerical and anti-theistic diatribes are his principal claim to remembrance. These attacks are, no doubt, sincere enough, and in some moods one enjoys their violence; but however stimulating they may be at first reading, one is wearied in the end by these screaming and unintermittent imprecations. Those of us who know the whole of his work have, however, the satisfaction of being certain that his splenetic attacks on priestcraft are but an insignificant part, insignificant alike in quantity and quality, and that his best poetry draws upon the more permanent and more human emotions.

A book of new poems by Swinburne, although they may not add anything to his reputation, is an event of some importance, especially for those of us who are old enough to remember the thrill of anticipatory delight with which we opened the pages of *Tristan of Lyonesse*. The volume now before us (*Posthumous Poems*. Heinemann; 6s. net) is edited by Mr. Edmund Gosse and Mr. T. J. Wise. With one exception, noted below, it is made up of poems which Swinburne wrote between 1887 and 1907, and left unprinted for some reason or other. The manuscripts were sold to Mr. Wise by Watts-Dunton, whose interest in his friend's work, Mr. Gosse uncharitably avers, had become entirely a financial one. But when a man has been a sort of male nurse to an irritable and ailing poet for twenty years, he has probably had enough of him and his work for all time, and it is hardly to be wondered at if his interest be partly, or even wholly, financial. There was no shrewder critic of modern verse than Watts-Dunton, and no one knew better than he did the weak places in his friend's poetical armour. However that may be, Mr. Gosse has given us a number of poems for the first time, or comparatively for the first time, because some of them I have seen in the British Museum in privately printed copies. The place of honour is given to eleven Border Ballads in imitation of the old songs before they had suffered from restoration at the hands of Bishop Percy, and others who were irritated by the rough versification and crude romantic passion. Swinburne had in him an element of barbaric violence that made him a ready sympathiser with the quarrelsome and amorous spirit of his ancestral raiders of cattle and maids. In confirmation of this sympathy with primitive modes of feeling, Mr. Gosse tells us that when William Morris was printing some of the old ballads at the Kelmscott Press, he was not well enough to continue to work. On looking round for a likely man to take his place as editor, Swinburne's name was mentioned. "Oh, no!" said Morris, "that would never do. He would be writing-in verses that none of us would be able to tell from the original stuff." There is a little exaggeration here. Swinburne was not less a decorative artist than Rossetti and Morris. His imitations, although interesting to us and valuable to him as exercises in narrative verse, in which his strength did not naturally lie, have by no means the simplicity and directness of the best of the traditional ballads. His gravest defect is that he did not know when he had said enough. The pathos is too often wrapped up in the cotton-wool of verbiage. The inspiration is literary instead of being natural. A comparison with "Clerk Saunders," or the fine Scots ballad "Tam-lane," would bring out clearly the difference. But, after all, Swinburne's poems are imitations, and, in spite of Morris' judgment, would deceive no one sufficiently practised in the two forms of poetry.

Swinburne's undergraduate verse is represented by "The Death of Sir John Franklin" and an "Ode to Mazzini." The first of these is supposed by Mr. Gosse to have been sent in for the Newdigate for 1858. This date is disputed by competent authorities, who assign the poem to 1860. The subject set for 1858 was "The Discovery of the North-West Passage"; but this, it will be noted, was not the theme of Swinburne's poem, which is written, by the way, not in heroic couplets, as required by the Prize-rules, but with an elaborate scheme of rhymes. The punctuation, if Mr. Gosse represents the manuscript correctly, is bad enough to damn the verses even with the least academic of examiners. However that may be, and in spite of its inflation and wordiness, the poem has some moving passages, and a long, rhythmic swing that indicated the direction in which our greatest master of metre achieved success. He pictures the brave companions of the great Arctic explorer winter-bound among the ice lying gigantic to either hand, remembering how in England the "warm land were starred with gracious flowers in the green front of spring," and recalling with moving pathos:—

> Slight words they used to say, slight work to do
> When every day was more than many springs,
> And the strong April moved at heart, and made
> Sweet mock at fortune and the seat of kings .....
> And now they know not if such things be done,
> Nor how the old ways and old places fare,
> Nor whether there be change in the glad sun,
> Defect and loss in all the fragrant air.
> New feet are in the waymarks of their feet,
> The bitter savour of remembered sweet
> No doubt did touch their lips in some sharp guise,
> No doubt the pain of thought and fever-heat
> Put passion in the patience of their eyes.

The tribute to Mazzini is a long, pseudo-Pindaric ode, inchoate, rhetorical, and violent, with not even one of those felicitous passages which come as a surprise to us in Cowley's experiments with the much-abused form. The subject affords free play to the poet's genius for vigorous imprecation. He curses with hearty emphasis all the things he holds most vile—the tyranny and stupidity of kings, the trustless lips and bloody hand of Austria, the guile of Rome and her minions, prepared to sell Italy as Judas sold his Master. The ode was written when Swinburne was twenty, and if it be not poetry, it is at least resounding rhetoric.

As a contrast to these more serious exercises in the poet's art, Mr. Gosse prints an amusing parody of

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Tennyson's "Despair." Swinburne calls his poem "Disgust: a Dramatic Monologue." A note prefixed to the verses tells us that "a woman and her husband having been converted from Freethought to Calvinism, and being utterly miserable in consequence, resolve to end themselves by poison. The man dies, but the woman is rescued by application of the stomach-pump." The wife speaks:—

You would like to know, if I please, how it was that our troubles began?
You see, we were brought up Agnostics, I and my poor old man.
And we got some idea of selection and evolution, you know—
Professor Huxley's doing—where does he expect to go!

Well, then came trouble on trouble on trouble, I may say, a peck—
And his cousin was wanted one day on the charge of forging a cheque—
And his puppy died of the mange—my parrot choked on its perch.
This was the consequence, was it, of not going weekly to church?

The manifold disasters which, if we are to believe M. Paul Bourget, ever dog the steps of those who forsake the Gospel for a more rational creed, turn the head of the unfortunate husband, and he sends to the chemist for two packets of strychnine.

Nay—but first we thought it was rational—only fair—
To give both parties a hearing—and went to the meeting-house there,
At the curve of the street that runs from the Stag to the old Blue Lion,
"Little Zion" they call it—a deal more "little" than "Zion."

And the preacher preached from the text, "Come out of her."
Hadn't we come?
And we thought of the shepherd in *Pickwick*—and fancied a flavour of rum
Balmily borne on the wind of his words—and my man said, "Well,
Let's get out of this, my dear—for his text has a brimstone smell."

So we went, O God, out of the chapel—and gazed, ah God, at the sea.
And I said nothing to him. And he said nothing to me.

This is a much better parody than any one of those printed under the title of *Heptalogia: Specimens of Seven Poets*, but it is a long way from perfection. Swinburne had too strongly marked an individuality to shine as a parodist, for whose art is needed much mental adaptability. He could not have written anything to equal Mr. J. C. Squire's "Merciful Widow."

The shorter poems include tributes to Shelley, Landor, Leconte de Lisle, and Karl Blind, some stupid abuse of Parnell, a few pleasant lyrical efforts, and a version of the *Dies Irae*. One of the poems, "To a Leeds Poet," is included by mistake, as the two stanzas are a part of a set of verses to the memory of J. W. Inchbold that appeared in the third series of *Poems and Ballads* (Collected Works, vol. iii., p. 252).

Geo. Underwood.

National Secular Society.

Interim Conference.

At the last Annual Conference a resolution was passed approving the holding of an Interim Conference for the purpose of discussing such matters as do not affect the constitution of the Society. War conditions prevent this Conference being held in any other place than London, and also limits the choice of halls. The Executive has, however, secured the use of Chandos Hall for Sunday, October 28, and two meetings will be held on that date. The afternoon meeting will commence at 2.30, and will be for Members of the N. S. S. and Branch Delegates only. The order of business will be (*a*) the discussion of such special resolutions as have been sent to the Executive; and (*b*) a general discussion of the position of the N. S. S. in relation to social, ethical, and political questions. The evening meeting, commencing at 6.30, will be open to the public. The proceedings will take the form of a general discussion on "The Present Position of Freethought." The Churches are all busy discussing their future as affected by the War, and it is well that Freethinkers should also be getting ready for the strenuous times before them. The discussion is to be a *general* one, and by that is meant that it will not be confined to set platform speeches. The President of the N. S. S. will take the chair at both gatherings.

Chapman Cohen, *President, N. S. S.*

The Fugitive.

It had been a field day—each Freethinker will recall many of his own experience; great moments, red letter days, purple passages in his life. We had gone—the little leaven of idealists in our litte north-western town—to hear a famous miners' leader, a man of the people, above all, a man of trusted renown, combining in his person those three great qualities so rarely found in one man—courage, honesty, and intelligence; and which presuppose the minor virtues—tact, sagacity, judgment, eloquence, etc. He sounded the sanest human and the wisest political note on the War. At least, the large audience thought so, and cheered and cheered and cheered. "Honours" were nothing to him. He could meet kings, dukes, diplomatists, ministers, face to face, as man to man—*provided*, he said, *always provided, I have "my own people" behind me.* One of us, at the close, stepped on the platform and shook hands with the speaker, assured him there was one other promising movement on foot, and handed him a copy of the *Freethinker*. This War, said the speaker, patting the title with his hand, this War has gone a long way to kill the old faith. We all came home jubilant and hopeful. Such is the magic of the human voice and the common aspiration.

One of us that night talked with a friend till very late on certain superficial aspects of sociology, with only occasional revelations of the deeps and the fundamentals. Small talk is very boring just after being enthused by the significant things. I, for it was the writer, escaped at last into the quiet of my own home, and found within those walls what the hunted hare in its form may find—the great peace of the wilderness—the sheltering rushes swaying in the wind, sighing overhead—divinest lullaby! The fugitive was free, and at ease for an hour; what blessed ease, what rich reflection; this is the reward of the battle of life. I turned out the lights. In the dim glow of the fire the solid chairs were fantastic, shadowy things. Shadows were all around, and seemed to descend like slumber on the soul. Within that flickering firelight and those quiet, dim, answering walls was peace, perfect peace, and home sweet home with its household gods, familiar things, and nearest, dearest loves, and the soft yet strident, far yet near, menacing yet soothing monotone of the "homeless sea" kept sounding evermore!

And the War, as I sat there, in that precious fugitive hour seemed far away, impossible, grotesque, absurd. Surely the soul of man is fugitive from such slaughter; surely the trend is toward a better world. If not, then you and I and all of us are fugitive indeed.

Menander.

Correspondence.

SOCIALISM AND FREETHOUGHT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—A correspondent said in a recent issue that if we had Socialism we should all be sure of food. Yes, if the birth-rate were sufficiently restricted. For example, it is inconceivable that in a country with a birth-rate of 44 per thousand per annum, like Russia, the food supply could be increased rapidly enough to provide an adequate allowance for all. With food enough for all, Russia's death-rate would be less than 10 per thousand; so the survival-rate would be over 34 per thousand. Yet the highest steady survival-rate in the world is only 17 per thousand; and this occurs in New Zealand which, being a new and rich country, is exceptionally favourable for rapid increase of population. Surely, there-

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fore, no country could, under any social system, maintain a survival-rate of twice 17. Russia is bound to have terrible poverty and trouble until her birth-rate is greatly reduced.

Freethinkers, whether Socialists or Individualists, should all be Malthusians (indeed, what are evolutionists but Malthusians?), and should realize that every fall of the birth-rate is a nail in the coffin of religion, poverty, and war. I entreat them to realize that there could be no poverty and war if wage-earners ceased to have more than two children per family.

B. Dunlop, M.B.

"GOD AND THE WAR."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I enjoyed reading last week's *Freethinker*. Among other things, I was interested in Mr. Lloyd's article on "God and the War." There is, however, a point on which I would like to ask him a question or two. He says in one place:—

> War is only a phase of the natural struggle for existence..... at the root of it are ambition, jealousy, greed, lust of power, all quite human qualities.....We are often told that the present War is to end war for all time, but there is absolutely nothing to suggest that so happy a result is the least likely to be realized.

Then, at the end of the article, he says:—

> It is our firm conviction that, had Buddhism won Europe instead of Christianity, war would have ceased long ago, and the essential brotherhood of the race would have been established on a rational and permanent foundation.

The two statements appear to be rather contradictory, and I would like Mr. Lloyd to explain:—

(1) Does he think that any religion—Buddhism, Christianity, or other—will ever abolish the natural struggle for existence, of which he admits war is a phase?

(2) Does he mean that, while Buddhism is pacific in its teaching, Christianity encourages militarism?

(3) If so, will he kindly point out where, in his teaching, the Founder of Christianity countenances or sanctions international war?

A. Russell.

National Secular Society.

Report of Monthly Executive Meeting Postponed from September 27 on Account of Air-Raids.

President: C. Cohen in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Braddock, Brandes, Eagar, Lazarnick, Leat, Neary, Palmer, Samuels, Spence, Thurlow, Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, and the Secretary.

A large number of new members were received for Battersea, Birmingham, Goldthorpe, Manchester, Newcastle, North London, South London, Sheffield, and Swansea.

Permission was also given for the formation of a new Branch at Goldthorpe, near Rotherham.

The report of the Joint Committee of Protest was received, from which it was gathered that the hearing of the Mandamus calling upon the Council to show cause for their action in prohibiting sales of literature in the Parks, would be before the High Court in a few days. As this action would incur heavy legal expenses, Mr. Cohen promised his assistance, if necessary, as Editor of the *Freethinker*, in making the Committee's appeal for funds widely known.

The death of Mr. Samuel Morley Peacock, a highly esteemed Vice-President of the National Secular Society, was reported, and the Secretary was instructed to send a message of sympathy to his widow.

Arrangements for the Interim Conference were discussed. It was reported that the greatest difficulty had been experienced in obtaining halls, and it was arranged to hold it at Chandos Hall on October 28, commencing at 2.30.

Notices of motion from Branches for the Agenda were considered and accepted, and it was resolved that at the conclusion of the formal business of the Conference a discussion be opened on the relation of Freethought to general subjects now and after the War.

Various items of official business were transacted, and the calling of the next meeting was left to the President and Secretary.

E. M. Vance, *General Secretary*.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

Indoor.

Mr. A. D. Howell Smith's Discussion Class (N. S. S. Office 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Oct. 26, at 7.30.

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, "Will Esperanto Become a Universal Language?" Affirmative, Chas. H. Edmonds. Open debate.

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Views and Opinions.

Conservatism and Progress.

Quite naturally and inevitably man is a conservative animal. Walter Bagehot pictured a time when the great task was to break man to the social yoke, and he conceived religion as playing this useful part in primitive life. But this is purely speculative, and is open to serious question. The first glimpse we get of man is as a member of a group, and the laws and customs of group life hold him firmly in their grip. In innumerable directions, and in a manner unbearable to the modern mind, the life of each is regulated by that of all. The tendency to rebel comes later, and slowly. Inclination also lends its aid to custom. It is easier to follow the old ruts than to seek new paths; the courage that inspires the pioneer is always the property of the few. And there is the underlying truth that while progress is due to the rebellious attitude of the few, the stability of society is ensured by the conservatism of the mass. They represent the centrifugal and centripetal forces of social life. The reformer easily recognizes the place of the conservative in social evolution. If others recognized with equal readiness the function of the rebel, progress would be a much more uniform thing in human history than it is.

* * *

Physical versus Mental Force.

While disagreeing with Bagehot's proposition that the need of early man was to be broken in, we quite endorse his statement that being broken in, the great thing was to get man to break out, and that chief amongst the perpetuating forces of an unreasoning conservatism is religion. Physical force plays a much smaller part in human evolution than is usually conceived. People are misled by seeing physical force everywhere applied, without recognizing that it is really an instrument at the service of a much more insistent and more pervasive power. Even in the present world-upheaval, where physical force is being applied on a quite unprecedented scale, it is really the instrument of other and greater forces. The social sense of a community of interest, the ideals of devotion to duty, to the interests of civilization, of patriotism, etc., are the real forces that have brought the world to arms. It is idle to talk of the rule of physical force when millions fly to arms at the bidding of a few. Force, in such cases, is the instrument of mind. In ultimate analysis the true social forces are constituted by the psychic life of man as represented by his ideas, his ideals, his customs, and institutions. And any modification of the social structure must, of necessity, be by way of an attack upon dominant ideals and beliefs.

* * *

The Great Obstruction.

This is why we agree with the latter generalization of Bagehot while disagreeing with his primary one. There is need to teach men to break out, and it is true that the greatest of all conservative forces is religion. In primitive life religion is the seed-plot of all that makes man a slave to stupid and brutal customs. Down to the smallest details the life of early man is dominated by religious fears. He dare not move from the customary path for fear of offending the gods. And behind this all-enslaving fear are entrenched those sinister interests that threaten the development of social life. Generation after generation passes; the form of both the attack and the defence varies, but the issue remains ever the same. To-day, man no longer moves—in civilized societies, at least—in direct fear of the gods, but the fear of religion is still active, and if it is not always expressed in a clinging to orthodox forms, it is manifested with disquieting frequency in the shape of a clinging to old formulæ and phrases that rob the rebel of much of his effectiveness, and so play into the hands of the common enemy.

* * *

That "Blessed" Word.

Consider the curious clinging of so many people to the word "religion." When it is not grotesque, it is pathetic. Now, "religion" is a word that has a very definite meaning in common usage, and that meaning cannot be altered by a more or less fanciful derivation of the word. Religion has always had to do with the supernatural—with the belief in God, or gods, and a future life. And if a man believes in the supernatural, he has every title to the word. But what legitimate use can anyone have for the word who has no belief in the supernatural? It is all very well for such a person to offer his own definition of the word, and to say, "I mean by it devotion to art or morality or duty." There seems no earthly reason, on these lines, why he should not also include a fondness for plum-pudding or Government beer. The fact remains that others will not understand it as he defines it. All custom, all usage, is against it. And the significance of a word is fixed by usage, not by a dictionary. What the religious man understands by people using the word is an act of homage to his own position, and we venture to say that he is in the right in so taking it. It is a grain of incense burned by the rebel in honour of conservatism. These people have lost the substance of religion, but they keep to the name. And the real religionist is justified in assuming that if

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the name itself is valuable, the thing itself must be still more precious.

* * *

Playing with "God."

With another class—substantially unbelievers—the word "God" plays a similar part. That, too, has a fairly definable meaning in common use. Substantially, the followers of religion mean by "God" one who, as Mr. Balfour says, loves and hates, can take sides, listen to our complaints, and heed our wants. Such a God may be—in fact is—quite absurd to a modern mind, but it is so far intelligible. But to take some sort of an ethical abstraction, as with Mr. Wells, or a hypothetical life-force, as with Bernard Shaw, or an unknown something behind phenomena, and call that God, is neither intelligible nor useful—or, at least, it is intelligible only as a dislike to being without something which the world declares needful and useful as a subterfuge. If one believes Nature is all, and natural law universal, there is no room for God, and no use for God. Again, we are flattering the religionist by retaining the name. We, too, say they, believe in God. True, it is not your God; we do not know what our God does; in fact, we do not believe he does anything at all; but still we believe in something we call God. "We cannot admit ourselves to be so stupid as those who believe in a real God. But we beg you to observe that we are not so wicked as those who dispense with God altogether."

* * *

The Function of the Reformer.

There are numberless other examples that one might cite to the same end. They all illustrate, more or less clearly, the tremendous power of conservatism in human affairs. This conservative element is not in itself bad; on the contrary, it has its good side. A universal readiness to depart from accepted customs and standards would mean disruption, not progress, and natural selection has seen to it that this danger shall be only speculative and remote. The mass will always remain relatively conservative, attached to what is usual, governed by what is traditional, and looking with suspicion upon all that is new and unusual. The more reason that reformers in general and Freethinkers in particular should set a good and strong example. Let us cease paltering with religious ways and religious phrases. When we say that the world can do well without orthodox religion, let us prove that we mean what we say by going without it. We do not believe that anything good really comes *from* religion, although we admit that much that is good has been associated *with* religion. Our task should be to find words that should express this view. It is neither honest nor ultimately useful to go on using words that are meaningless to Freethinkers and misleading to religionists, and which play their part in confirming the very errors we profess an anxiety to remove. There is not an idea, an ideal, or an aspiration that cannot be expressed without recourse to religious phraseology. Why, then, keep a name when we have discarded the thing for which it stands? The true majesty of man must always be degraded by the livery of the gods.

Chapman Cohen.

AN IMPULSE.

Free as the wind that stairs the crested larch;
Mad as a hatter, or a hare in March;
Nor prude, nor pietist;
Nor yet a moralist;
A simple humanist
Am I.
I've bid to all life's artificial starch
Good-bye! —*Avon Dale.*

"God and the War."

Mr. A. Russell does me the honour of raising a few points of criticism in connection with my recent article under the above title. In his letter, which appeared in this journal for October 21, he calls attention to my statement that "war is only a phase of the natural struggle for existence," and asks how it can be reconciled with the later intimation that "had Buddhism won Europe instead of Christianity war would have ceased long ago." As every student of evolution is aware the natural struggle for existence has undergone many changes, a fact which justifies the inference that war is by no means the final phase of it. It is true that General Friedrich von Bernhardi teaches, in his famous book, *Germany and the Next War*, that the "desire for peace has rendered most civilized nations anæmic, and marks a decay of spirit and political courage," and that, therefore, only "the weary, spiritless, and exhausted ages have played with the dream of perpetual peace." He quotes with approval Schiller's martial lines:—

> Man is stunted by peaceful days,
> In idle repose his courage decays.
> Law is the weakling's game,
> Law makes the world the same.
> But in war man's strength is seen,
> War ennobles all that is mean;
> Even the coward belies his name.

Consequently, we are not surprised to find that Bernhardi believes, not only in the right, but also in the duty, to make war. When Germany covets certain territories, she regards war as a legitimate method of securing them. In Great Britain and America, however, there has been a rapidly growing sentiment which looks upon war with unspeakable horror, and condemns it as an evil in itself. I need not say that I heartily share that sentiment, and loathe the very idea of an appeal to physical force. In saying that war is a phase of the natural struggle for existence, all I intended to convey was that a Supreme Being had absolutely nothing to do with it either as punishment or as discipline. It is a phase we ought to have outgrown long ago.

I now come to Mr. Russell's questions, the first of which is: "Does he think that any religion—Buddhism, Christianity, or other—will ever abolish the natural struggle for existence?" I hasten to declare that, in my opinion, the struggle for existence will never be abolished. Struggle is, indeed, a potent tonic of which we all stand in never-ceasing need; but I am equally certain that of this perpetual struggle war is only a phase, destined to be superseded. Under Humanism, as interpreted in modern sociology, it would be an entirely friendly and mutually helpful struggle. Now, between Christianity and early Buddhism there is practically nothing in common. As everyone fairly familiar with its teaching and history is aware, Buddhism is not a supernatural religion at all. It is rather a philosophy of life, a system of ethics, and it would be an accurate definition of it to call it Secularism, or Humanism. The supreme emphasis of the Buddha was upon self-reliance, and he hated war with perfect hatred. King Osoka's Edict, No. xiv., is as follows:—

> Piyadasi, the friend of the Devas, values alone the harvest of the next world. For this alone has this inscription been chiselled, that our sons and our grandsons should make no new conquests. Let them not think that conquests by the sword merit the name of conquests. Let them see their ruin, confusion, and violence. True conquests alone are the conquests of *Dharma* (Law).

Christianity, on the contrary, has never prohibited war, but has been directly responsible for an enormous

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amount of bloodshed. We are assured, however, that although Christianity has not put an end to war, it has introduced humaner methods of conducting war. This was the contention of Christian leaders, like Sir Robertson Nicoll, four and five years ago; but the present War has taken the ground completely from under their feet, for there never was a war more callously brutal and barbarous. As a matter of fact, what is now being so violently denounced as Prussian militarism is justified by Bernhardi on the ground that it is not at all out of harmony with Christian teaching. It is, indeed, claimed that the teaching of Christ "can never be adduced as an argument against the universal law of struggle, because "there never was a religion which was more combative than Christianity."

Let it be emphasized, then, that in practice Christianity has always encouraged militarism. While Origen was bound to maintain, in his controversy with Celsus, that Christianity was incompatible with military service in a Pagan State, he affirmed that "the prayers of the Christians were more efficacious than the swords of the legions." As Lecky puts it, "a great battle, on the issue of which the fortunes of a people or of a monarch depended, was supposed to be the special occasion of Providential interposition, and the hope of obtaining military success became one of the most frequent motives of conversion" (*History of European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 250). It is well known that Pope after Pope zealously advocated war, the Crusades, in particular, with all their unspeakable horrors, being directly due to their influence.

I am asked, if Christianity encourages militarism, "to point out where, in his teaching, the Founder of Christianity countenances or sanctions international war." Mr. Russell cannot be ignorant of the fact that Christianity encourages and has been responsible for many things which are neither directly nor indirectly sanctioned in the teaching of the Gospel Jesus. A short time prior to his secession to the Anglican Church, the Rev. R. J. Campbell read a paper on Christianity and the War before the Congregational Union, in which he argued that inasmuch as the Church has both permitted and caused numerous wars, we must conclude that in so doing she did not wholly misrepresent her Divine Head; or, in other words, that the Holy Spirit must have so guided her that she did but carry out the will of her Lord on the subject. That was an ingenious subterfuge not at all creditable to a man of God. The truth is that in the Four Gospels there is no expression of opinion on the subject of war. Though Jesus mentions the topic more than once, he utters not one word either for or against it. He declares that his supreme legacy to his disciples is peace, but the peace he promises to give them is not of a social or a political nature, but the peace which he enjoyed himself while at war with the beliefs and practices of his contemporaries. There are among us to-day many conscientious objectors to the War, who decline to enter upon military service on the ground that it would be an act of disloyalty to Christ; but neither in the Gospels nor the Epistles is war, as such, condemned. In Luke xxii. 37, 38, these strange words occur:—

> For I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in me, And he was reckoned with transgressors: for that which concerneth me hath fulfilment. And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

Equally significant is the following passage:—

> Think not that I came to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword (Matt. x. 34).

On another occasion (Luke xxii. 36), Jesus advised the disciple, who had neither purse nor wallet, to sell his cloke and buy a sword.

The conclusion to which I am inevitably brought is, first, that Christianity as a peace-making religion has been a tragic failure, and, secondly, that even in the New Testament war is simply taken for granted and used as an illustration, while in the Sacred Writings of Buddhism war is represented as an evil to be crushed out of existence. Our only hope for the future peace of the world lies in the upward evolution of mankind, which has been so seriously retarded hitherto by the prevalence of superstition. We are looking forward to the reorganization of society on the basis of security, equality, brotherhood, and universal goodwill, when we shall be able to clasp one another's hands and look into one another's eyes as members of a happy family, animated and governed by the royal law of love.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Tyranny of Theology.

> 'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
> Oh life, not death, for which we pant,
> More life, and fuller, than we want.—*Tennyson.*

Christians are justified in making the most of their men and women of genius, and Freethinkers do not quarrel with them on that account. For this reason we welcome the publication of a single volume edition of the works of Christina Rossetti, which sets the final seal of honour on a deserved reputation. That such fame will lessen there is not much reason to anticipate, for it has been founded on the slowly formed but sure appreciation of all good critics and lovers of real literature. It is, indeed, noteworthy that one family should have produced two such eminent poets as Christina and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Christina shared with her brother the delight in mediæval colouring and theme, and in the sensuous appeal of verse; but, unlike Dante Gabriel, she had a strong strain of superstition in her character, and she soon lost her vision of a brightly hued and romantic world, and turned her tired eyes to the contemplation of purely religious subjects.

At the first Christina Rossetti's verse exhibited a definite personality. It is, perhaps, her sex which renders her lyrics more bird-like than her brother's verses. It can be nothing but her constant experience of ill-health which made her dwell constantly on the morbid side of religion.

Death, which to Shelley and Swinburne and the Freethought poets seemed own brother to sleep, was to her a more horrific shape, and was a perennial subject for her verse. The constant burden of her muse was the mutability of human affairs. And when to physical ailments were added love disappointments, entirely caused by religious bigotry, there is small difficulty in understanding how Christina Rossetti became a devotional poet; and one of such distinction that only Crashaw, Donne, Vaughan, and Francis Thompson can be held her compeers. And Dr. Donne, be it remembered, mitigated his raptures concerning the Saviour by writing poems on such less sacred and more welcome subjects, as seeing his mistress getting into bed.

Many of Christina Rossetti's poems are very short, and are concerned with trite theological themes. In nothing is her undoubted power so much shown as in the fact that so few are commonplace. Had she not had genius, they might have sunk to the dead level of pious verse, orthodox in purpose, and contemptible in execution. The only trait she has in common with the ordinary hymn-writers is a certain morbidity in dwelling on the idea of immortality and the pathological side of religion.

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She disembowelled the Scriptures, and her brother, W. M. Rossetti, said, with justice, that if "all those passages which were directly or indirectly dependent upon what can be found in the Bible" had been taken out of Christina's verse, it "would have been reduced to something approaching a vacuum."

Starting her poetical career as the one woman member of the Pre-Raphaelite enthusiasts, she, naturally, showed the effect of that romantic spirit in her first mature poem, "Goblin Market," and in the less extravagant "Prince's Progress," both of which have all the glow and rich tints of Dante Rossetti's and William Morris's early works. The meditative and introspective sonnets of even her later years have something in common with this early artistic impulse. But what a change was there! It is impossible not to deplore the narrowing down and petrifying of Christina Rossetti's poetic interest. Here was a woman of warm blood and a passionate sense of beauty, who, with better health and satisfied affections, might have interpreted the joy of life. Instead, she turned with morbid pleasure to the contemplation of the sickly delights of a barren religiosity. She was a paradox, an anamoly; a Puritan among Anglo-Catholics; a nun outside the walls of the great lying Church. Necessarily preoccupied, as she was, with attenuated religious emotions, her melodies with difficulty escape monotony. And yet, again and again, Nature will out, and the old, half-forgotten romantic instinct asserts itself. The truth is, she was not a sacred, but a secular poet. Her religious bias forced her sympathies into wrong channels. To the real world she became indifferent. With actual life, its questionings, its humours, its perplexities, its despairs, its hopes, its loves, there is no sympathy in her poetry. Beyond the walls of her residence her tired eyes saw but a mad world rushing to perdition. Her idea of wisdom is to withdraw from the tumult into an inner shrine of pious meditation, disturbed only by feminine anxiety for the fate of the Christian Church.

Her piety was essentially of the womanly, prayerful, submissive kind, so attractive to priests of all ages and all countries. It asks no questions, it is posed by no problems. It only kneels in adoring awe, and gives money and service freely.

Naturally, her picture of "the world" is grim and forbidding:—

> Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy,
> And subtle serpents gliding in her hair.

And she fears lest her feet "cloven too, take hold on hell." This view of life blinds her eyes. When she notices the beauties of Nature, it is always through a religious haze. She could not rise to the art of Coleridge's—

> Hidden brook,
> In the leafy month of June,
> That to the sleeping woods all night
> Singeth a quiet tune.

Or to the magic of Meredith's—

> Hear the heart of wildness beat
> Like a centaur's hoof on sward.

Nor could she utter the brave defiance of Emily Bronte:—

> No coward soul is mine.

But she has a haunting music all her own:—

> When I am dead, my dearest,
> Sing no sad songs for me,
> Plant thou no roses at my head,
> Nor shady cypress tree;
> Be the grass green above me,
> With showers and dewdrops wet;
> And, if thou wilt, remember,
> And, if thou wilt, forget.

This, however, is an exception. Usually, her emotions were regulated and refined by ascetic priestly traditions, and this places her at a great disadvantage among singers of free utterance. At the worst, she is never crude, extravagant, or commonplace. She challenges comparison with the greatest of her sex. Mrs. Browning is the inevitable foil of Christina Rossetti, and the two suggest each other by the mere force of contrast. The author of *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, *Casa Guidi Windows*, and *The Cry of the Children* is the very antipodes of the woman who gave us the shy, devotional *New Poems*. There is none, of course, of Mrs. Browning's fluency in Miss Rossetti's work, but the sister-poet lacks the splendid humanity of the other. Christina Rossetti, despite her lyric gifts, hardly stands the comparison. How should she? A delicate spinster, she held the Christian superstition in the most absolute and most literal manner. Shadow, not light, was her nourishment, and her music was a delicate undertone. We long for something individual. Like the dying farm labourer, we like something concrete. His friends tried to solace him with the golden joys of heaven. He raised himself for a last word, "'Tis all very well for thee; but give I the "Pig and Whistle." His mortality, like that of most of us, was unequal to raptures "too severe." Christina Rossetti's life-work is, in its way, an impeachment of orthodoxy. In spite of its beautiful language, it explains nothing, and adds nothing to human knowledge, but leaves the world in the meshes of devilry, darkness, and despair.

Mimnermus.

The Story of the Sugar Industry.

III.

(Continued from p. 668.)

The modern discovery that two liquids of different densities when separated by a membrane, undergo the process of diffusion has had important bearings on the development of the sugar industry. When liquids diffuse through a membranous partition the lighter liquid passes into the heavier, while the denser diffuses into the less dense. When the denser liquid holds in solution a mixture of crystallizable and uncrystallizable constituents, the crystallizable ingredients will diffuse readily into the lighter liquid, while the uncrystallizable matters scarcely diffuse at all. This constitutes the remarkable phenomenon known as osmosis.

Those substances in solution which diffuse easily are termed crystalloids, while those that diffuse languidly or not at all are called colloids. Therefore, when a membrane separates a quantity of beetroot or sugar-cane juice containing crystallizable sugar mixed with gelatinous and other colloidal substances from the water lying on the other side of a membrane, the sugar solution which is crystalline, diffuses into the water, while the latter diffuses into the sugar juice until the liquids are of equal density. "If," we are told,

> the water containing the sugar were then drawn off and fresh water substituted the diffusion would recommence, and this process might be continued until the whole of the sugar had passed away in the form of a nearly pure solution, while the impurities would remain alone in the solution which was originally sugar juice. The membrane may be animal or vegetable—parchment paper, for instance, answers the purpose.

Now, the walls of plant cells form a natural diffusion medium, and the sugar contents of the beet or cane are immured within the cells. By the above outlined process of diffusion it was ascertained that sugar juice might be very conveniently extracted, especially in the case of the beet. With the cane the diffusion method is still in the course of development.

After the sugar juice from the cane has been pressed

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out by rollers a small quantity of lime is added to it, and the juice is then raised to the boiling point to secure the coagulation of its albuminous constituents. The liquid is then skimmed, after which it is conducted into a vacuum pan and boiled under reduced pressure until it becomes sufficiently concentrated to cool into a crystalline mass. The treacle is then separated from the sugar. At this stage the sugar is brown in colour. To obtain white sugar the raw material is dissolved in water, and the syrup left to slowly percolate through a bed of bone charcoal some 30 or 40 feet thick. This bone layer absorbs the colouring matter, and a white syrup runs through. When run into a frame a solid crystalline sugar loaf will be produced.

With the beet the roots are thinly sliced, and the slices are plunged into a series of vessels containing hot water, and, as a result of diffusion, a strong solution is obtained. This solution is ultimately drawn off, purified, and the clarified solution is concentrated in vacuum pans. In the sugar refiner's art the vacuum pan is important. For when the juice is overheated it suffers severely, and it is therefore essential to boil the sugar at a low temperature. In an ordinary vessel a solution of sugar must be heated above the boiling point of water (212 deg. F.) before it boils. In a partial vacuum, however, the solution boils violently at 160 deg. F., while it boils at a still lower temperature in a more perfect vacuum.

Some who are qualified to speak entertain the theory that the day is rapidly dawning when the inferior by-products of the refinery will be very substantially reduced. A larger and larger percentage of high quality sugar is anticipated with a material lessening in the quantity of exhausted molasses. Geerligs, the famous expert, holds this opinion, and few are better able to gauge the possibilities of recent departures in sugar manufacture.

In Jamaica, Demerara, and other places celebrated for their rum, the molasses is despatched to the distillery and manufactured into a stimulant, which, when taken in moderation, is an excellent drink. In other cane sugar regions the disposal of molasses is a more difficult task. It finds a market in some of the beet-sugar countries with the ordinary distillery, while in Germany it is sent to special refineries which actually evolve sugar from it by chemical agencies. But in several countries molasses is at a discount. Mixed with the pith of the sugar cane, molasses forms a nourishing cattle food, but where the syrup cannot otherwise be disposed of, it serves as fuel, or is utilized as a manure for the land.

The old sugar loaf lingered until the 'eighties of the past century, but it has now disappeared from England. The lengthy, laborious, and expensive processes essential to its production have been superseded by the highly efficient and economical methods which provide us with our cube sugar. The name of Eugen Langen must ever be identified with this reform, for he was the pioneer in the revolution which furnished cheap, clean, and conveniently cut sugar. As an English expert says:—

> To see Langen's beetroot sugar factory at Elsdorf turning out fine cube sugar straight from the beetroot juice was a real treat to anyone who appreciates the pleasure of seeing things well done; everything clean, everything tidy and handy, no mess on the floors, and a complete chemical control of all the operators. He used to describe every sugar refinery devoid of these virtues as a Schweinerei—pigsty.

The world's cane sugar crop for the season 1908-9 totalled 7,664,631 tons, and of this aggregate over seven million tons were grown in Asia and America. In later years marked progress has occurred in Louisiana despite the disadvantage of occasional frosts, but the cane industry is there treated by the United States authorities as a youthful undertaking, and its products enter the home markets duty free. Porto Rico, a tropical island with a splendid soil, enjoys the same paternal favours as Louisiana, and its planters pursue a progressive system of culture. Since their absorption by the States the Sandwich Islands have made extraordinary progress. While under Spanish rule in 1857, the output of these islands was a beggarly 313 tons of sugar, and their production increased very slowly. But, in 1898, when the isles were annexed to America, the crop was over a quarter of a million tons, a total now considerably more than doubled.

Were the Cuban sugar producers to find their Burbank their prospects would be bright indeed. Prior to the insurrection in Cuba that island's output approached 1,000,000 tons annually, but its internal troubles nearly ruined the industry. With more settled conditions and a guaranteed market for her supplies, Cuba is rapidly rising to the premier position among cane-growing communities. At present there is a race for supremacy between the West Indian island and the Dutch pearl of the Orient, the beautiful land of Java. Cuba is busily promoting her transit improvements to link up plantation with factory and factory with port.

In consequence of the European beet sugar bounties and other adverse circumstances, the British West Indies were heavily handicapped, so much so, that in some old sugar centres, the cane was abandoned. Now that beet sugar is no longer unfairly fostered, these famous sugar colonies are returning to cane production. India is a great sugar region, but, owing to various detrimental factors, that wonderful peninsula lags sadly in the rear. In Australia the sugar industry flourishes in North Queensland. The primitive methods of last century have been supplanted by modern scientific processes; the Australians have composed their labour difficulties in their own way, and the cane is assisted by preferential treatment in the colonial markets. Mauritius was much esteemed for its splendid sugar, but the people failed to move with the times. Falling places told against the colony, and the country was smitten with a disease which exterminated its cattle, thus depriving it of its only beasts of burden. To make matters worse a most disastrous cyclone swept over Mauritius. Fortunately the Colonial Office helped the colonists to build light railways to carry the crops previously drawn by the cattle to the mills. Prices improved; the old-fashioned factories were replaced by modern buildings. Labour is still a serious problem, and cyclones may occur at any time, but otherwise prospects of complete recovery are very good.

The Philippine Islands are being encouraged by their American masters in the cane planter's art. It was decided to admit 300,000 tons of sugar yearly from the Philippines into the United States free of duty, but the Senate stipulated that this favoured sugar must be produced in the factories already in existence in the islands, which are mainly the property of the native population. But a coach and six will almost certainly be driven through this safeguard by the eager and enterprizing American capitalists.

T. F. Palmer.

(To be concluded.)

It is beautiful that Force should have Right for a master, that Progress should have Courage as a leader, that Intelligence should have Honour as a sovereign, that Conscience should have Duty as a despot, that Civilization should have Liberty as a queen, and that the servant of Ignorance should be the Light.—*Victor Hugo.*

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The Need for Definition.

The essential condition of Freethought is clearness. Conversely, a fruitful cause of muddled thought, and therefore of superstition and surrender to dogmatism, is the use of words without a clear conception of their meaning. Many a contradiction in terms passes muster as good mental currency, simply because the terms are left so vague as to leave the contradiction unperceived. Freethinkers will do well, when engaged in controversy, to insist on their opponents defining in advance every term they use, the meaning of which is not too obvious to juggle with; and, of course, they should be ready to do the same with their own. I propose in this article to advance a few such definitions, and to illustrate their utility in controversy, especially in the stock controversies as to "God, freedom and immortality."

1. *Body* or *Matter*. Anything which, under any conditions whatever, can cause sensation.

Nuttall's Dictionary gives, for "matter," "that which occupies space, and is perceptible to the senses"—a definition which has the drawback of saying too much. It is better to leave "space" out of the definition. One thing is quite certain, namely, that the ordinary man means by "matter" something objective, and not (as Berkeleyans allege) a mere "idea" of his own. When we say that the sun contains a given quantity of matter at a high temperature, we do not mean that the sun contains a given quantity of "ideas" at a high temperature—which is meaningless. I prefer, therefore, to define matter simply as above, emphasizing its objective character (as the cause of sensation) and leaving open the question of the nature of space.

The bearing of this definition on "spirit" phenomena is obvious. Nothing perceived by the senses can be evidence of anything immaterial, except by a chain of reasoning, the onus of establishing which, rests with those who uphold that conclusion.

2. *Mind* or *soul*. Anything capable of consciousness. I can find no other definition of these terms which gives a clear notion of what is intended. Nor have I ever met with anyone who could give an intelligible account of the distinction between "mind" and "soul." It will be well, for practical purposes, to treat them as synonymous, and thereby effectively "dish" at once the clerical profession, who would import into the word "soul" an indefinable, emotional significance which serves no purpose but to assist their theological jugglery, and the Spiritualists, who make free use of such a word as "psychical," trusting to the ignorance of the public, or else ignorant themselves of the fact that it means simply "mental" and nothing more.

The definition of "mind" and "soul" given above disposes, firstly, of the alleged incompatibility between the attributes of mind and matter. No reason can be shown why mind, or that which is capable of consciousness, should be necessarily immaterial, or incapable under any conditions of affecting the senses; and no argument, therefore, can be admitted which begins by assuming this.

Secondly, our definitions of mind and matter have a certain bearing on that much-used expression, "a disembodied spirit." A soul without a body would mean something capable of consciousness, yet deprived of sight, touch, hearing, and every other avenue of sensation, and unable therefore to be conscious even of itself, since we distinguish ourselves from our surroundings only through our bodies! It is difficult to think that those who uphold the existence of disembodied spirits fully realize what they are out to maintain. As a matter of fact, nearly every reference to the "spirit world" in literature, from the Bible to the latest work of Sir Oliver Lodge, implies physical organization in the "spirits"—implies sight, hearing, touch, and susceptibility to pleasure and pain of distinctly physical sorts: a sure sign, that however much people may speak and write of "discarnate" beings, they are totally unable to *think* of them. Once admit, however, that these alleged beings have any sort of body, and they become subject-matter for the zoologist. We want to know what they look like, how they are organized, how they subsist, how they move and communicate. The writers of the Bible at least vouchsafe some information on these points; but the modern Spiritualist is regrettably evasive!

3. *Freedom*. Absence of compulsion by a given agency, or by any agency whatever.

As this definition indicates, "freedom" is a word used either relatively or absolutely. Its use in common speech is invariably relative. A free man, as distinct from a slave, is one exempt from the relation of ownership by another. We also call a bachelor or spinster "free," as being exempt from the tie of matrimony. Freethought means thought emancipated from the obligation to accept dogmas on authority. All these are cases of the relative use of the word, and present no difficulty. And if the term "free will" were used equally in a relative sense to denote acts which were directly due to causes within, and not outside, the mind of the doer, there would be no dispute as to its legitimacy; though there would remain a class of acts "on the borderline" of freedom, such as acts done in delirium, mania, or intoxication, which would be as impossible to classify as the colour of a dirty collar. This is not, however, the sense in which the advocates of "free will" use the term. They mean to imply the existence of acts of volition which have no cause at all, and which could have been different without any difference in their antecedents. This is what "free will" means in the strict sense; and perhaps the best comment on it is that its own advocates do not uphold it, except when actually engaged in controversy. Whenever it is asked *why* so-and-so did this when he might have done that, it is implied that the act must have had a determining cause. Whenever we remark that a certain act "shows what the man's made of," or that it is "what you would expect of him," or "not what you would expect," we take for granted that it is the necessary outcome of elements in his nature, suspected or unsuspected by us. The sole motive for the advocacy of "free will" will be found to be an idea that it is practically desirable to uphold the doctrine in the interests of morality—a consideration totally irrelevant to scientific or philosophic truth. The fuller discussion of this would take too long for me to venture on it here, and I must rest content with having stated the issue.

4. *God*. A supposed superhuman mind or minds, exercising immense, if not infinite, power over the universe, possessing ideal moral attributes, and therefore claiming the worship and obedience of mankind.

The definition of this term is the most thorny, and also the most important, preliminary problem of any discussion on religion. The definition I have given would not by any means cover all the notions of godhead which have been put forward by man, from the writers of cuneiform tablets to Mr. Wells; but I defy anyone to frame a definition which would do this. Down to the time of Plato, at any rate, moral perfection was no essential part of the attributes of deity; and in modern times, from Spinoza on, there has been a tendency in philosophic circles to whittle down the idea of God to little more than that of an underlying unity pervading phenomena. Apart from this last tendency, which has

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little or no popular vogue (and is not meant to have any), the definition I have given covers pretty well the ideas of God prevalent in civilized countries since the rise of Christianity.

The first thing to do with any disputant who upholds the existence of God is to pin him down to a statement as to whether he believes his God to be almighty or not. Generally he will decide in the affirmative. He can then be impaled on the horns of the historic dilemma as to the compatibility of divine omnipotence with divine perfection, which every Freethinker worth his salt will know how to press home. If he elects for a God of limited power (and, therefore, a God who is *not* the creator of the universe, and *not* supreme over it), it lies with him to show reasons for believing in such a being. He will probably attempt to get away from the difficulty with a reference to conscience, or to man's ideas of truth, beauty, and goodness. If he tries this, it will be time gently but firmly to remind him that he set out to prove, not the existence of these things, but the existence of God, as above defined, and that the shortest distance to a point is not to describe a circle round it, but to go straight at it!

I hope hereby to have illustrated with sufficient brevity the great use in controversy of framing definitions and insisting on their being adhered to. In practice, it will be found that religious apologists are one of three kinds. Either they are dogmatists who do not try to think freely, and who resent your trying, in which case argument with them is waste of time; or they are people who have not defined their terms, and are consequently the slaves of words, in which case a course of definition will do them no harm; or they are Freethinkers at heart, who, for reasons best known to themselves, use words in an esoteric sense, and not in that which plain people appreciate. In this case it is the duty of Freethinkers who prefer plain speaking to see to it that the issue is not confused by such equivocation.

Robert Arch.

Acid Drops.

We have had the Angels of Mons legends exploited by various people, but Mr. Bottomley is evidently convinced that this legend didn't exhaust the gullability of the more ignorant section of the British public. And, writing in the *Sunday Pictorial*, in between hints as to what he said to Haig and Haig said to him, he proceeds to tell his readers all about the miracle of the Virgin of Albert. This is the way Mr. Bottomley writes:—

> Now come with me to Albert Cathedral, and be prepared for an even more wonderful "freak." How it haunts me! And how grateful I shall be to you very clever and learned men, who understand these matters, if you will kindly explain it all to me! Towering above the cathedral was a big square steeple. Surmounting the steeple was a magnificent figure, in carved and gilded wood, of the Madonna and Child—it was one of the great sights of France.....That steeple formed a fine target for the enemy guns, and it was badly hit. Great, gaping wounds show you its interior; huge stones are suspended by the iron "braces" which once held them in position. Just below the base of that figure of the Madonna there had been a direct hit by a shell. The place was pointed out to me by an officer who was in the battle. "Our eyes instinctively turned to the Madonna," he said; "the beautiful thing trembled and then suddenly bent over at right angles to the steeple. We held our breath and waited for the crash—*but it never came*, as you see." And, sure enough, there is the Madonna still, leaning over the old desolated town, with the holy infant in her arms. Many shells have burst round her since she fell, but none has touched her. It is the most impressive spectacle that human eye ever looked upon.....
>
> Again, I know I shall be told it was mere "coincidence." .....Well, perhaps you are right. But the fact remains that the faithful, patient folk of Arras and of Albert will never believe any other theory than that in the zenith of the Devil's triumph God raised His hand to shield from harm the sacred emblems which the souls of men and women for two thousand years have endowed with the sanctity of the story of the birth of His son—at Whose shrine they have worshipped and found comfort, and Whose stately presence still amongst them helps them to believe that deep down in all this tragedy of blood and tears there may yet be some divine purpose which it is not for them, they think, to question or to understand.

We might be moved to tears by Mr. Bottomley's pathos (or bathos) were it not that we happen to know the truth of this miracle of the Virgin. *If* Mr. Bottomley has really been to Albert, and if the officer spoke to him as above, then we can only say that Mr. Bottomley failed to use his eyes, and the British officer was simply "pulling his leg." *There is no miracle whatever about the present position of the statue.* And the explanation is a prosaic one. We go further and say that the Germans would be very pleased if the statue stood in its original position. We do not care to say more at present, but we challenge Mr. Bottomley to tell his readers the truth on this point. The confidant of Haig, and the guide of the Government must know the truth on this matter.

"God has called us by name," says a German officer. So have other people; but the names are quite unprintable.

The suggestion at a London Military Tribunal that the manufacture of women's hats is not of national importance roused the ire of some editors, who, probably, remembered the millinery advertisers. One editor interviewed a lady, who said, pointedly, "What are we to do on Sundays? Are we not to go to church?"

An evening paper has been protesting against the payment of £10,000 a year to two judges. The Bench of Bishops absorbs a very large sum of money annually, but pious editors never think of protesting.

The Bishop of London has been trying to gloss the parsons' share in the War. He says that fifty-nine chaplains have been killed and seventy wounded, "so we are taking our part in the thickest of the battle." The Bishop did not add that there are about 25,000 Church of England clergy, and that the Army chaplains are non-combatants, and receive officers' pay. Nor did he say anything concerning the special exemption from military service of all ministers of religion. Most parsons prefer to read of "the thickest of the battle" in the security of their own homes.

"The City needs cheering up in this fourth year of the War," says this delightful Bishop of London. The emptiness of the City Churches shows that the cup that cheers is not the communion cup.

A bequest of £1,700 to George Muller's Orphanage, Bristol, reminds us that the founder of that Christian institution was born in Prussia, and he boasted that it was supported by voluntary contributions given in answer to prayer. Yet the dear, truthful, clergy will insist that all Prussians are Atheists.

"Get down as low as possible," advises Sir Francis Lloyd. The lowest thing we know is the Christian Evidence Society.

The War is not hastening the promised revival of religion. Sir W. F. Barrett, F.R.S., writing in the *Sunday Times*, says "the consolations of religion are not felt as they might or ought to be." It is as well, for one of the consolations of religion is that so many people go to Hades.

Rev. P. J. Kelly, Vicar of Collingham, who left home recently, ostensibly to join the R. G. A., has been unfrocked by his Bishop for immorality. He left a wife and six children at the rectory, and a young woman, a nurse, left the village at the same time as the vicar. The *Eastern Daily Press* of October 19 reports the conviction of John Kells, aged 15½, for an offence against a girl of eleven. The rector

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said the lad was a member of the Sunday-school and the church choir. There is no moral—for Christians—in either of these cases.

The dear *Daily News* has been airing the perplexity of a "London minister," presumably a Nonconformist, concerning the copyright of the Bible, and says that the copyright being the property of the Syndics of the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge is a "monopoly," and a little like "profiteering." The plain fact is that, by Act of Parliament, the printing of the Bible is entrusted to the University Presses to ensure accuracy of the text. If any publisher could print an edition of the Bible, the text would soon become inexact, and the Christian fold would be, if possible, still more full of malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness.

It is fashionable to sneer at the educational value of lectures, but Mr. Will Thorne, M.P., tells a different story. He says that he went to work so young that he had no schooling, but received his education at the corners of factories and workshops, and by listening to lecturers.

"All the English history that I know," says Sir R. Baden-Powell, "was learnt from the cinema." This suggests filmy eyed innocence.

What quaint ideas are circulated by the pious press. The *Daily News* recently printed a letter stating that "the main qualifications for a parson seem to be the ability to live on love and air." This is beautiful nonsense. Thirty-nine ecclesiastics of the Established Church share £180,700 annually, whilst the leading Nonconformist ministers follow in the footsteps of the Carpenter of Nazareth with salaries equal to those of Cabinet Ministers.

The *Divine Valley News* of a recent date contains an interesting letter from a Conscientious Objector on his prison experience. Dealing with the warders he says:—

> Now we come to the warders. What shall we say of them? I know how I feel about them. But then, in Philosophy, I'm a Determinist. I believe that man does what he must, and, after all, a warder is a man, however much he may resemble a beast. It is his misfortune to be what he is, as it is mine to be what I am, therefore, let us be lenient. Warders are drawn from two sources—the Highlands in Scotland, the Army in England. When they want a batch of warders for Scottish prisons a party is sent to the Highlands to lasso a number of Highland ghillies and bring them to the Lowlands, where they are taught how to put on trousers and open and shut doors, and then their training is complete! In England they are recruited from the Army—discharged men who have been unable to find work as billiard-markers, etc. Both classes possess the same qualifications—the fewness of their ideas! The one has been driving sheep for years, the other has been driven like sheep. Both are susceptible to that prison disease "systematus," and generally "take" with the first inoculation. When I pray at nights I sometimes wonder who I shall mention first—the prisoner or the warder. Both have a good case for a first call. Both are prisoners, only the warder dines outside; but for this privilege he pays a heavy price—he's a life-sentence man.

We gather from the article that the writer is not an avowed Freethinker, and his remarks on religion in prison are, for that reason the more interesting:—

> We have another strange specimen in prison—the Prison Chaplain. No friend of "Charlie's," but equally humorous. What he has done to be kept there I don't know, and what he does that he should be kept there I also don't know. The first one who came to console me in my sorrow had a breath that was sufficient to put a man "on the fuddle" for a month. We didn't agree, somehow, and he, being a Biblical man, acted on Paul's advice—*i.e.*, if you cannot love your enemies, avoid them. He never came back again. I remember a funny little incident happening in church one day. In church you sit apart, and a warder sits on an elevated chair, built at the end of every second seat. He watches while we pray. You must open your Bible whether you can read or not. Well, this day a little Englishman was sitting with his Bible closed. Mr. Warder got his eye on him. "Open your Bible," he cried. "I can't read," replied Mr. Cockney. "It disna' matter, a damn, open your Bible." Then we all prayed.

Is not England the land of the open Bible?

"Stanley converted Mutesa [King of Uganda died 1884] to Christianity, which he professed for a time; he actually ordered the Christian Sabbath to be kept throughout the land, and not only promised Stanley that he would build churches throughout his kingdom, but he asked him to go back to England and send missionaries out to Uganda. The missionaries were sent, and they were welcomed by Mutesa. But their quarrels and disputes disgusted him so much that he asked both parties to return to Europe and decide which was the true religion, and said that when they had settled the problem amongst themselves, they could come back and tell him."—*By the Waters of Africa*, 1917, by Norma Lorimer, a lady-traveller. She cites Dr. J. W. Gregory.

A picture was published in an illustrated daily paper showing the students at Birmingham University marching to church, and the procession was headed by Sir Oliver Lodge in full robes. Perhaps that was one of the reasons why the editor styled Sir Oliver "a distinguished scientist."

Dr. Horton's *Autobiography* throws considerable light on clerical methods. He once determined to preach in support of a crusade against the music-halls. "Then it occurred to me," he says, "that I had never been to a music-hall." So he went once, and preached his sermon. Judging by their remarks, that is how most parsons treat social matters.

At Hascombe, Surrey, the local Wesleyans have a room, over a public-house, where harvest festival was celebrated. Those aloft sang "Come, ye thankful people, come," while down below the worshippers of Bacchus emptied tankards.

The clergy like to mix a little business with their philanthropy. A South London parson, who opened his church hall for shelter from air-raids, conducted short services with prayers and hymns.

The Rev. Bernard Snell, President of the Congregational Union, quoted Lord Morley in his presidential address. The words are worth repeating, "The pulpit is a belt which has slipped off the driving wheel of the world."

The Bishop of Birmingham says our boys at the Front can do without haloes. Of course they can. The muscular curates of military age have so much more need of that sacred ornament.

An attempt is being made to introduce more definite religious teaching into the elementary schools in Wales. The initial programme is a religious service each day, to consist of a Welsh hymn, the Lord's Prayer, a reading from the Bible, and an English hymn. More, we presume, is to follow if this aim is accomplished. The scheme is supported, it is said, by leading Nonconformists as well as Churchmen. We hope that Freethinkers and other reformers in Wales will keep their eyes on this new move. The work of education is being taken very seriously in Wales just now, and it would be a pity to allow this energy to be turned into the wrong channels.

An article in a monthly review by a clergyman bears the alluring title, "Our Sons Have Shown Us God." It is hard to discover what is meant in the dimness of a rhetorical twilight; but the sons of the British Empire patronise a varied selection of gods, ranging from Mumbo Jumbo to the Man of Sorrows.

An article in a daily paper bore the quaint title, "The Soldier with Nothing to Do." It sounds as if it referred to the Church or Salvation Armies.

An article appeared in a daily newspaper with the title of "The Great Unpaid Profession." It did not refer to the clergy.

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To Correspondents.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 28, London; November 4, Abertillery; November 18, Birmingham; November 25, Nuneaton.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—November 18, Manchester; November 11, Glasgow; November 12, Falkirk.

E. Brace (West Africa).—The history of the War seems against your position. War itself is an act of reprisal, and the whole progress of this War has shown that there is an ascending—or descending—scale of "frightfulness." Germany uses gas, and we are forced to follow suit in self-protection. We blockade Germany, and Germany retorts by declaring a blockade of England with submarines. Gas is followed by jets of flame and burning oil, etc. Whatever may be said for reprisals, it is clear they do not make for less brutal methods of warfare.

Mr. W. Mann is anxious to obtain copies of the Reports of the Seybert Commission on Spiritualism published in Philadelphia. The Reports are out of print, but some of our readers may be able to help. If any possessing copies do not wish to sell, perhaps they would not mind loaning the Reports. Address this office.

F. Lonsdale.—No notice reached us. It would have appeared had it done so.

H. Elliot.—We sincerely hope that you will more than equal your past twenty years' reading of the *Freethinker*.

E. R.—We are very grateful indeed for all that our readers are doing all over the country to secure new readers. The results of their efforts are both encouraging and helpful.

A. Lester.—We much regret to hear of the death—in action—of F. Lester. Please accept our sincere condolence.

G. Garrett.—Thanks for good wishes. If each does their share, the burden will be practically imperceptible.

C. G. Crooke.—We were not aware of what you state, but will bear the matter in mind. So far as we are concerned, we should certainly check any such disposition.

W. R.—Please call. We are always pleased to see those interested in the Cause. Time is never wasted in that direction.

Hugh Devlin.—The journal you name is no longer in existence.

E. Butler.—The omission is very obvious. Will deal with it next week.

W. P. Jacob.—*All* slaveholders were compensated by the British Government when the shares were liberated in Jamaica. We cannot say at the moment whether the Church Missionary Society then held slaves there. It is certain that Christians did.

We offer our apologies to many correspondents whose letters are obliged to stand over until next week. We have also to refrain from noticing quite a number of interesting newspaper cuttings to hand. These will, in most cases, be dealt with in our next 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.

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 do not care to let October pass without an "In Memoriam" note on the death of our late editor and leader, G. W. Foote. His death, two years ago, robbed the Freethought world of a fearless and uncompromising fighter, and we have the best of reasons for knowing in what great appreciation his work was held. Had he chosen any other walk in life—either politics or literature—his success would have been assured. It is our gain and, ultimately, the world's gain that he preferred a task which, while it meant a smaller measure of public recognition, meant also a concentration of energy on a work the importance of which cannot well be over-estimated. Thirty-five years' editorship of this journal, with twenty-five years' presidency of the N. S. S., represents a record of which any man might feel proud. G. W. Foote was content to be known only as a soldier in the service of humanity. In that war of human liberation his zeal never flagged. He wielded a sword to the end, and when the weapon fell from his grasp, the world of Freethought freely recognized that it had lost one of its most brilliant champions. The recognition of his qualities and services by a larger public belongs to history and the future.

We hope London readers will make a special note of the Interim Conference held in London to-day, afternoon and evening. Full particulars will be found in another column. Mr. Cohen takes the chair at both meetings.

The winter programme at Manchester opened well with two lectures by Mr. Cohen on Sunday last. Both meetings were good, and the audience enthusiastic. The Secretary, Mr. Black, occupied the chair on both occasions, and made a very pressing appeal for new members. We were glad to learn that this resulted in a number of membership forms being duly filled up and handed in. A very pleasing feature of the meetings was the large number of ladies present. It was good to know that there was a very brisk sale of literature. Altogether a gratifying day.

Next week (Sunday, November 4) Mr. Cohen lectures in Abertillery. There will be two meetings, afternoon and evening, and we expect there will be the usual gathering of friends from the surrounding districts.

We have received the following from a correspondent known to us many years ago in England:—

> The first meeting of the "Society of Freethinkers of the Caucasus" to take place in Baku was held on August 30 last (September 12), the audience numbering over three hundred. M. Ooshakoff, of Tiflis, was the speaker, and dwelt at length on the trend of modern Freethought in religious matters and the objects of the Society. Referring to the abuses prevalent among the clergy under the late inglorious reign and the attitude of the Church towards all reform, the lecturer invited his audience to welcome the law of July 14, which guarantees absolute freedom of conscience, and to avail themselves of the new institutions of civil marriage and divorce. He also appealed to them to lend their assistance towards bringing about an early dissolution between the Church and the State. Notwithstanding the decidedly heated character of the discussion which followed the lecture, and in which two priests of the orthodox Church took part, there was no disorder, and the meeting dispersed at midnight, many of the audience collecting in knots outside the building to discuss points that had arisen in the course of the debate. The Society has appointed a permanent secretary at Baku for the enrolment of members.

The Secretary of the Swansea Branch of the N. S. S. wishes to make a special appeal to all Freethinkers in the locality for assistance in conducting their winter campaign. The Committee is full of enthusiasm, and we hope that this will not be damped by any lack of ardour on the part of those who are desirous of seeing the work go forward. There are all the elements in Swansea for the creation of a really strong Society, and we sincerely trust that this will not be prevented by even an apparent lukewarmness on the part of Freethinkers. The Secretary is Mr. B. Dupree, 12 Short Street, Swansea.

Will Freethinkers in Southampton and neighbourhood who are desirous of forming a Branch of the N. S. S. please communicate with Mr. A. A. Wildman, 100 Clovelly Road, Southampton? We are informed that the address of the local *Freethinker* newsagent is Messrs. Woodger & Son, St. Mary's, Southampton.

We are glad to learn that the Birmingham experiment in the Repertory Theatre is proceeding well. Mr. Clifford Williams had a good, and improved, audience on Sunday last, and there is every prospect of the course being continued throughout the winter. Mr. Willis is the next lecturer, and we hope the meeting will mark a still further advance.

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"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

Seventh List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £304 1s. 4d. Harold Elliott, 5s. Per F. Lonsdale—D. Watt, 2s. 6d.; J. Harrison, 3s. 6d.; F. Lonsdale, 2s. 6d.; M. Parker, 2s. 6d.; A. Little, 3s.; Mr. Harley, 2s.; Mr. Learmont, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Falconer, 1s.; Mrs. F. Lonsdale, 2s. 6d.; Total, £1 2s. 6d. A. J. Fincken, £5. A. Laing, £5 5s. F. H. H., 5s. Rogers George, 3s. In appreciation of Mr. Lloyd's Swansea Lectures, £1 1s. Bob and Dossie Polworth, 5s. E. C., per A. Millar, 10s. J. Burrell, 2s. 6d. C. T. Barker, 10s. W. J. Young, 5s. Miss A. M. Baker, £2. Mr. and Mrs. G. Garrett, 5s. T. Walker, 3s. 3d. Sapper Cornock, 6d. Corpl. A. L. Smith, 7s. 4d. C. F. Simpson, £1. C. W. Marshall, 10s. Per Miss Vance—W. T. White, 4s.; H. Spence, 5s. Total, £323 8s. 5d.

Correction—Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Rosetti, 10s., in our acknowledgments for October 13, should have read 4s.; and W. W. Braddock, 7s. 6d., in last week's list, should have read a few members of the Battersea Branch, N. S. S., 7s. 6d., per W. W. Braddock.

God and Gold.

It is hard to estimate the vast sum of human misery caused by the superstitious belief in God as a necessary factor in Nature and in gold as a necessary factor in that easy exchange of goods and services which makes civilized life possible. Not only so, but many intelligent men who have emancipated themselves from the God superstition still go in bondage to the great Gold Fetish, as Mr. Arthur Kitson so well calls it in his last book, *Trade Fallacies*.

Yet these two false beliefs, so potent for social harm, have many points of similarity, a consideration of which will help to clear the mental atmosphere, and thus lead to a higher stage of civilization than the present sordid scramble for wealth-without-work, and the unnatural solace of an impossible heaven beyond the sky for the inevitable dissatisfaction which is the lot of rich and poor alike. As T. L. M'Cready so finely says:—

> Man learns to conquer the universe; to produce wealth with ever-diminishing effort, to harness Natures forces and make them do his bidding. But, like Dead Sea apples, his wealth turns to ashes in his mouth and yields him no satisfaction. For with wealth comes poverty, hand in hand, making the vast majority of the workers to toil in hopeless misery and the few thousands of idle millionaires to stagnate in a slough of unearned luxury.
>
> Day by day, this spectre of undeserved and unnecessary Poverty grows and swells, repulsive, threatening, terrifying our souls. We must dig down into the roots of things and find its cause, and digging thus we lay bare superstition after superstition.

You will observe that the high priests of God—the Popes and Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops—all reside in fine mansions, well supplied by the workers with every kind of comfort and luxury. And the high priests of Gold—the cosmopolitan financiers, banking magnates, and cunning Stock Exchange manipulators—also reside in their palatial mansions in Park Lane and Fifth Avenue. Not one of these men has rendered any useful service to the workers in exchange for the unearned wealth at their command, and yet so profound is the public ignorance of finance that they are regarded as the very pillars of society.

Again, consider the places devoted to the worship of these two great fetishes, God and Gold. Every civilized country is studded with great cathedrals and churches adorned with costly carvings and painted windows, where an ornate service is carried on to placate a God so incomprehensible that not one of those who profess to believe in his existence can give a reasonable definition of him, or point to a single instance of his interference with the well-known laws of Nature.

And the Gold Fetish is also honoured with magnificent buildings—palatial Banks and Stock Exchanges; while a vast amount of labour is constantly expended on extracting him from the bowels of the earth in distant lands, carrying him carefully to the great commercial centres, and again consigning him to the earth in some great Bank; yet not one of his worshippers can tell you in what way he is of the slightest use in exchanging goods and services, or why he should be produced at all, save for a few trifling purposes of decoration.

Just as the religious devotee is led by an acolyte into a shrine to gaze with awe at some picture of his useless God, whom he fondly imagines to be the very pivot of the natural universe, so is the economic devotee led into the vault of a bank to gaze at the blocks of useless bullion, which he imagines to be the very pivot of the commercial universe.

Furthermore, just as many books have been written to expound the nature and function of the useless God, so also have many been written about Gold and its imaginary powers.

Again, the high priests of the useless God make huge claims on the workers for their services to them in placating the useless God, and thus enabling them to obtain admission to an impossible heaven; while the high priests of the useless Gold pile up mountains of ever-increasing spurious claims on the workers for their services in enabling them to exchange their goods and services.

Furthermore, as the high priests of Gold have tried to prevent sceptics in the divinity of their fetish from putting their ideas of a currency, based on the productive power of the workers, into actual practice, by their Bank Charter Acts and Legal Tender Laws, on the specious plea of saving their bodies from robbery, so also have the high priests of God tried to prevent sceptics from preaching and practising their views by their Blasphemy Laws, on the specious plea of saving their souls from everlasting torment.

Again, the high priests of God teach their deluded victims that eternal happiness is only obtainable by abstinence from all the natural pleasures of this life, and through the vicarious suffering and labour of the Man of Cavalry; while the high priests of Gold maintain that the pleasures of an everlasting unearned income are a fair reward for abstinence, and obtainable through the vicarious suffering and labour of the men of the mines and factories. And it will be observed that this lauded abstinence is not practised by the high priests of either fetish themselves; the luxurious lives of the millionaires and their friends, the dignitaries of the Church, being somewhat notorious. As the monks and nuns were denied the wholesome gratification of their appetites, so are the rank and file of the army of Gold denied decent marriage at the proper age, and the streets in consequence swarm with prostitutes, driven there by the cunning and greed of the high priests of Gold.

Now, to anybody who has emancipated himself from the baneful belief in the Gold Fetish, it is manifest that banking is nothing more than the bookkeeping of commerce, and that the money now in use, to wit, cheques and currency notes, are simply claims to wealth, conveying credit from hand to hand. From this it is obvious that no exchange is completed until the money received by the creditor is converted into the goods or services

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he may require, or passed on by him in liquidation of some debt he owes. In short, the principle that goods and services are always exchanged for other goods—and services of equal value, remains as true now as in the old days of barter, the money nexus not altering it in the least.

Applying this principle to the many exchanges necessitated by this great War, it at once becomes apparent that all the persons engaged in it, *i.e.*, the actual fighters and all those who are supplying them with everything they want, are being paid from day to day in the goods and services they are receiving daily in exchange for their services. To make my meaning clear, consider the position in the old days before the invention of money, which is merely a contrivance for avoiding the great loss of time and labour involved by barter. When a nation was attacked, most of the able-bodied men were withdrawn from their usual productive work in order to fight against the foe, while the rest of their co-workers, including many of the women, had not only to work ever so much harder in order to supply the fighters with everything they required, and also to support themselves and the children, and other helpless people. The only war debts that could then have existed were pensions for disabled fighters or indemnities exacted by a victorious foe, which were paid in kind.

This should be precisely the position with us to-day, the money nexus not altering it in any essential respect. But instead of our gallant fighters returning home to a well-earned rest after their arduous exertions in the field, and the enjoyment of ample pensions by such as have been disabled, they will find themselves confronted with the preposterous claims of a few thousand idle millionaires who have rendered them no service and contributed no goods for the War. So high are these claims already that Mr. A. D. Hall, the Permanent secretary of the Board of Agriculture, said the other day: "We have to recognize that the mere claims of the debt which will weigh upon the nation mean that every working man and woman will have to put in about a quarter of the working day in paying off that debt." And this spurious debt and interest charges are rising rapidly all the time, so that they will probably be double their present size before the War is over, which means that every working man and woman will have to surrender one-half of their hard-earned wages to meet these preposterous claims!

On page 169 of *Trade Fallacies*, Mr. Arthur Kitson says:—

> The future victims of this frenzied finance will regard this war loan as the greatest monument to British financial lunacy that has ever been raised!.....The Government have contracted to pay first a bonus of 5 per cent. and second an annuity of 5 per cent. to every subscriber for contributing towards a sum of credit which the Government already controlled, and which could have been made effective by the mere stroke of a pen.

Of course, the Government could have paid all its creditors (sailors, soldiers, and contractors) with currency notes or cheques drawn against the vast credit of the Empire, which includes and far exceeds the credit of all the banks against which the cheques of subscribers to the War Loan are drawn. But instead of doing this simple and obvious thing, the Government has exchanged its own superior credit for the inferior credit of the banks, and paid both a 5 per cent. bonus and annuity for this accommodation.

You see, the high priests of the great Gold Fetish were consulted by the Government, and asserted that no money was sound unless based on him, notwithstanding the patent fact that he had miserably failed at the first breath of war. The small investors will make no profits out of the War Loan, because their taxes will far exceed the interest they receive, and they have been brought into this scheme as mere "camouflage" for the operations of the cosmopolitan financiers, who are quite able to prevent the super-tax from being raised highly enough to stop them from raking in millions of unearned wealth.

If it be asked how it is that every other nation has adopted the same plan of financing the War, I answer that they are all under the spell of the great Gold Fetish, whose high priests care nothing for patriotism, and regard the workers of the world as mere pawns in their great game for attaining power and wealth. Not one of these nations has yet started a State Bank, basing its paper credit-instruments on the productive power of its workers, save only the Australian Commonwealth. All financial questions are blindly submitted to the high priests of the Gold Fetish, who are thus enabled to cause contractions and expansions of the currency, which involve the ruin of thousands of honest merchants and manufacturers, but always add to their own power and vast unearned wealth.

Now, what is the shortest and safest way out of this financial morass? Convert the present Post Office Savings Bank into a fully equipped State Bank on the lines of the Australian Commonwealth's State Bank; then call in all War scrip, and credit its owners with its value. This will put a stop to all further payments of interest. Finance all further operations by means of cheques drawn against the abounding credit of the Empire as registered at the State Bank. Increase the super-tax, so that the idle millionaires shall be forced to contribute handsomely to the hard-earned pensions of the disabled fighters who have so bravely and ungrudgingly sacrificed their youth and health and limbs in defence of us all.

Both God and Gold have had their power for evil rudely shocked by this great War, their utter uselessness having been demonstrated beyond the possibility of doubt. The stern necessities of war have in a few years taught lessons which, if properly driven home, may compensate humanity for the vast misery it has undergone.

G. O. Warren (Major).

New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

VI.—The Tempest.

Thirteen men in a small wooden ship on the Galilean lake. There was tax-man, Levi, and there was fisherman Andrew; another was Peter the pilot.[1] The Twelve Apostles were wide awake; the thirteenth man, Jesus, master of the Jinn, fell asleep. He slept even when a tempest arose and howled, and a thousand thunders roared.

"Master, master, we perish!" shrieked the Twelve.

Jesus woke, lifted his hands, spoke in a stern voice to winds and waves, and there was a great calm.

"Have you no faith in me?" he asked. "Why should you fear?"

They looked at one another, and whispered,

"Wonderful! What sort of man is this? He orders the blasts and the waters, and they obey him!

When they landed on the lake side, a poor lunatic, all naked, rushed out from a place of dead men's graves, and yelled, as if a whole regiment of jinn were scream-

[1] The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
—*Milton's* "*Lycidas*," lines 109-111.

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ing inside him. Broken chains dangled from his wrists and ankles.

"Out of him, out!" cried Jesus to the jinn.

"No, no," groaned the demons from inside the lunatic, "send us not to our Pit![1] We would prefer to dwell in the swine yonder."

"Into the vile pigs, then," ordered Jesus, pointing to a herd of many swine which fed on the slope of the hill.

Then there was a sound of tempest! The swine—animals hated by Jews—felt the jinn inside them, rushed with a storm of grunts and squeals down the rocky descent, and plunged headlong into the lake. The swine-keepers fled in terror. As to the jinn, no doubt they returned, all wet and wretched, to their home in the Abyss, or Pit. Meanwhile the lunatic had borrowed garments from bystanders, and sat at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind.

"I will follow you, master," said the man.

"No," replied Jesus. "Go and tell the folk of your city what I have done for you."

And this he did; and, in many a street, crowds gathered round him, and listened, wide-eyed and open-mouthed, as he told the story of the devils that had once made him more like a pig than a human being.

The next tempest was one of grief and tears.

A young girl lay dying. Her father, a chief officer in a synagogue, had knelt at the feet of Jesus, begging help. At once, followed by a chattering crowd, the Wonder-worker set out for the officer's house.

All of a sudden, Jesus halted.

"Who touched me?" he cried.

Peter and others replied that, in the hurrying, many people could not help jostling him. But a woman, shy and trembling, seeing the Wonder-worker's eye fixed on her, came forward, made a deep salaam, and said—

"Sir, I touched just the edge of your robe; and forthwith I felt healed of a sad trouble in my blood which I had suffered twelve years; and not a doctor in the place could do me the least good."

"Daughter, go in peace," said Jesus, gently; and then he hastened, the dying girl's father keeping close to his side.

A man ran to meet them.

"All is over," he exclaimed. "The child is dead."

The Wonder-worker made no pause. He reached the house, where women, sitting on the floor, were raising the Keening-cry of "O way-lee, O way-lee, hoi ah-ee, ah-ee, ah-ee!"

"The girl is only asleep," said Jesus, and he sent out of the sick-chamber the howling women and the crowd, all except the child's parents, and Peter the pilot, and the fishermen, James and John.

"Maid, arise!"

As the Wonder-worker uttered these words, the girl sat up.

"Give her something to eat," said Jesus, "and do not go gossiping about what happened."

Shortly afterwards the Master of Jinn called his Twelve Apostles together.

"You are now my delegates," said he. "Go into villages and towns, and do as I have done. Preach the Kingdom of God. Heal the sick. Drive out demons. Take no baggage, no food, no wallets, no walking-sticks, no money, no extra clothes. Go simply as you are. If people won't welcome you, don't quarrel or scold; just walk away, and shake off the dust from your feet to show them you have quit their place, their presence, and their soil."

The Twelve—all humble fellows, not one of them being a scholar, or a rabbi, or a high-class man—started out, full of zeal and faith; and you can imagine the noise, and mobbing, and astonishment that ensued in the hamlets, farm-yards, village streets, and city market-places, wherever the Wonder-worker's delegates travelled.

Some weeks or months later, one by one, the Apostles wandered back—Peter of the Keys, fisherman John, Judas Iscariot (he that loved silver shekels), and the rest, with their reports about crowds of listeners, and jinn conquered, and diseases cured.

"Now, come and rest," said the Master.

But there was no rest, even in the quiet countryside to which he led them, for a multitude followed, wanting to hear Jesus preach, wanting to have their wounds and pains healed; and so the day wore on towards sunset.

"Send the folk away," said his disciples, "for twilight will soon be here."

"Let them sup first," he answered.

"All we have for supper is five loaves and two fishes."

"Go and divide the people into fifties, and make them sit down on the grass," he ordered.

Then the Wonder-worker looked up to heaven, and said a holy spell over the loaves and fishes, and began handing portions quickly—bread and fish, bread and fish—to the Apostles, and they ran in and out among the seated people.

When the feast was ended, and the five thousand mouths were satisfied, the Twelve Apostles picked up twelve basket-loads of pieces left. Meanwhile, the people, talking and exclaiming, trudged homewards by the light of the moon.

"What do the folk say about me?" he asked his twelve friends.

"Some think you are John the Baptist come back from the tomb; some say you are Elijah, the prophet of Yahweh, who rode in the fire-car."

"And what do *you* say?"

"You are the Good One, the Christ; the man on whose head God has dropped the holy oil,"[1] cried Peter.

"Say nought of Christ to the people," he replied. "And now mark my words—I shall be a martyr soon; I shall be killed by the priests and Pharisees of Jerusalem; and for three days I shall lie dead, and then I shall rise up. And you who follow me will have a bitter path to travel. You must bear the Cross."

The cross was the tree of death. Many a slave had been nailed to a wooden cross by his Roman masters, and so died a lingering death; for none could withstand the power of Rome, and the Roman legions, and the Roman eagles.

About a week later, the Christ of the Cross, followed by three of his Cross-bearers,—Peter, James, John,—climbed a mountain, and he kneeled down under the stars, and prayed. As he kneeled, his face shone like the sun, his garments glittered and sparkled. At his right hand stood a shining man,—Moses, the prophet of Yahweh, the Fire and Storm God; on his left, the shining man, Elijah, the rider in the Fire-chariot of heaven.

The three apostles had fallen asleep. When they awoke, they heard the three shining ones talk of Jerusalem, the Cross, and Death.

"Master," cried Peter, dazzled by the glittering scene, "it is good for us to be here. Let us build three booths, one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah!"

[1] *Abussos*=abyss.

[1] The French word *Chrétien* (Christian) even to-day points back to the Greek word *Chrestos* (kind, gracious). Perhaps the early Christians had both ideas in mind—the Good Man *Chrestos* and and the Chosen Anointed Man *Christos*.

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A cloud floated over their heads, and a voice came from the cloud,—

"This is my beloved son; hear him!"

Then Moses, Elijah, cloud, and all the glory vanished.

A few days later, the twelve apostles had high words and arguments over the question as to which was the greatest? Was it Peter? Was it John? Was it Judas Iscariot? Was it Matthew? And so on.

Jesus called a little child, and the small boy approached, shy and simple.

"This wee lad," said he, "is the least person standing here. But whoever is kind to him is kind to me. Love the least, and be ready to take the least rank. He that is least among you, the same shall be great."

* * * *

The Roman poet Virgil tells the tale of Æneas sailing with his fleet of wooden ships (the prows were brass) across the Mediterranean Sea. Some day he would land in Italy, and take possession, and his children's children would be the Roman people, and their power would build up the Empire of Rome.

But the goddess Juno hated Æneas, and resolved to wreck his fleet. She persuaded the King of the Winds to send some terrible blasts over the waters. Thunder and lightning added their horrors, and poor Æneas thought the hour of death had come.

The god Neptune, however, was his friend. Hearing the noise of the tempest, old Neptune, three-pointed trident in hand, raised his head above the billows, and shouted to the King of the Winds to recall his unruly servants. The king obeyed; the winds ceased; and there was a great calm; and Æneas was able to sail in peace to the coast of Africa; and in due time (that was after many years) he reached Italy.[1]

The Gospel made Jesus as great a wonder-worker as Neptune.

The Romans also had a story of the shining king, Romulus, who was really the son of the god Mars. Once he was but a humble shepherd, but he became a leader of men, and a king, and builder of the city of Rome. On his death, he was carried by his father up to heaven in a chariot of fire; and soon after that, he was seen by a Roman elder on earth, looking beautiful and shining.

"I am now a god," said the shining Romulus to the elder; "tell the Romans to worship me as their Founder, and let them call me Quirinus."

F. J. Gould.

Barristers and Bishops.

The great and enlightened and generous-minded British public have their weaknesses. One of them is their belief that they enjoy self-government. Whatever else they enjoy, they certainly do not enjoy *that*. And we may depend upon it that the reactionaries will take advantage of the demoralizing and disintegrating effects of war to keep the great British public and self-government still further apart. It is the policy of these reactionaries to keep the great British public wholesomely afraid of—bogeys. But it is still more their policy—and interest—to blind such sections of the said B.P. as are disposed to listen to suggestions for change, *as to who their rulers actually are*. It is thus impossible for the said B.P. to spot their masters; for each and every one whom they take to be such clamours fervently, "Nay, friend, I am but thy servant." Meantime the *ruled* live on bread and margarine—sometimes bread alone (of sorts)—and weak tea; and these unctuous "servants" retain their money-bags and well-stocked cellars, and they do furnish their fair boards with toothsome delicacies.

After much pondering, I have arrived at the conclusion that the agitators have been banging the wrong knockers and pulling the wrong bells. They may as soon as possible—and it cannot be too soon—cease grousing about kings and the expense of them, about office-seeking parties out of power and axe-grinding parties in power, about circumlocution offices and red tape, and barnacles and peculators. These, my friends, are but effects—excrescences, superstructures. The root causes—the vital sap, the fount and foundation of these things—are to be found in the power you accord to *the Barrister and the Bishop*.

Did not Dickens realize something of this truth when he depicted "Bar" and "Bishop" like courtiers hanging round Merdle, the financier, in *Little Dorrit?* In a spirit of love for the "Terewth" brethren, let us inquire.

How could privilege or vested interest live for an hour without Barristers and Bishops? They are the pillars of the Temple of Property, whose "duty" is to restrain the Samson of Democracy. Oh, we know the various labels of the various political parties; we have listened to the soul-moving, lachrymose pathos of these philanthropists and well-wishers of humanity! We have been there. But we are sick at heart because our hopes have been so long deferred. There seems, after all, to be so little *dynamic* in talk, that one feels one could do with a little less of it. It would be interesting to see some eloquence translated into action.

Now, consider what, after all, are the chief *tools* of Barrister and Bishop. Surely they are their *tongues*. What they *write* is negligible. What they *make* is imperceptible. But by the tongues of themselves and their satellites, they can do mighty things. In the British House of Commons alone there are nearly two hundred barristers, to ensure—in the masses outside—a proper veneration for the Law. Ah, and the great bulk of the remainder of our M.P.'s are good boys, who would never have the temerity to contradict a bishop! Why, in the twentieth century, these noble, holy, divinely ordained bishops sit (without election) on every piece of legislation proposed for the governance of the British Empire—even for that part thereof called Scotland, which professes to repudiate bishops! A strange world, i' faith!

You picture the successful barrister emerging from Court. How the client and solicitor hang on his every word! But the barrister who has reached the Bench is more powerful than any king. His only restraints are imposed by the laws which he and his brethren agree to enact. What a happy convenience for all concerned! And you picture him and My Lord Bishop dining at another Merdle's to-night, each with his tongue in his cheek, and honey on that tongue. Concentrate on *them*, you pioneers; concentrate on *them*, the props of privilege—Barrister and Bishop!

Ignotus.

A Surrey Vale.

I know a vale by man forgot,
'Tis Beauty's perfect home;
The hand of man hath marred it not,
There would I gladly roam.

Far from this hell of noise and strife;
These prison walls of fate;
The God of Beauty reigneth there—
The God of Love—not Hate.

I'll build a home for thee my love,
Within a mossy dell;
And we will live in Eden there,
And bid the world farewell.

P. A.

[1] The *Æneid*, book i.

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National Secular Society.

Interim Conference, to be held at Chandos Hall, Maiden Lane, Charing Cross, on Sunday, Oct. 28.

The Conference will sit at 2.30 prompt for the discussion of the Agenda, already in the hands of the Secretaries of the Branches and the Delegates. At the conclusion of the formal business, the meeting will be thrown open for the discussion of papers on "Why Our Reformed Educational System Should Promote Patriotism," by Mr. A. Eagar, and "Freethought and the Family," by Mr. T. F. Palmer.

All members of the Society are entitled to speak and vote. Admission to the Afternoon Session, as usual, will be by production of the card of membership. Individual members should be particularly interested in this gathering.

The Evening Public Meeting will commence at 6.30, and is open to all London Freethinkers. The subject for discussion will be "The Position of the Freethought Movement, Now and After the War."

The best possible arrangement will be made for a plain tea on the premises, between the meetings, provided that notification reaches the N.S.S. office not later than ½ p.m. on Friday. The office Telephone number is City 41. This stipulation will be strictly adhered to in consequence of the difficulty in obtaining provisions.

The premises at Chandos Hall include a proportionately commodious and sound basement. Air-raiders may accept the intimation that not being invited, no welcome will be extended to them!

E. M. Vance, *General Secretary.*

Correspondence.

SAINTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—The verse in question (*Freethinker*, Sept. 23) is a variation of a rhyme in a book of doggerel verses by Professor Marshall Hall, Professor of Music at the Melbourne University and President of the Conservatoire of Music. My memory gives it:—

King David and King Solomon
Lived merry, merry lives,
With their many, many lady friends,
And their many, many wives;
But, when Old Age came o'er them,
With its many, many qualms,
The Younger wrote the Proverbs,
And the Elder wrote the Psalms.

A heresy hunt was started by the local Calvin, a certain Dr. Rentoul, Presbyterian, who claimed that the Professor was an Atheist, a free-lover, and a general corrupter of youth, and cited this thin booklet of "pomes" as proof.

In the legal wrangle which ensued a great lot of money was, I doubt not, raked in by the counsel on each side, and in the end the Professor had to accept notice at the end of two more years, when the contract under which he held one of his posts came to an end. I believe he is a still in his University chair.

The only other rhyme of interest in the book was, perhaps, the one that chiefly wrankled in the Presbyterians hide. It ran:—

Some think this and some think that,
According as they're lean or fat.
Those that cannot think at all,
Theologians we call.

Mr. Joseph Symes published a series of articles pouring scorn on the heresy hunters, and Prof. Marshall Hall was sufficiently courageous to pay him one or two visits, to thank him for his support.

This happened about 1899 when I was on the staff of the paper.

Lucifer.

Somewhere in France.

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.

N. S. S. Interim Conference (Chandos Hall, Maiden Lane): 2.30, Discussion; 6.30, Public Meeting.

Mr. A. D. Howell Smith's Discussion Class (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Nov. 1, at 7.30.

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Kells, Swasey, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch N. S. S. (Collingwood Hall, 12a Clayton Street): 3, Members' Meeting.

Swansea and District Branch N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, "Elysium," High Street): J. H. Edwards, 3, "A Labourer's Philosophy"; 7, "Shelley: Atheist, Socialist, Poet."

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THE *Times* announces that their article, entitled "The Ferment of Revolution," is to be issued as a pamphlet. In reply to that capitalist attack upon Co-operation and Trade Unionism, the *National Weekly* is reprinting in a leaflet the Notes of "Trade Unionist" from the issue of Oct. 6th, correcting the misstatements of the *Times* Correspondent.—Send 9d. in ½d. stamps to the Manager, *National Weekly*, Imperial House, Kingsway, W.C. 2, and a hundred copies will be sent you post free for distribution.

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Views and Opinions.

"Blasphemy" in Nigeria.

Some timo ago we received a letter from Lagos, Nigeria, asking our advice about conducting Freethought propaganda. We gave what advice we could, and promised any assistance possible at so great a distance, and under conditions that must be very different from those existing in this country. A week ago we received a communication—very much delayed in transmission—which informed us that the work had been commenced and a little journal started, followed by the not unprecedented result of a prosecution. On August 31 the editor of the *Lagos Literary Magazine* was fined £100 or six months' imprisonment. The fine has been paid, but as it is now proposed to form a properly constituted Secular Society, it does not appear that the prosecution will reap any great benefit from their action.

* * *

A Thanksgiving.

The ground of prosecution was an article in the June issue of the magazine entitled "General Thanksgiving." The article would fill about two-thirds of a column of the *Freethinker*, and its nature may be gauged by the following :—

> We thank thee, O God, for creating us weak and then blaming and punishing us for being weak and sinful.....We thank thee O God, for allowing War, so that men may slay and maim each other. We thank thee, O God, for allowing hatred to continue in the world, when with one word thou could'st have put an end to all hatred.....We thank thee, O God, for creating smallpox, yellow fever, and epilepsy.....We thank thee, O God, for creating Lunatics and Idiots, so that a portion of thy children may be entertained at the expense of the others.....We thank thee, O God, for creating lions and tigers to devour us.....We thank thee, O God, for creating mosquitoes to pest our lives, and introduce disease into our systems..... We thank thee, O God, for sending Thy Only Son into the world to save it, although nearly 2,000 years after the birth of the Saviour the world is as much under the influence of sin and wickedness as ever..... We thank thee, O God, for creating Hell for those of thy children whom thou hast made too weak to resist evil.

This is a fair specimen of the article on which the prosecution was based, and the reason for the prosecution, and for the conviction was that it was offensive to certain people. Who these were we shall see in a moment.

* * *

Bigotry in Power.

Section 204 of the Criminal Code for the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria provides that :—

> Any person who does an act which any class of persons consider as a public insult on their religion, with the intention that they should consider the act such an insult, and any person who does an unlawful act with the knowledge than any class of persons will consider it such an insult, is guilty of a misdemeanour, and is liable to imprisonment for two years.

This, then, is the law of blasphemy in Nigeria. Any class of persons who consider a man has insulted their religion may initiate a prosecution; and, despite the expression "any class," one may reasonably suspect the true reading to be "any class *of Christians*." Christians will be allowed the same licence of speech with regard to others that they are permitted here. In this case the "class of person" on whose behalf the Attorney-General prosecuted were Bishop Herbert Tugwell, of the Church Missionary Society, Rev. A. W. Howells, Rev. T. A. J. Ogunbiyi, C. W. Wakeman, and H. C. Chanceller, all of the C.M.S., with O. J. Griffen, Superintendant of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and Rev. Father Terien, of the Roman Catholic Mission. The professional interest is naked and unashamed. And the regulation is one which is, in practice, wholly in the interest of Christian missionary religion. It not only reduces blasphemy to a plain absurdity, but it places the freedom of all non-Christians at the mercy of any "class of persons" who feel themselves insulted. That is, unless the non-Christian is content to be a coward and a hypocrite. In that case the Christian will treat him as a brother beloved. It is the normal consequence of all punishments for opinion to place a tax on honesty and a premium upon hypocrisy.

* * *

Getting at the Facts.

Now let us return to the prosecuted article. Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Wesleyan Methodist say it is an insult to their religion. Why? Is it untrue that God is responsible for all the evils particularized in the "General Thanksgiving"? If God is not responsible, who is? Surely it is the burden of numerous apologies that God does allow them, either because to prevent them would be an interference with human freedom or because they are part of God's plan of educating the world. Mr. White, the editor of the magazine, was only saying quite plainly what thousands of Christians say with much circumlocution. Bishop Tugwell, for example, is a member of the Church of England, and in the Prayer Book, under the heading "The Visitation

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of the Sick," the minister is instructed to say to the sick person :—

> Dearly beloved, know this that Almighty God is the Lord of life and death and of all things to them pertaining, as youth, strength, health, age, weakness, and sickness. Wherefore, whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly that it is God's visitation.

That is clear enough. And it cannot be held that God is certainly the cause of sickness in England but not in Nigeria. And for the other Christians, we may surely refer them to Isaiah :—

> Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down.
>
> I form the light and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.

This, again, is quite clear. God does everything. That is the main teaching of the Bible; it is the general teaching of the best Christian theology. God must have created the mosquito, and the lion, and the tiger, and the germs of disease. They are all part of the plan of creation. Lagos Freethinkers are only putting plainly before Christians the teachings of their creed. We are not surprised they feel aggrieved. That is usual with all shams and hypocrisies when threatened with exposure.

* * *

A Plea for Reason.

One can readily understand that Bishop Tugwell and his fellow-preachers find it much easier to lock the Freethinker up or fine him than it is to answer him. That is the historic way of dealing with the heretic; and in these out-of-the-way places, where the white officials hang more or less together, it is a method easily put into operation. Bishop Tugwell feels himself insulted on being told that his God made the evil things of the world. Well, in God's name—if we may be permitted a pious ejaculation—if he didn't make them, who did? If the germ of smallpox came without his aid or against his will, by whose will or with whose aid did it come? If one thing could exist without God, why not all? And is there not good scriptural warranty for saying that God prepared hell for the Devil and his angels? One can hardly imagine Satan preparing it for himself. Would the Bishop have been better pleased if, instead of thanking God for all the evils in the world, Freethinkers had blamed him? Let us try and cultivate a little logic. If God is, if he is what Christians say he is, the world is as he would have it be. He could have made it otherwise. He preferred it as it is. And if we are to praise him for the good in the world, must we not also blame him for the bad? It is not the fault of the Freethinker that he draws a logical conclusion from the Christian premises. The fault lies with those who propound a creed which is at once an insult to human intelligence and an outrage on human decency.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Dough."

O! God our Help in Ages Past.
(Pile up the Dough).
We all must come to Thee at last.
(Pile up the Dough).
And though Thy Son said other things;
We'll cinch the quids and quit the wings;
An empty pocket misery brings.
(Pile up the Dough).

The Lord, through light, He led the weak.
(Pile up the Dough).
He blessed the poor and praised the meek.
(Pile up the Dough).
And though in Hell with pain you'll stew;
The Bishops know a thing or two
Worth three that Jesus tried to do.
(Pile up the Dough).

A. F. T.

The Essence of Christianity.

As is well known, there is no authoritative definition of the Christian religion, with the result that after an existence of two thousand years scarcely any two among the millions who profess it are agreed as to what it really is and seeks to accomplish. Indeed, it is safe to conclude that existing definitions of it are literally innumerable. This being the case, it naturally follows that there is no agreement as to that in which the real character of Christianity consists, or as to what quality constitutes or marks its true nature. One popular preacher of a generation ago was in the habit of saying that the essence of Christianity is self-denial, and the same opinion is being frequently expressed to-day. Others declare that the predominant Christian quality is love—love to God manifesting itself in social service. Some who hold this view are convinced that "Christianity and war are incompatible, and that Christianity truly lived is the antidote to war." This is tantamount to a confession that the prevailing religion has never justified its existence. The Rev. T. Rhondda Williams, of Brighton, accounts for its failure by saying that the Churches have never realized what its central message is, and that, consequently, the pulpit has neglected to give it the prominence which it demands. The truth is, however, that social service is not a distinctively Christian duty, but has been enjoined by all the great religions of the world. Others still assure us that the essence of Christianity is "the saving of man in spite of Humanity by One whose life transcended the limits of his birth and nation." Such is the opinion held by Professor J. M. Thompson, of Oxford, to which he commits himself (in the *Christian Commonwealth* for October 24) and we are bound to admit that there is more truth in it than in any of the other views. Neither self-denial nor vicarious service has ever been exemplified on any large scale by the followers of Christ, except under priestly tyranny, and ministers of the Gospel have more than once, even in the twentieth century, dissociated themselves from mere social reformers, and expressed their pride at being preachers of the Gospel of personal salvation by a mystic union with a crucified and risen Saviour. And, surely, they are right, if the Pauline Epistles and the Creeds are to be relied upon. Paul's one message was that now at length God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and the Nicene Creed speaks of Jesus Christ as "the Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, the only begotten, Light of Light, very God of very God,"

> Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried. And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven.

With that teaching all subsequent creeds are in full harmony, so that we are perfectly right in affirming that the essence of Christianity is justification by faith through the merits of the crucified Redeemer.

Christianity presupposes human depravity or lostness. Behind all other ideas in it is that of man's total inability to save himself, and of God in Christ's gracious intervention on his behalf. In his timely article on this subject in the *R. P. A. Annual* for 1918, Professor Gilbert Murray says :—

> It seems to me that the greatest source of the religious emotion is exactly this feeling of "lostness," this feeling that a man "cannot live without Christ." I doubt if a man engaged in full successful activity, satisfying all his social instincts, ever *discovers* God or the need of God, though, of course, he may continue to use

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> the "discovery" when once made. It is when the social approval, the sympathy, the human friendship which we normally enjoy, and without which we feel desolate, is taken away that we crave so suddenly for a Friend who will never fail us, and whose support will make up for the world's opposition.

Nothing is more undeniable than the fact that the first duty of the Christian pulpit is to create this sense of lostness and need of a Saviour in all who listen to its voice. Without the doctrine of the Fall there would have been no use for the Christian dogma of the Atonement. Until a man is brought to a realization of his lost condition as a child of Adam, he will never dream of accepting Christ as his deliverer. Some years ago the Rev. Silas Hocking, in a speech at the City Temple, threw vitriolic ridicule on the people who concentrated their attention on the Salvation of their own "miserable souls"; but the audience showed its total disapproval of his action in the most emphatic manner at its disposal, and, without a doubt, the attitude displayed by the distinguished novelist was anti-Christian to the last degree. According to the New Testament and the Orthodox Church, we are all doomed to perish for ever in hell-fire, and our only hope of escape is by putting our trust in the finished work of Christ. And there are facts in the lives of the generality of people which the preacher utilizes in his attempt to bring home to us our need of a Divine Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. As the Professor puts it:—

> Most of us have in our lives periods of desolation or exile, when the world seems to have betrayed us and we crave for some social support—some sympathy or agreement or affection—which is not forthcoming. In the space where we can see clearly, there is no one; but beyond that there is a space that is dim and hidden, and beyond that again the vastness of the invisible; and if in the very great distance we begin to feel that there is a Friend, a Friend very powerful, full of intimate understanding, absolutely faithful, and unlike all the friends who have failed us; a Friend with hardly any distinctive characteristics except those which will satisfy our own hungry desire; how can we escape the suspicion that the very existence of the Friend, and not merely the details of his character, is only the creation and projection of that Desire?

Professor Murray is a fine poet as well as a keen critic. What he discerns with absolute clearness is that there are real human wants which Christianity pretends to be able to supply to our entire satisfaction, and that to multitudes who attend church or chapel the supply is all that could be desired. Clergymen are aware, however, how extremely difficult it often is to convince anxious inquirers that the Gospel story is true; that there is a God who truly loves and cares for them; that Christ died for them and is longing to befriend them; or that there is a Spirit of all grace who longs to accompany them through life. Painfully small, at best, is their success in such a mission. The number of people who verily believe that there is "a Friend behind phenomena" who never fails, is never large, and even they pass through times of doubt and fear. Even they must confess, with Tennyson, that—

> We have but faith; we cannot know.

Every supernatural religion is fundamentally the same. There is no material difference between Christianity and Mithraism. The Saviour God, who dies and comes to life again, is common to most religions. Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Mithra, and Christ are all in the same category. Man's ignorance of Nature has always bred within him the desire to escape from her. This is how Meredith expresses it:—

> Therefore the wretch inclines
> Afresh to the Invisible, who, he saith,
> Can raise him high: with vows of living faith
> For little signs.
>
> Some signs he must demand,
> Some proofs of slaughtered nature; some prized few,
> To satisfy the senses it is true,
> And in his hand.
>
> This miracle which saves
> Himself, himself doth from extinction clutch,
> By virtue of his worth, contrasting much
> With brutes and knaves,
>
> From dust, of him abhorred,
> He would be snatched by Grace discovering worth,
> "Sever me from the hollowness of Earth!
> Me take, dear Lord!"

But escape from Nature is utterly impossible. She is our only real Friend, and that "Friend behind phenomena" is nothing but a myth. Professor Murray says:—

> As long as the discussion of Christianity is concerned mainly with the question of its "truth" or "falsehood," I confess that the orthodox position seems to me as completely remote from the possibility of defence as that of any other traditional religion. Neither the doctrines stated in the creeds nor the supposed history contained in the Gospels will, in my judgment, bear examination.

Thus, even in its very essence, Christianity is a system of incredible myths, which fully accounts for its moral impotence, and justifies the rising generation for its attitude of indifference towards it. Dr. Orchard admitted, in a recent interview, that there is no sign whatever of any revival of interest in it, and that the outlook for the Churches is extremely gloomy.

J. T. Lloyd.

In the Name of the Prophet.

> Who shall persuade the kings that God is not,
> The politicians, usurers, financiers,
> Priests, warriors, that depend on God to bear
> The burden of their inhumanities?—*John Davidson.*

The clergy assert constantly that England is a Christian country, but the fact remains that the British Empire contains more non-Christian inhabitants than Christian. Prominent among the great religions incorporated within the Empire is Mohammedanism, which, under the Moorish banner, once threatened to overrun Europe. Had not the defeat of Islam resulted, a large part of the world might have become Mohammedan; or, as Edward Gibbon tersely declared, Oxford University might to-day be expounding the Koran.

Yet the Koran, the Bible of the Mohammedans, revered by over two hundred and thirty millions, of whom eighty millions are British subjects, is a little known book in Christian countries. It is a wonderful volume, and, if the arguments by which the divine inspiration of the Christian Bible are worth a straw, this must be inspired also. There is the same apparent incompatibility of the author with the writing: a morality as impressive, the same beauty of language and wealth of Oriental imagery; the same claim to prophecy and fulfilment of prophecy.

The outstanding divergence is that there is no claim on the part of the prophet to work miracles, although the Koran is based manifestly on Jewish legends. The same fictitious characters, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Moses, Solomon, and others, appear again and again. The conception of duty is simplicity itself compared with the tangle of the Christian Trinity. Take the first Sura: "Glory to God, Master of the Universe, the Merciful, the Compassionate, Lord of the Day of Judgment, we adore Thee and implore Thy aid; guide us in the right

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path." Then, again: "There is no God, but God; God is most great," was a bold message for an Arabian shepherd to bring to a nation that had gods by the dozen, and sharp swords to defend them.

Take the faith as laid down in the Second Sura: "Piety does not consist in turning your faces to the East or the West. He is pious who believes in God, and in the prophets; who, for the love of God, gives of his own to his neighbour; to the orphans, to the poor, to the traveller, and to those who ask; who ransoms the captives, who observes prayer, who gives alms, fulfils the engagements he contracts, who is patient in adversity, in hard times, and times of violence. These are just and fear the Lord."

Chivalry originated in the courts of the Emirs. The knight and the troubadour came from Islam. Together they resummoned civilization, which had gone out in darkness, at the break-up of the Roman Empire. The world at the time was divided. Long since Europe and Asia had gone their separate ways. When they caught sight of each other, the Christian Church sickened with envy and bigotry. There ensued the eight Crusades in which the Papacy pitted Christianity against Mohammedanism, and staked the authenticity of each in the result. The result was that Mohammedanism proved its claim. The Koran was the Bible of the people who, when the Saxons were living in rude huts, had developed a poetic civilization, a social order which had a superstructure of art and of science. It was this that hundreds of thousands of Christians in rusty mail went forth to destroy. But though they could not crush Islam, the chivalry of the Moslems taught them how to conquer themselves. From the victory contemporaneous civilization proceeds.

The conduct of the great Saladin, the Moslem ruler, illustrates the chivalry of the race. When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem, they turned it into a shambles; but when Saladin recaptured it he did not shed civilian blood. On the contrary, he spent large sums of money in alleviating distress. At his death he ordered gifts to be distributed to the poor, without distinction of creed, a noble act in that age. "Take this cloak," he said to one of his servants, "show it to the faithful and tell them that the Ruler of the East could take but one garment into the grave."

The place filled by the founder of Mohammedanism is very prominent. As compared with some other religious systems, Islam possesses great advantages. The text of the Koran was finally settled within thirty years of Mohammed's death, and, so far as his own life is concerned, eulogists and detractors are agreed as to main facts of his career, however their judgment of it may differ. The career of Mohammed may be traced in the stately pages of Gibbon, the picturesque phrases of Carlyle, and in many another volume. An ardent propagandist, the prophet made only thirteen converts in three years. In most communities such propaganda meant death or severe punishment. The execution of Socrates took place after a legal trial in a highly civilized state of antiquity. The charge was that Socrates did not worship the gods and shook other people's belief in them. In the nineteenth century Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, met his death in a Republican country at the hands of the State soldiery. The reason why Mohammed escaped death was that there was no orderly government. When forced to take the sword in hand, it took him ten years' fighting before he prevailed. The motto on his banner was "God is Great," a motto which has challenged the Trinitarian Christian world for centuries.

Mohammed was a very remarkable man, and his religious system is still a powerful factor in life. Whilst the number of Mohammedans show a tendency to decrease in Europe, and to increase with the growth of population in Asia; in Africa, Islam is being steadily propagated among the tribes, and is increasing constantly. Mohammed's life story is a plain tale. When he first meets us he is in middle life. Several of his relations play an important part in his career. We know the name of his first wife, Kadijah, said to have been fifteen years his senior, yet the mother of a family. The daughters were all married to men of note. He seems, like most of the Meccans, to have carried on a trade; at first accompanying caravans, afterwards selling goods. We even know the name of his business partner. Passionate and well-meaning, he never forgot a benefit. In his age, Ayesha, his young favourite wife, a woman who distinguished herself by all manner of qualities, questioned him concerning Kadijah, his first wife. "Now, am not I better than Kadijah? She was a widow, old, and had lost her looks. You love me better than you did her?" "No! by Allah!" answered Mohammed, "she believed in me when none else would. In the whole world I had but one friend, and she was that."

Yet, after the death of Mohammed, the doom of Islam was sounded. It seems strange that this should be so, for hundreds of cities shimmered with mosques. From thousands of filagreed pulpits the glory of Allah and of Mohammed his Prophet were daily proclaimed. And Moslems possess a good share of the simple virtues. They are said to be temperate, truthful, honest, and hospitable. Yet, as a ruling power, they become a curse to all who fall under their power. They have been trained up under despotism and superstition, and they are capable of the wildest fanaticism. They are proud of their deficiencies, and have an obstinacy in their natures which flames into something worse in the face of opposition.

Islam has a noble and ancient history; but no people can live on its past. She has given to the world one of the immortal books in *The Arabian Nights*. She has incarnated dreams in architectural marble. Her poets penned manuscripts which throughout the ages retain the perfume of scented gardens. For a long period she was truly powerful in the world, and now she is at the foot of the ladder of progress.

What is the reason of this terrible downfall? The answer is simple. She is the victim of stereotyped religion. To the Moslem, religion is not an amusement, or a social decoration, or a social police force. It is a passion that inflames his nature, and makes all other things trivial. Christianity is open to much of these objections; only there is less religion in it. It is only better as a mild attack of fever is better than a severe attack of fever. Most Christians have the disease at recurring periods, coming on once a week. The followers of Mohammed were more fanatical than the Prophet. The Caliph Omar wished to burn all books except the Koran, which he regarded as the beginning and end of wisdom. This spirit has destroyed the value of Islamism. During the past five centuries Moslems have done nothing for human advancement. They have not made a single contribution to art, literature, science, manufacture, or invention; they have not produced an engineer, or a chemist, or a biologist, or an historian, or a painter, or a musician of the first rank. Its doom is said.

Throughout the civilized world the shadow of death has fallen. The fair fields of Europe are covered with corpses, and the flower of the manhood of many nations is arrayed for slaughter. A world-epoch is dying. While gravediggers are at work at their grim task, a fresh page of history is being turned. On the other side was a dawn which will presently be daylight. The knell of

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expiring night Nature answers with words of hope. Into a shroud she tosses flowers. Of these many are frail, but one is the white flower of Liberty. It symbolizes the eternal quest of mankind which will one day make all things new, and will change the face of the earth. In that day superstitions will be transformed into the religion of Humanity, and both Christianity and Islamism will be as remote as when the star of Ormuzd burned out in the unquiet skies.

MIMNERMUS.

The Bible and Immortality.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

ONE of the many superstitions which the Christian religion has borrowed from a remote and ignorant past is the belief that something within man, variously designated mind, soul, or spirit, is capable of existing apart from and independent of the body to which it belongs. Hence, what is usually spoken of as "death" is declared to be only the separation of the "spiritual" part of man from the material portion—the former being an invisible entity that survives death and continues to exist in some unknown locality, and the latter ultimately crumbling into dust. Of the correctness of the last statement there can be no doubt; the only point open to question is the existence of an internal spiritual entity that survives the death of the body. Much inflated nonsense has been written upon the "pro" side of the question, in which reason has been thrown to the winds and well-known facts ignored. It may not, then, be out of place to see if any real evidence can be produced, either for or against, of sufficient weight to be submitted to the Court of Common Sense, whose verdict is the only one of value to-day.

Before entering upon the subject generally, it will be well to see what the Bible has to say respecting immortality. In that ancient volume we find the ideas that were prevalent in two periods of the world's history, with an interval between them of several hundred years. We turn first, then, to the books of the earlier period, those of the Old Testament, written originally in Hebrew, but afterwards translated into Greek some time before the Christian era. It was this Greek translation, usually called the Septuagint, which was used by the New Testament writers, as well as by the historian Josephus. In our search for evidence of immortality in the Old Testament, we have no less than thirty-nine books to examine; but this work can be very much curtailed by the aid of a concordance.

Writing in an old religious publication, Professor Sayce says of the ancient Egyptians:—

> Educated and uneducated alike, all believed after a fashion in the resurrection of the body, the immortality of the soul, a judgment to come, and a heaven and hell. It was in connection with the belief in the resurrection of the body that embalming was practised. But Egyptian superstitions never attracted the Hebrews.

Just so; the Hebrews took all their superstitions from the Assyrians and Phœnicians, who were of the same Semitic race and spoke nearly the same dialect. The Egyptians carried on their embalming during the whole period of Old Testament times in which Israel was a nation, so that the Hebrews must have known of the practice, though they never adopted it. One reason for their not doing so is, that at no period in Old Testament times did the Israelites believe in the resurrection of the body or in a future life. This conclusion is the only one that results from an examination of the thirty-nine books. Nowhere in the pages of the sacred volume, if we search from Genesis to Malachi, do we find it stated that man is an immortal being who would after death "inherit eternal life."

In the story of the "Fall" we are told that Adam was expelled from Eden lest he should "eat of the tree of life *and live for ever*." He was not immortal then, neither was he told that he possessed a soul that would live in another life; not one word was said upon this subject. Similarly, the Lord God, in his dealings with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom he had taken under his special protection, several times pronounced blessings upon all three; but these had solely to do with their earthly lives. They were to enjoy peace, prosperity, and have a numerous progeny, and after spending a happy time on earth, "be buried in a good old age" (Gen. xv. 15; xviii. 8; xxii. 17; etc.); but nothing was said about such an important matter as life after death—not even to Abraham, whom the Lord called his "friend" (Isaiah xli. 8). The Lord God gave to his three faithful servants every earthly blessing known to him, but he had apparently never thought of "eternal life."

Again, where one would naturally expect to find some mention of immortality, there, as elsewhere, the promise is conspicuous by its absence. In four of the books forming the Pentateuch there are scores of long paragraphs giving instructions to the Israelites through Moses respecting the priests, Levites, sacrifices, the tabernacle, dress and furniture, penalties for various offences, and a host of other matters; but in the whole of the Mosaic law there is not one word respecting a future life. It is thus clearly evident that the Lord God had never thought of giving man such a life.

Furthermore, that the Hebrew deity had no "eternal life" in store for his chosen people is fully proved by the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, in which is set forth at length all the "blessings" that would be showered upon them if they remained faithful in their allegiance and continued to worship him (Deut. xxviii. 1-14). These blessings are followed by a long string of the most terrible "curses" that were to come upon all those who forsook him for other gods (Deut. xxviii. 15-68). Every one of these blessings and curses had reference only to their earthly life; there was no heaven, nor no hell; no rewards nor punishments in a future life; there was nothing beyond this world. If the fourteen verses describing the blessings be read, it will immediately be perceived that the Hebrew God knew nothing of any other life than the present; another life after death had evidently never once entered his mind. After carefully reading these verses, it is simply impossible to imagine that a God who had decided to bestow "eternal life" on all who served and obeyed him could intentionally withhold all mention of that future life here.

The same may be said of the Decalogue (Exod. xx.; Deut. v.), in which the only incentive to good conduct is the promise "that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." In 2 Kings ii. 11 it is recorded that the prophet Elijah "went up by a whirlwind into heaven." Assuming the story to be true, this reward was granted as a special favour; but the fact that he went to heaven without dying tacitly implies that there was no life after death.

It may, of course, be contended that an argument based upon silence cannot be valid; that because a future life is nowhere mentioned, that is no reason for supposing that it had not been promised to the nation by the local deity, or that the people themselves did not look forward to it. Such might, perhaps, be the case with regard to some minor question, but it could not possibly be so with respect to such an important matter as a life after death. Such an omission would be like a play of *Hamlet* without the ghost. If "eternal life" had really

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been promised, then there must have been a "conspiracy of silence" on the part of all the writers of the thirty-nine books—which, as Euclid says, "is absurd."

There is, however, one paragraph in the Old Testament which should perhaps be noticed. This is the story of the "Witch of Endor." Here, it is often asserted, is a conclusive proof of the immortality of the soul. In our Bibles this woman is stated to have possessed "a familiar spirit"; in the Greek Septuagint she is said to have had "a divining spirit"—the latter being evidently the more correct. This paragraph reads:—

> 1 Sam. xxviii. 8-20.—Saul said to the woman, Divine unto me, I pray thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring one up whomsoever I shall name.....Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman *saw* Samuel, she cried with a loud voice.....And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: *what* seest *thou?* And the woman said, I see a god coming up out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a robe [or mantle]. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel.....And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? etc.

According to this story, king Saul saw nothing; he had to ask the woman what *she* saw. The narrative thus reminds one of a scene at a modern Spiritualistic meeting, in which a lady or gentleman professing to be a "clairvoyant" declares from the platform that he or she sees a "spirit" standing behind one of the persons present, and then, after naming the sex, goes on to describe the apparent age, form, and dress of the alleged apparition. As in the case of Saul, no one among the spectators are able to see the "spirit." The Bible story, if true, proves nothing more than the existence of a number of sharp-witted individuals among the ancient Jewish people, who traded on the ignorance and credulity of the majority. The only point in the story demanding explanation is, Who did the talking (which is here omitted) ascribed to the spirit of Samuel? Assuming the presence of a "spirit" at the *seance*, that abnormal being was invisible and without vocal organs, its body being in the grave. If, then, any words were spoken, it was the woman who uttered them, and, in doing so, she might probably counterfeit the quavering voice of an old man. Among Spiritualists it is, I believe, generally assumed that a "spirit," whenever it speaks at all, does so by employing the vocal organs of the medium. The two cases are thus very nearly parallel. There is, however, one point in this story that I will have to refer to again.

That the Endor *seance* is a Hebrew fiction appears evident from the fact that the words supposed to be uttered by the spirit of Samuel are precisely the same as those uttered on a previous occasion by the living Samuel when reproving king Saul in the name of Yahweh (1 Sam. xv. 17-23). Now, the words spoken by the living Samuel were known only to himself and king Saul; consequently the woman could not have repeated them at the *seance*. That a spirit-Samuel, without brain or vocal organs, could have uttered them cannot for a moment be admitted. We are thus thrown back upon the compiler of the book, who *did* know of Samuel rebuking Saul in 1 Sam. xv.; for he had written that incident himself—and he probably fabricated it, as he certainly did the story of the *seance*. All through the book the compiler has glorified the acts of David and disparaged those of Saul, though the latter was one of the best kings that reigned over Israel, and a better man than David.

Having now seen that no promise of "eternal life" is found in the Old Testament, it is not surprising to be told by Christian commentators that immortality is plainly implied in various passages of that volume in which life, soul, or spirit is mentioned. This remains to be verified.

ABRACADABRA.

Correspondence.

AGNOSTICISM AGAIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Every Freethinker admires the life-work and reveres the memory of Charles Bradlaugh, but I confess that up till now I must have underrated his prowess.

According to Mr. H. Irving, in "Sugar Plums" last week, Bradlaugh appears to have been able to "combat every conception of the Inconceivable." That, truly, must have been a most magnificent *tour de force*—if it ever occurred! I have my doubts. Will Mr. Irving set them at rest by giving me, not "every," but just one single "conception of the Inconceivable?" If he succeeds, I assure him, I will at once proclaim myself an Atheist, and exhaust all my thought in combating anything so monstrously self-contradictory. Until then, "God," pure or applied, must mean nothing to me; and I must continue to call myself an Agnostic, for, really, my "scorn for lexicographers" is not yet sufficiently developed to reconcile me to a name derived from a word which my philosophy tells me is meaningless.

But this stiff-necked attitude, I am sure, is temporary only, for if your editorial patience be not exhausted, and Mr. Irving be willing to oblige me, I hope soon to see in the pages of the *Freethinker* the remarkable phenomenon of a man conceiving the inconceivable.

J. BLAIR WILLIAMS.

[In justice to our correspondent, it should be pointed out that "inconcetvable" was writ "sarcastic."—ED.]

The Blank Wall.

I.

THE stupidity of the modern mind, and more especially of the modern official mind, is well demonstrated by the amazing lack of even elementary psychological knowledge displayed during the progress of this War.

Here, it must or should be obvious to all, we have a flood-tide of barbarism involving both body and mind, which has swept men like an avalanche swiftly away from their homes, wives, children, and peaceful civilian life; all the refining influences of normal human existence have been destroyed in the deluge of war; men have been forcibly dislodged from groves of ordinary civil toil; they have been sucked without mercy into the ravenous maw of an enormous military machine whose sole function is to emphasize their purely animal and primitive propensities. They have been drilled, lectured, trained, and "educated" in the "art of war," that is, in the science of legalized slaughter; prizes in the shape of medals, etc., have been, and still are, offered to those men who are most successful in the business of war. Yet, despite the psychological re-actions inevitable in such a process of organized demoralization, there are a host of terrified official persons raising up their beautiful white hands in horror, not because of war or its natural violation of ideals, but because there seems to be an increase in crime and disorderly conduct at home; or an increase in beer-drinking; or an increase in lust and in animal recreations generally!

During the now almost universal and popular "Picture Paper" ideal of war and the right to kill, men are to remain respectable, law-abiding citizens; models of good behaviour, and, at all times, worthy of the good-conduct medal!

ARTHUR F. THORN.

"The Church of to-morrow is not to be built up of prodigal sons," said the Rev. L. Beaumont at the Congregational Conference. It is far more likely to be "built" of daughters who have taken the wrong turning.

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Acid Drops.

The disaster to the raiding Zeppelin fleet has given the ultra pious an opportunity. A Mr. Noel Friston led off with a letter to the *Star*, asking for general thanksgiving because "God blew with his winds, and they were scattered." Quite a number of other letters followed, calling upon the churches and chapels to appoint a day on which to thank God for his help. But there has been, as is not unusual, a striking paucity of letters on the other side. We have good reason for knowing that this was not because letters were unsent. One *Freethinker* reader pertinently asked, in a letter to the *Star*, "If God was responsible for the wind, I cannot imagine why it was not sent before many women and children were mutilated and killed? A *Te Deum* might have been excusable had this terrible War been avoided, not when it has been in progress over three years."

That seems to go to the root of the matter, and, presumably, the letter was *not* printed because it went straight to the point. Imagine thanking God for dispersing the Zeppelins *after* he had permitted them to kill seven children in one family, in addition to many others! And what of the Zeppelins which came and killed, and escaped unscathed? And of the various aeroplane raids? If God can scatter the one, why not the other? And what are we to think of a God who can only do something after the mischief has been accomplished? The crowning irony is that God permitted the Zepps to kill in Christian England and brought them down in Freethought France! All these newspaper pietists succeed in doing is to make God as ridiculous as themselves. If a man really believed that God could and did disperse the Zeppelins, it would be far more manly to "curse God and die" than to live and praise such culpable negligence or gross brutality.

The Bishop of Woolwich is resigning after Christmas. He thinks Woolwich requires a younger man, with more energy than he possesses, to deal with the new problems that exist. We suppose this is a diplomatic way of saying that all is not well with the Church in Woolwich. We know Freethinkers are active in Woolwich, and their efforts are bound to have some effect. We suggest to them the need for organization. Isolated effort is bound to involve a deal of wasted energy.

On Friday, October 26, Mr. Lloyd George entertained at breakfast about thirty ministers of all denominations. We may take it for granted that Mr. Lloyd George would not have done this unless he had wanted the clergy to do something for the Government. And we may be equally sure that the clergy will not do it unless they get something in return. So we shall await developments with some little interest.

An evening paper says, "Every piece of bread saved brings us an hour nearer complete victory." Perhaps the 50,000 clergymen in this country, who are too proud to fight, will help matters by suspending communion services.

With the fear of Disestablishment in their hearts, pious penmen are writing of "The Awakening of the Welsh Church." Quite poetic. The trump of doom ought to wake the dead.

Writing in the *Sunday Pictorial*, Mr. Horatio Bottomley says that "the simple French peasantry are keeping their faith, humbly believing in the undestroyed Madonna and in the indestructible Child." This is really very thin, even for the readers of a Sunday paper with a large circulation. "Simple peasantry" everywhere are very liable to "keep their faith." They have very little else to keep.

Brother Bottomley is one of the toughest converts that Christians have ever had. Christ said: "Love your enemies," but Brother Horatio shouts: "Give them Hell, now!" And there can be no question that the latest convert is far more popular than the founder of Christianity. This gives point to the Gallic jest that Christ was the first and last Christian.

The Bible says that the Lord slumbereth not nor sleepeth. Even if he had any inclination that way, the Christians would not grant him a moment's indulgence. Just now they are committing assault and battery on his holy ears. The Americans have held a "national day" of prayer for success in this War. This has meant a great outpouring of talk; but all the other Christian Churches are also bombarding "the Throne of Grace." Every humane person will ejaculate, "Pity the sorrows of a poor old Deity!"

Journalists are often very inaccurate. The Nonconformist *Daily News* recently referred to Richard Baxter, the dissenting divine, as the author of *The Saint's Rest*. Baxter wrote a famous work, entitled *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, and he also wrote a number of tracts, one of which was entitled *A Shove for A Short A —— d Christian*. The *Daily News* scribe is, in all probability, unacquainted with either.

The refusal of the House of Commons to sanction the proposal of the Government to pay a royalty to the ground landlords on all petroleum found on their land has brought to the front the question of mining royalties in general. While this is before the public, we hope the question of the mining royalties enjoyed by the Church of England will be remembered. From Durham alone the royalties amount to between two and three hundred thousand annually.

The action of the Convocation of Canterbury in deleting some baharic portions of the Bible from the Prayer Book has aroused the ire of some of their fellow Christians. The Council of the Church Association has passed a resolution regretting "the public slight put upon certain of the Psalms by the recent high-handed action of Convocation." The resolution concludes that such Psalms express a "righteous vengeance upon the working of evil." The best comment upon this precious resolution is to take a typical instance from the Psalms, such as "Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." There is a great deal of "frightfulness" in the Holy Book, as well as much Oriental nastiness.

The Bishop of Chelmsford is in the doleful dumps. In his address to the Diocesan Conference he had very little of an encouraging character to say. He charged the newspapers with general unfairness to the clergy in their relation to the War, and he could cherish no hope of any improvement until the editors got born again. "Until newspapers are controlled by regenerate editors," he said, "the Church, and especially her clergy, must expect to be misrepresented." Editors ought to be profoundly thankful that there is a Lord Bishop who knows exactly what is wrong with them, and what they must do in order to be set right.

But the Church herself, as well as newspaper editors stands in need of regeneration. The Bishop pointed out "that to allow the present state of affairs in the Church to continue was to head straight for disestablishment." Disestablishment would be a fearful calamity for both Church and State; but even that would be infinitely better than a continuation of existing conditions. So the Bishop's motto is "Church Reform or Disestablishment." As a matter of fact, the State has grown almost hopelessly degenerate, and is now seriously considering whether concubinage should not be adopted as a legal substitute for marriage. His lordship's demand is this: "If you, the State, won't grant us self-government in conformity to the laws of God, then disestablish and disendow us as quickly as you can."

The Bishop of London's public utterances aid the gaiety of life. Recently he said: "Many people are doing very little to win the War." Was he thinking of the thousands of clergy who are exempted from military service?

The clergy are notorious for their reckless statements. One much in favour is the libel concerning the heavy increase of drinking among women. At the Stratford Police

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Court, near which there is a population of over half a million, the presiding magistrate said: "People who did not know what they were talking of were complaining of heavy drinking amongst women, but it was an absolute libel on the district."

"The educated woman is becoming more and more the backbone of civil life," says the Bishop of London. In the ages of faith the dear clergy moderately regarded woman as a mere sub.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle says that "Christianity must change or perish. It had delayed the change overlong, until the Churches were half empty, women its chief supporters, and both the learned classes and the poorest were largely alienated from it." The parsons will be delighted at this unsolicited testimonial.

The War Office has declined the offer of the Bishop of London to raise a Parsons' Ambulance Corps, on the ground that it "would be most difficult to work and maintain, and experience showed that it was doubtful whether, if established, it would last." This is a fine example of the snub courteous.

At Prescot, near Liverpool, there lives a family named Duddle. Mr. Duddle and his wife quarrelled, and the husband turned her out of the house at the point of a poker. Mrs. Duddle then summoned her husband for desertion, and, in adjourning the case, the chairman said the Bench would ask Mr. Case, the court missionary, to report. And Mr. Case, the dear good man, said that in his opinion one of the parties—we do not know which as the report is somewhat mixed—was "totally unfit" to have charge of children, as he, or she, did not believe in a hell. What a nice man Mr. Case must be! For our part we should hesitate to give Mr. Case control of a dissipated tom cat.

The Church has been described as a sleepy institution, but a London daily paper recently expressed the sentiment in felicitous language. It stated that the Rev. W. Summers, of Dane Hill, Sussex, "has passed away in his sleep. Deceased who was in his eighty-fifth year, had always expressed a wish to die in harness."

The dear and dull *Daily News* never forgets to cater for its Nonconformist readers. A short time since it published a couple of paragraphs entitled "Ezekiel on War Bread," and referred to the verses as a "Biblical precedent" of present-day conditions. What nonsense is this? Ezekiel's "cookery" would be sufficient to make the bronze lions in Trafalgar Square roar defiance.

It is curious how many minor writers and journalists are dropping into a theological vocabulary. Here is Mr. James Douglas, who is old enough to know better, describing a tenth-rate foreign poet as "the devil, the very devil." So many pious folk bestow that title on the religious maniac who occupies the throne of Germany.

Apparently, some of the Y.M.C.A. huts are not entirely given over to refreshment catering, billiards, and entertainments. A newspaper paragraph announces that a Royal Princess attends the religious services at one of the huts, and takes charge of the music. A princess at the piano should be quite a star attraction.

How hysterical some of the clergy are! The Rev. R. J. Campbell says that the present is "an age of Agnosticism in theory, and Materialism in practice." Is that the reason he left the Nonconformists and joined the ranks of the Government religion?

We were pleased to see Earl Russell calling attention, in a letter to the *Daily News*, to the distinction between Conscientious Objectors who are religious and those who are not, as drawn by the Bishop of Exeter. The Bishop argued for respect and consideration in the one case and harsh treatment in the other. As Earl Russell says, few have exposed the intolerance of the Church so openly as this Bishop. What we now desire to point out is that this attitude is much more common than Earl Russell imagines. It has been the usual attitude of most members of Tribunals. Many of the ignoramuses have said plainly that an objection that was not based on religious grounds could not be a conscientious one. Conscientiousness and religion were to them synonymous terms, even while they were demonstrating their own weakness in the possession of the former quality.

The *Harrogate Advertiser* gives an account of a most remarkable clergyman. The Rev. J. Chalmer Lyons, of a local Presbyterian church, is in the habit of giving ventriloquial entertainments. He gave a performance before a soldiers' camp, and greatly interested an Atheist soldier. This same Atheist soldier was so taken up with the entertainment that he came again and again, and "this led to his conversion by Mr. Lyons." There is excellent authority for this story—namely, Mr. Lyon himself. All the same, we should dearly like to know the name of this converted Atheist. And why will converted Atheists always conceal their names? But Mr. Lyon is evidently a remarkable man, and *so* truthful.

There was no need for the *Daily News* to begin it, but having begun it, it should have ended it. The writer of the "Daily Notes" on the leader page gave the other day what it called a Bible precedent for War bread. It quoted Ezekiel iv., verse 9-12: "Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and fitches, and put them in a vessel, and make thee bread thereof.....And thou shalt eat thereof." At this point the dear *D. N.* breaks off, right in the middle of the twelfth verse. It left out the instructions as to what the mixture was to be baked with. The crowning ingredient was evidently too much for the stomach of our pious contemporary.

The *Sunday Herald* says that "the heads of the Catholic Church in England can be trusted to look after themselves." The same remark may be applied to the clergy of all the Churches.

A new book bears the title, *The Great Unmarried*. Happy thought! Perhaps it refers to the Bishop of London.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell says: "Psychical research is not a substitute for religion, and neither is spiritualism." The 50,000 clergy in this country need have no fear of unemployment at present.

The Russian Executive has decided to dispense with the assistance of the clergy in the government of the country. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the English Tory press is dissembling its love for the Russian Revolution.

The newspapers state that leaflets are being circulated in the German trenches advocating the advantages of polygamy. It is really wonderful how these German "Atheists" derive their ideas from the Bible.

Sir Arthur Yapp, director of food economy, says, "I want the Churches to lend a hand." Does this imply fewer tea-fights, or communion services without bread and wine?

The Bishop of London poses as an admirable Crichton, and, although a bachelor, often advises married folk as to their duties. One of the latest examples of episcopal wisdom was, "Beef steak and gin are not the best things for children three months old." Does his lordship realize that there is a war? At the present prices of these luxuries, only wealthy persons could so indulge their offspring.

Dr. Horton has published his *Autobiography*, but he omits a good story of him once popular at Oxford University. He once said in a sermon: "I wear no clothes to distinguish myself from my Christian brethren." This resulted in a local caricature representing the reverend doctor in the pulpit wearing nothing except a white tie and black gloves.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 4, Abertillery; November 18, Birmingham; November 25, Nuneaton. December, 2, South Shields.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 18, Manchester; November 11, Glasgow; November 12, Falkirk.

F. H. BLAKEY.—You appear to be doing all that lies within your power to help the Cause, and no one can do more. See "Acid Drops."

C. W. MARSHALL.—Many thanks. The citations are extremely interesting and useful. Your interest in the *Freethinker* is very encouraging, and we think we are doing the best thing in keeping it unchanged as long as possible, however hard the struggle.

T. DOBSON.—We are proud to have the good opinion of so old a Freethinker as yourself. We feel quite sure that your steady devotion to the Cause has influenced many others in the right direction.

ROGERS GEORGE.—"My host has the look of a good sportsman" is a very near rendering of the passage sent.

J. H. LANGFORD.—Glad you think the Manchester meetings were full of good promise for the future. We think so, too.

J. W. WHITE.—We shall not fail to take advantage of your suggestion when we are in that neighbourhood. In most places propagandist movements have their ups and downs, but one need not get discouraged over that.

F. BARRACLOUGH.—We presume your idea is that the very absurdity of a "National Day of Prayer" would help to drive many into Freethought. In that we agree.

E. H. OLD (Dunedin).—Mr. Cohen has not had a portrait taken for very many years, and we regret that he has not one he could send. We are afraid yours is not the only place in which religious influences control the press.

A. SPENCER.—Will try and find room as soon as possible.

F. CHADWICK.—Sorry want of space prevents our publishing your communication.

W. WHILEHAVEN.—When the Curate of St. John's said to the soldiers "We have all done our best; you as soldiers on the battlefield, I silently did mine. You fought and got badged, I prayed and cadged"; he must have raised a smile on the faces of many who listened.

J. G. DOBSON.—We are not surprised to hear that since you induced your newsageut to take a number of copies of the *Freethinker* on the condition to take back all unsold copies, you have only had a "chance one" now and again to take back. This is an excellent plan, and others have found similar results when it has been adopted.

J. A. REID.—That the late Professor Kingdon Clifford was a much more accurate thinker than Sir Oliver Lodge will not, we think, be disputed by anyone who has carefully studied and compared the two.

A. M.—Our point was, that in allocating to religion the sphere of the "Unknowable," Spencer was really endorsing the opinion that belief in God rests on no other basis than that of ignorance.

DR. B. DUNLOP writes: "Mr. J. T. Lloyd says that the struggle for existence will never be abolished. But surely the era of Freethought is coming when very few people in the world will have more than two children."

E. POYNTON.—Please send on the MSS. Very pleased that an avowal of Atheism has led to no unpleasantness in the Army so far as you are concerned.

T. MOSLEY.—We saw the notice of *Determinism* to which you refer. Naturally, we agree with it.

R. WILSON.—A Church magazine which says so little about Jesus or Christianity, as the one you enclose, may certainly be regarded as a sign of the times.

WEKERMTHEMES.—Sorry we can't offer an explanation of what you say you saw. We should have to know very much more of the incident before we could venture. It is probably a case of counting the hit and forgetting the misses.

E. B.—Thanks for more than usually interesting batch of cuttings. We hope to notice at some length, so soon as we can find space, some of the works referred to.

G. D. SIDE.—See "Acid Drops." You were evidently too logical and too straight—unforgivable sins in connection with religion.

R. H. ROSETTI.—Yes; your letter must have gone astray. We never received it. Pleased to hear from you, however, and to know you are well.

G. B. TAYLOR.—After fifty years at sea, no one will deny your having done your share, or contest your right to a rest. We wish you continued good health to enjoy it. Pleased to hear that you get more sense out of the *Freetkinker* than from any other paper.

D. D.—For your own sake we wish your contribution was equal to your ambition, but it would make no difference to our appreciation of what is done.

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.

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

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.

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.

By some means a paragraph we had written on Mr. Lloyd's visit to Abertillery on October 21 got mislaid, and so failed to appear in our last issue. We were glad to learn that the meetings were very successful, the hall being crowded both afternoon and evening. Everyone was highly delighted with the visit. To-day (November 4) Mr. Cohen lectures there in the same hall, and we hope the experience will be repeated.

The Interim Conference, held last Sunday at the Chandos Hall, resolved itself, as it was bound to do under present conditions, into a meeting of London members. The only exception was Mr. R. Chapman (South Shields), whom we were very pleased to see present. After some formal resolutions were disposed of, the rest of the afternoon and evening was devoted to a general discussion of topics in which all Freethinkers are more or less interested. That is an idea which may admit of greater development in the future.

The meeting on Sunday last expressed regret that Branches of the N. S. S. had not availed themselves of the resolution passed at the Annual Conference, asking that reports of meetings be sent to the *Freethinker*, and which the editor had promised to insert. The General Secretary had reminded Branches of this, but without avail. And, of course, the editor cannot insert what he does not receive. Branches are helped in every possible way by the *Freethinker*, and if enough reports are sent in, they could be placed under a separate heading. But they must reach this office by Monday evening or first post on Tuesday. The better way would be for Secretaries to send their reports on Sunday evening. Only a few lines are needed, and that could easily be done after the meeting had concluded.

As announced in another column, we have decided to close the Sustentation Fund on November 20. This will enable the last list of subscriptions to appear in the issue dated November 25. When the Bowman Bequest Case was decided in the House of Lords we had to explain, as a result of letters that reached us, that the *Freethinker* benefited in no way from that bequest. Other communications that have been received since force us to again make this clear. The *Freethinker* does not receive anything, either by way of subvention, or by way of payment for advertisement, from either the National Secular Society or from the Secular Society, Limited. And it, therefore, has no pecuniary interest in the Bowman Bequest. The whole of that bequest is intended, and will be available, for propagandist purposes in the shape of lectures and publications.

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Although we have not said much lately about the fight with the L.C.C. over the sale of literature in the parks, it has been going on all the time. Following the hearing of the case in the Police Court, when a fine was inflicted, the Committee of Protest instructed Counsel to make application for a rule nisi for a mandamus ordering the Council to set on one side its resolution prohibiting all sales, and to decide each case on its merits. The rule was at once granted, and came on for hearing before Justices Darling, Avory, and Sankey, on October 23. After arguments from Counsel, the Court, by a unanimous decision, made the rule absolute, Mr. Justice Darling remarking that he "was unable to see how the Court could give judgment in any other way without disregarding the rule and construction of the law."

This decision represents a complete rebuff for the L.C.C., the members of which were evidently under the impression that they could wipe out a public right by a general resolution. The Council has still the right of appeal, but it would be well advised to let the matter rest where it is. If it does, then the London ratepayers may be asked to express an opinion on what the *Star* well called "an insane waste of time and money." Of course, so far as the Protest Committee is concerned, this result has not been gained without much hard work and a considerable expenditure. On that latter point something may be said later. But Mr. Verinder, who is Chairman of the Committee, has spared no time or trouble in the matter, and there has been a considerable addition to the work of Miss Vance, who has acted as Secretary. Mr. Cohen is on the Committee as representing the National Secular Society.

Freethinkers will welcome the appearance of Mr J. M. Robertson's new work, *The Jesus Problem: a Restatement of the Myth Theory* (Watts & Co., 5s. net). The present work is a following up of *The Historical Jesus* published last year and is intended to be a concise exposition of the myth theory of the origin of Christianity. Starting from a primitive and pre-Christian-Saviour-God cult, Mr. Robertson attempts—we think successfully attempts—to recreate the conditions, religious, social, and economic, that led to the establishment of historic Christianity. And, while the very nature of the subject precludes anything in the nature of demonstration, most unprejudiced readers will grant that Mr. Robertson makes out a strong, and, in most respects, an unanswerable case. In this connection the two chapters on "The Evolution of the Cult" and "Organization and Economics" stand out with special strength. The only word of criticism we have to offer is that, in our opinion, this work, as well as the one that preceded it, would have an added value for the general reader if it pursued a more uniform line of exposition, with less attention paid to the utterances of other writers on the same subject. We say this without in the least detracting from the value of an important piece of constructive writing.

The *Cambridge Magazine* records the death of Mr. F. C. Thompson, of Trinity, wounded on October 2, and who died on the following day, at the age of 29. He was placed in the first class, first division of the Classical Tripos, and, says the *Cambridge Magazine*,—

> in spite of the fact that few men ever did more hard work in the space of three years, he found time, unlike most classics, to take sufficient interest in ideology to lose his Faith completely. He was one of those "Undergraduates mostly scholars of their Colleges" who, in 1909, addressed a letter of congratulation to the late Master of Emmanuel, Mr. Chawner, assuring him of their support in his courageous attempt to expose the Conspiracy of Silence by which the majority of Deans and Tutors succeed in preserving their charges from heterodox discussion.

We are indebted to a correspondent for a priced catalogue of a recent sale of autograph letters, in which four by Shelley realized no less than £369. One letter on eternal punishment is described by the auctioneers as "very extraordinary," and the catalogue gives from it the following sentence:—

> I am not convinced. If God damns me, even by making me my own hell [as indeed sometimes, when I am in an ill-humour, he does in this life] it by no means follows that I *must* desire to be so damned. I may think it extremely disagreeable, as I do, to be in an ill-temper, and wish to God that God would not have damned me in this or in any other manner.

We should very much like to see the whole of this letter. Coming from Shelley, who deliberately wrote himself Atheist, we suspect that much better things remain unquoted.

This evening the North London Branch debate is on the question "Should an Industrial Conscription Scheme include Women?" It will be opened by Miss Evans of the Women's Freedom League, and replied to by Mr. A. Eagar. Ample opportunity is afforded for discussion by Members of the audience, and the Committee cordially invite women of all shades of opinion. For time, etc., see Guide Notice.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

WE have decided to fix November 20 as the closing date of this Fund. This means three more issues of the *Freethinker* in which acknowledgments will be made, and by that time everyone who wishes to subscribe will have had an opportunity of doing so. Some subscribers have suggested keeping the Fund open during the continuance of the War, and others that the anticipated deficit for the current year should be subscribed in advance. So far as the first suggestion is concerned, we have a dislike to keeping a subscription list open indefinitely if it can be avoided. So far as its success is concerned, if enough were raised to meet the recurring deficit our task would be so much easier, and there would be no need to reopen the Fund next year. In that matter we are quite in the hands of our readers. But all will please note that the Fund closes on November 20.

Below is the list of acknowledgments to date:—

Eighth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £323 8s. 5d. S. Dobson, 4s. Anon (Manchester Meeting), 2s. 6d. Deneb (2nd sub.), 2s. 6d. T. Mosley, 2s. 6d. E. Pankhurst, 2s. 6d. M. Pankhurst, 2s. 6d. G. B. Taylor, 2s. 6d. J. W. Davis, 2s. 6d. M. Barnard, 5s. D. D., 3s. Three Coventry Atheists, 7s. H. Organ, 4s. G. T. Bowman, 3s. H. T. C., £1. H. Adams, 2s. 6d. H. A. Lupton, 5s. J. Murphy, 2s. S. E., 2s. O. B., 3s. T. W. Arnott, 9s. 6d. J. Lazarnick, £1 1s. J. Foote, 10s. Mrs. Bertha Siger, 2s. 6d. Per Manchester Branch—G. Bailey, 5s.; R. Clayton, 2s. 6d.

Per H. T. Knott:—E. Eastlake, 1s.; R. Montgomery, 1s.; P. Stacey, 1s.; H. Atkinson, 1s.; L. Box, 6d.; A. Lindsay, 6d.; B. Gargeeke, 6d.; C. Gray, 3s.; F. T. Knott, 2s. 6d. Total: £330 7s. 11d.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL.

It was as a young curate in Trinidad that doubt first assailed my soul. I mention this because it was doubt in the end that sealed my career as an Anglican clergyman—the utter inability I experienced to believe implicitly all I was required to teach, and the hopelessness, the misery, the impossibility, of remaining in a calling which every tradition of honour and honesty, and every vestige of decency and good feeling, demanded I should abandon once and for all. But it took me seven years to reach a final decision and to arrive at a moment when, penniless and without a single earthly prospect, I threw off my black coat and white tie and emerged once again in the world a free man. All this, of course, I will describe later; for the present I will endeavour, as best I can, to describe the actual working life, as well as the mental condition, of a man into whose heart and mind was gradually creeping a doubt as to the possibility, let alone the probability, or the truthfulness or otherwise, of the dogmas and doctrines he was required to teach, with behind him that very infallibility, at which even the Anglican clergy jeer when they denounce it as it thunders out its decrees from the papal chair of Rome. In a way, so far as my ecclesiastical education was concerned, I never had a chance.—*Raymond Blathwayt, "Through Life and Round the World."*

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The Story of the Sugar Industry.

IV.

(*Concluded from p. 677.*)

In 1871 France was the foremost beet sugar-producing State; Germany was then far in the rear of her rival. The German Government, however, promptly busied itself in establishing its native sugar industry on a firm foundation, while the French producers and refiners remained without State aid. And while the German producer paid a duty on the weight of his roots a powerful inducement was furnished to the farmer to raise roots containing an increased percentage of sugar juice, as he was taxed on the weight of his crops and not on their sugar-yielding capacity. This system promoted both a rapid increase in the richness of the roots and a constant improvement in the extractor's art. Superior culture and refining were thus rewarded by handsome profits. In France, unfortunately, the factories were forced to pay the full sugar duty, and no encouragement seems to have been offered to the progressive farmer or manufacturer.

In 1871 the French produced 284,444 tons of sugar, but in 1884 no increase was apparent. On the other hand, the German output had risen during the same period from 186,000 to 1,123,000 tons. Confronted with this startling disparity, while realizing that their rivals had not only vastly increased their production, but that the percentage of sugar yielded by their beets had advanced from 8·28 to 11 per cent., whereas the yielding qualities of French roots had remained stationary at a mere 6 per cent., the Republic determined in 1884 to imitate the German example. A low duty based on the very poor yield of the French crops was imposed with revolutionary results. The author of *The Statistical Aspect of the Sugar Question*, George Martineau, states that:—

> Better seed was sown in France, better methods of manufacture were adopted, the diffusion process was substituted for the old hydraulic presses, and the yield of the sugar began to rise by leaps and bounds. From 6 per cent. it soon went up to 7, 8, 9, and 10 per cent. But as the French producers were allowed the full drawback (the money refunded by the excise on the exportation of excisable commodities of home manufacture) on exportation although they were paying only a small fraction off the duty on the sugar they produced, the revenue began to show a great and constantly increasing loss.

The profits of the French manufacturers reached in 1886-7 the huge sum of 91,966,437 francs (£3,678,657). Sugar was then taxed in a more discriminating manner; profits fell, but from 1884 to 1896 the yield of beet sugar had risen from 6 to 11 per cent., while the crop had increased from 265,000 to 668,000 tons.

In 1888 the German Government began to modify its earlier policy and slowly changed the system, whereby it charged a duty on the roots to a method which taxed the sugar actually manufactured. In 1892 this change was completely accomplished, and all the sugar produced became liable to duty, while the makers continued to enjoy a bonus on exported sugar. In 1871 the German exports of refined sugar were 5,809 tons, but the expansion was so immense that in 1896 they were 760,657 out of a total production of 2,000,000 tons.

In France, Austria, and Germany, great sugar industries have been developed, although Austria has proved itself an expert in the art of muddling through. In that country for a long period State interference was of very questionable benefit either to the Exchequer or the consumer. Prior to the War, Russia produced more than one million tons of beet sugar annually, but the price has always been extravagant to her own people. The production in Russia in 1875 was 159,000 tons only. From the same year onwards German raw beet sugar exports, although subject to variation, have been fairly steady, while the Austrian exports have varied widely from season to season. The exports from France have fluctuated enormously. They have fallen to 3,000, and have risen to 300,000 tons in different years.

In its infancy and adolescence the beet industry was artificially fostered, developed with giant strides, and easily outran its competitor the sugar-cane in the world's markets. Now that the beet product is of age, it is supposed to be able to stand alone. A few support the view that the cane still possesses a promising future. But that is no reason why the beet should not be extensively cultivated in the British Isles where we ought, at least, to produce a third of the sugar we consume.

From the standpoint of production the cane—a tropical or sub-tropical plant—has several advantages over the beet. Its yield per acre is much heavier, and its methods of manufacture have undergone great improvements, but the cane sugar plantations are thousands of miles across the ocean, while the European beet growers and refiners have their customers near at hand. At present the largest sugar-consuming population of the Old World is shut off from its usual sources of supply. Hence the sugar famine. In the words of a shrewd observer:—

> With a market for 1,600,000 tons of sugar at our doors, and a good soil and climate, we import it all and read the sugar market report day by day under the cheerful heading of "Foreign Produce." Germany, in the meantime, with a home demand not much more than half of ours, not only supplies all her own sugar but has, every year, more than a million tons for exportation, half of which is refined sugar. These are curious facts, of which the general public, and even our rulers, know little and care less.

The American Government having sugar industries of its own to care for was determined that these should not suffer ruin at the hands of European bounty-fed sugar. The astute Americans were perfectly agreeable to an extensive importation of this artificially fostered commodity, but they were careful to see that their Customs reaped the advantages arising from the receipt of foreign sugar at less than its real cost of production. Hundreds of thousands of tons of beet root sugar were unloaded at American ports. The United States revenue was enriched at the expense of Germany and Austria, and the price at which the sugar was retailed in American markets permitted the home producer to realize his sugar at a profit. Incidentally the policy pursued by the States proved the salvation of the West Indian planters who found in North America the only market in which they were protected from cut-throat competition. In a similar manner the Indian authorities secured relief to our own Eastern planters.

When, after much contention, the findings of the Brussels Convention came into force in 1903, and the bounty-fed sugar supply ceased, all the wise men predicted that the price of sugar would at once rise by leaps and bounds. But, somehow or other, the price of the article continued to be regulated by supply and demand. With an abundant suger crop prices were low, and when the yield was below the average, prices rose. In 1904-5 the European beet crop suffered keenly from the prolonged drought, and the sugar yield was nearly one and a quarter million tons below the estimated return. Naturally prices advanced, but many people completely lost sight of the fact that the consumers had placed too much reliance on the

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products of a small European area for their permanent sugar supplies. This utterly anomalous state of things was the direct consequence of our great dependence upon bounty-fed beets. In 1905 a larger acreage was sown with roots, mainly because of the high prices then ruling. The season proved successful, and a splendid crop was gathered. Prices fell so low that sugar was marketed below the cost of production in August, 1905. More recently consumption has increased faster than production in sugar as in cereals. The high prices of meat and grain cause agriculturists even in the beet countries to favour an increased production of live stock and grain.

In the cane lands these particular factors do not materially enter. Therefore, other things equal, we shall probably in the future depend to a greater degree than at present on cane sugar. Among other, if less important sweetening substances, Palmyra Jaggery deserves mention. This sugar is well known in India, where its juice is drawn from one of the native palm-trees, and run into earthern vessels suspended from a furrowed stick, which permits the flow of the juice into the receiving-pot. A daily collection of the sugar-pots takes place, and the juice is boiled down to the point of crystallization. Noel Paton estimates that this excellent palm sugar yields the respectable total of 560,000 tons annually. In extracting the sugar, the bark of the palm-tree is not incised, as some writers have erroneously stated. "The long flower is tied up and a piece cut off at the top. The pot is tied on, and the juice flows into it. from the wound. It is cut again when the juice ceases to flow, and so from day to day."

With the American sugar maple, however, the juice is extracted by tapping the bark. The annual consumption of this divine sugar in America amounts to 11,000 tons; but the luxury is so highly prized in the land of its origin that it is all consumed there. Sorgum is another kind of sugar extracted from the stalk of a grain-producing plant, but it is very inferior in quality, and is never likely to enter into serious competition with the beet or cane.

The Mincing Lane sugar market still survives, but its glories have sadly faded. The decline and fall of the old West Indian imports led to mournful changes in the Lane sugar centre. Down to the 'sixties, a vast amount of solid business was transacted where a busy speculative market now reigns. The British refiner continues to produce the finest sugar, but he is denied the facilities for delivery which his foreign competitor commands. At every port in our sea-girt isles sugar is unloaded from the vessels as they arrive, and then forwarded to its destination.

There is little doubt that the furiously assailed Brussels Convention, in abolishing the bounty system, helped to preserve the cane industry from destruction. The world requires all the sugar it can obtain, and let us trust that both the cane and beet industries will continue to flourish. After the comparative failure of the beet crop in 1909, Europe was short of sugar, but its troubles were eased by larger supplies of the cane commodity. As a careful writer stated in December, 1909, we should then have been "faced with a shortage of about half-a-million tons in the European needs for sugar were it not for the most welcome increase in the production of cane sugar, and that increase could not and would not have occurred under the bounty system."

T. F. PALMER.

"Cleanliness is next to godliness," says the proverb. Yet English people lived without soap till the seventeenth century.

Is There a Religious Revival in France?

I.

IT is an old saying that the wish is often father to the thought. We find how true it is when we note—as we so often do—the emphatic assurance of our religious friends that there is a great revival of the sentiment and practice of religion, and that this alleged rebirth is an outcome of the gigantic efforts we are making to keep the freedom we have so long enjoyed, and to bring the "blonde beast," the Teutonic barbarian, by his own methods of blood and iron, into line with civilization as we know it. Now, it is not unreasonable to think that anything that tends to concentrate a man's efforts, to make him more deeply serious, will also make him more religious if he be already a believer. But, on the other hand, it will also confirm many in their Freethought; for it is not an easy thing to reconcile the bellicose exhortations of the Bishop of Oxford, and others of his type, with the ideal of the brotherhood of man, with the conscientious objections of their Lord and Master. The clerical mind runs naturally to hypocrisy, to humbug, conscious and unconscious. The one thing that will save humanity, we are told, is a revival of worship; therefore, signs of this revival must be found, even if common sense and logic go by the board. I, for one, must confess not to have found any trace of such a rebirth, although I have kept a sharp look-out. The Churches are certainly not better filled now than before the War, when the papers were lamenting their emptiness. The men who are now in the trenches may all be profoundly religious, or they may not. It is possible that they may not want to hurt the feelings of a chaplain whom they have found a good fellow, although a bit of a fool. With the prospect, at any moment, of a violent issue out of all their afflictions, they may regard a man's belief or unbelief as a small affair in comparison with what the man is in himself. If the parson be wise—which is perhaps too much to expect of him—he will discount the complaisance of men who are busy with more important affairs, and seek consolation at home in the opportune, if not opportunist, conversion of those buttresses of our intellectual life—Mr. Bottomley and Mr. H. G. Wells. I am assured, by my religious friends, that the support of the combined theological authority of these two gentlemen means a new lease of life for Theism. Yet there are malicious people who insinuate that these earnest seekers after spiritual truth are really pragmatists at heart. They have the impudence to say that for Mr. Bottomley the Deity is a business proposition, and Mr. Wells had found that his studies in sexual ethics were cut out by the profounder knowledge of what the public wants, as displayed by "Victoria Cross" and Mr. Hubert Wales. Not caring to repeat his earlier successes, from the delightful *Time-machine* to *Tono-Bungay*, we are told that, heartened by the conversion of his friend, Mr. Bottomley, he determined to discover a new God.

II.

However that may be, and it would no doubt be foolish to attach too much importance to a criticism obviously prompted by malice and envy, my subject here is not the conversion of two distinguished publicists, but the alleged religious revival in France. I must, therefore, ask my reader to look with me at a little book just published, called *Recent French Tendencies*, by the Rev. G. C. Rawlinson. My excuse for analysing what is really a flimsy piece of work is that it reflects a familiar type of the clerical mind, a type which is complacently satisfied with inadequate knowledge and loose thinking. It has also

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an airy assumption of omniscience, which is calculated to impose on those who have no means of checking the assertions. It begins with some silly observations about the closing years of the centuries, when, we are assured, writers seem to look back to what has gone before, rather than to what is to come. Now, the hastiest glance at our literature in the periods 1580-1600, 1680-1700, 1780-1800, is sufficient to convince anyone who is not a parson, or has not a theory to support at any cost, that they were pre eminently periods of expansion, of a forward movement, rather than of relaxed vigour and decadence. To labour this point would be to take the reverend gentleman more seriously than he deserves. But if these periods were full of creative and forward-reaching activity, what shall we say of 1880-1900? We are asked to believe that there was nothing but exhaustion in the twenty years that gave us the work in poetry of Francis Thompson, John Davidson, Mr. Yeats, Dowson; the fiction, at the ripest, of Mr. Hardy, Mr. George Moore, Henry James, Mr. Kipling, Mr. Wells, Mr. Frank Harris, and Hubert Crackanthorpe; the literary criticism of Mr. Arthur Symons and Mr. A. C. Bradley; the sociology of Mr. J. M. Robertson and Mr. Havelock Ellis. Did any period ever show fewer signs of being played out?

III.

Mr. Rawlinson is so little acquainted with the history of Freethought in the nineteenth century that he imagines that Huxley dominated the Rationalism of the period, and, what is more amazing, he assures his readers that this amusing, if somewhat belated opponent of Mr. Gladstone and the bishops is still living, as he puts it, a precarious life-in-death in the columns of the *Freethinker*, and in the books of Mr. Joseph McCabe. I am, unfortunately, not in a position to question his justice to the anti-Christian polemic of Mr. McCabe, for the only things of his I have looked into are a novel and a book on Mr. Bernard Shaw. The novel is an anæmic picture of the full-blooded life of the Italian Renaissance. It might have appeared in the pages of the *Christian World* under the name of Annie Swan, so little does it remind us of Cellini, or our own Webster. The depreciation of Shaw is as dull as the appreciations of M. Hamon and Mr. Henderson. None of them seem to see that Mr. Shaw is, or rather was—because the War has killed him—a twentieth century W. S. Gilbert. However that may be, the suggestion that the spirit of Huxley lives in the pages of this paper, or in the books of unacademic Rationalists is the last thing in silliness. Huxley was merely doing for educated people what had been done more effectively for the artizan thinker a generation before, and his method, often enough, came in for strongly adverse criticism in these pages, and in the work of Mr. J. M. Robertson.

IV.

So much, then, for Mr. Rawlinson's knowledge of English literature and the Freethought Movement. We shall proceed to note if he is any better qualified to instruct the earnest inquirer to the movement of French thought. Naturally, the Rationalism of the Voltairean type is as hateful to him as it was to Joseph de Maistre, and he has this in common with the earlier writer—he sticks at nothing in the way of abuse. The bitterness he puts into his account of Renan is the measure of the immense effectiveness of the Frenchman's method. He cannot forgive Renan and M. Anatole France their tone of urbane condescension, their smiling refusal to accept Christianity at the valuation of those who believe in it. He notes how, in his witty short story "The Procurator of Judea," M. France makes a point of wounding the susceptibility of Christians. But this was in 1892, and now, of course, M. France has lost his hold on the youth of the country. Presumably they are all mystics, or political pragmatists like M. Bourget! I know some, however, who find Remy de Gourmont more to their taste, his dissociation of ideas being a more powerful dissolvent than anything in Renan's or M. France's critical laboratory. But it is possible that Mr. Rawlinson and his friends have never heard of Remy de Gourmont, whose strong point was the cultivation of ideas.

After disposing of the Voltairean sceptics and wicked writers of naturalistic fiction like Flaubert and Zola, he fills in, in a sketchy manner, the history of Modernism, which I may describe as a sort of Freethought within the Catholic Church. It has attracted some of the best and most thoughtful minds in France; but salvation seemingly does not lie in the direction of reason, it lies rather in that of faith. Much comfort is found in the conversion of Huysmans, who returned to the Church of his ancestors when he had exhausted all the possibilities of sensation. This, however, is not a matter of wonder in a country where Catholicism is a part of the literary tradition. Nor is the return of M. Bourget or Brunetiere to the religion of their childhood any indication of a religious revival. Its significance was in the main personal. Believing and practising Catholics in France have not attached much importance to it. There was always the uncomfortable feeling, as M. Dimnet confesses, that these "intellectual converts might be Catholics—as Voltaire was a Deist—from practical necessities postulating higher principles." In a word, they might be, as so many are, mere political or social pragmatists.

V.

But it is in the younger generation of writers that Mr. Rawlinson finds proof of the revival of belief in France. He makes a parade of three of them: Psichari, a grandson of Renan, Peguy, and M. Paul Claudel, the last being a writer of mediæval mystery dramas in a Whitmanesque prose, and odes that may be sound expositions of Catholic faith, if nothing else. Only a critic who has no reputation to lose would claim them as great writers. They were, or are, good patriots, but not better patriots because of their belief. Now, the misfortune is that for the reader whom Mr. Rawlinson has in mind, a reader but little versed in contemporary French letters, they may seem to represent current thought in France. Nothing could be more misleading. If a few writers and a number of friends make noise enough, there will always be a crowd of noisier acclaimers. We have an example here in the group of gentlemen, young and middle-aged, who are kind enough to afford us amusement and instruction in the pages of the *New Witness* and the *Dublin Review*. With the exception of Mr. Chesterton, who is a man of genius, although he is unfortunate in not possessing the "first-class intellectual apparatus" which Mr. Arnold Bennett modestly claims for himself and his Rationalist friends, the bulk of them are men of talent, whose only fault is that they shout a little too much. Now, they do not impose on many of us, but a Frenchman might easily mistake them for an important factor in English thought.

But, after all, an English cleric with a leaning to Roman Catholic dogma and a superficial knowledge of his subject is hardly the best witness to an alleged revival of Catholic belief and practice in France. We have only to take up M. Alfred Loisy's *The War and Religion* to get at the truth of the matter. He admits that there may be a revival of faith, but only among those who believe already. Those who have not abandoned the religion of their childhood, through conviction and faith, he says, have practised it again with enthusiasm. It is probable, too, that some half-believers have

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persuaded themselves that they do believe, and so perform the outward acts of faith. The mere taking part in religious acts in camp or hospital does not imply that a man has abandoned his Freethought; rather it is a friendly act towards believers—it is to please the kindly sister or pious lady whose days are devoted to the care of the wounded. For the same reasons an unbeliever may wear a pious medal. He has no wish to hurt the feelings of a mother or sister, or, indeed, of any kindly person who offers one. The Catholic journalists delude themselves if they imagine a Freethinker will be any the less a Freethinker after the War, because the differences between believer and unbeliever do not count in face of the absorbing interest of the moment.

"Among those who die gloriously for their country," M. Loisy tells us,

> are some who have retained the feeling of Christian hope, while there are others, and large numbers of them, to whom these feelings are unknown. It is not becoming, that Catholic journalists should have the assurance to try to persuade us that only priests and believers in the old faith know how to die.....A young soldier, who had the faith once but no longer has it, being asked about this spirit of Catholicism, which is said to pervade our whole army, answered thus: "Without any prejudice, I can affirm that I have never known a single soldier, either in the trenches or in the rear, give any proof of the least anxiety about religion." Nevertheless these men do not ignore the fact that they are in continual and immediate peril of death. "They know by daily experience that death may overtake them at any minute; and they do not even think about a future life. I firmly believe that nothing pertaining to religion exists any longer so far as they are concerned."..... It is not for the sake of the God of the Christians that those die who believe on him, nor do they die in order that they may go to him. Certainly it is an august life for which a man will sacrifice his own without grudging it; but it is not for a blessed immortality in the company of Christ and the saints: it is for the life of the country.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

Leisure.

(THE CRY OF THE WORKER.)

The murmuring breezes sweetly sing
The music of the spheres;
Within these dreary walls I bow
My weary head in tears.

The honeysuckle fragrance sheds;
The lark sings loud and free;
The cowslip droops its golden head—
Such joys are not for me.

The sunshine cannot enter here,
And laughter dies at birth;
My soul within me faints to taste
The goodly joys of earth.

For those who toil not, neither spin,
My weary fingers ply;
I give them leisure, wealth, and hope—
They grudge me time to die.

P. A.

Obituary.

The Birmingham Branch has just lost in Mr. J. Terry, who died on the 22nd inst., and was buried at Lodge Hill Cemetery on the 26th, one of its oldest members. Throughout the long period of his membership he was a consistent worker and supporter of the Branch. Always ready to proclaim his opinions and pour scorn on the creations of superstition. He survived his wife only a few months, and the severance of a long and happy union was a heavy blow to him. A Secular Service was read at the grave side, and the sympathy of the members of the Branch goes out to the surviving members of the family.—J. P.

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.

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Nov. 8, at 7.30.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, "Should an Industrial Conscription Scheme Include Women?" Affirmative, A. Eager; negative, Miss Evans (Women's Freedom League).

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Tube Station): 7, C. E. Ratcliffe, "Why I Am Not a Christian."

WEST CENTRAL HALL (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road): 3.30, Dr. Boulenger, "Morality and Alcohol."

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ABERTILLERY (New Era Union, Tillery Institute): 3 and 6, C. Cohen, Lectures.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, F. E. Willis, "The Decay of Faith."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): 7, C. V. Ashurst, "Religion and Science."

NEW MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Bakers' Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, The Secretary, "Some Duties of a Freethinker, and Branch Objects."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Fowler Street, Victoria Hall Buildings, second floor): 6.30, J. Fothergill, "The Two Paths."

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Views and Opinions.

The Decline of Faith.

Following the burst of—call it imaginative rhetoric, concerning the great revival of religion that followed the outbreak of War, preachers are now generally declaring that religion is in a bad way, and that unless something drastic is done the end of the War will bring disaster. But while this change of attitude is striking there is nothing new in the lament. Christian preachers have hardly ever ceased lamenting the lack of interest in religion. And in modern times the complaint has been continuous. People will not attend church; or, if they do, they pay little attention to the teachings delivered or the amount of disbelief is growing. The situation is a curious one. An all-conquering creed is always in danger of defeat. People throw off a religion which, we are told, answers their deepest needs, and for which their whole nature clamours; the intentions of an omnipotent God are baffled by the creatures he has called into existence. A sense of the ridiculous would surely prevent preachers making claims one moment and demolishing them the next. But a sense of the ridiculous might well prevent their being preachers, and even wipe out their religion altogether.

* * *

A Cardinal Truth.

Now, as Freethinkers, we are not questioning the truth of the complaint. Every Freethinker knows it is true, and it would be well if Christians, even of the professing variety, set themselves to find out *why* it is true. Every civilized country in the world grows steadily less religious. That is a statement which does not admit of serious question. And the civilized world grows less religious in the face of enormously powerful influences to keep it Christian. In this country, for example, Christianity is still the official faith. Its financial resources are great, and its social influence extensive. No one gains anything—in a material sense—by rejecting Christianity, its profession opens up many an avenue to advancement. A large army of writers still find it to their interest to support Christianity. Some deliberately write what they know to be untrue; others suppress the truth so that its expression will not interfere with their market. Current periodical literature is "controlled" in a far more efficient way than is sugar. This procedure is sometimes excused on the plea of "deference to public opinion," or because "the public is not ripe for the whole truth to be told." But it is a pitiable condition of things at the best. Yet the facts are, first, that every inducement is held out to a person to profess Christianity; second, that Christianity is admittedly losing ground. Why is this the case?

* * *

An Alien Creed.

The answer is partly given, or at least suggested, in the remark made above, namely, the complaint of the preacher is an old one. In the Western world people have been always, more or less, giving up Christianity. That religion has always sat uneasily on the shoulders of the progressive races of the world. And the Churches have in turn been engaged in a constant attempt to modify their teachings so as to suit newer ideas, varied with spasms of persecution to perpetuate orthodox ones. The history of the heresies and persecutions of the Christian Church have at bottom this significance. Sometimes the official Churches have been strong enough to suppress the revolt for a time, only for it to break out in another form. Moreover, Christianity was, to the West, from the first, an alien creed. Its teachings, its ideals, are essentially Eastern. Indeed, it may be said that none of the Western nations possess a religion born of the soil. It was forced upon the West from without, and it has been maintained more or less by force all along. And the unsuitability of the imposed religion is shown by the fact that the revolts against it have been continuous. The underlying fact in nearly all the revolts against the rule of the Christian Church is, that the Western mind was struggling against the dominance of a religious creed alien to it in origin, in spirit, in idea, and in ideal.

* * *

Rival Aims.

A religion that was born of contemporary knowledge and needs, one which reflected life, would not need an elaborate official machinery to guard it from attack and to keep it alive. It would keep itself alive; the difficult thing would be to diminish either its vitality or its influence. The aim of Christianity and that of Freethought is here in striking and significant opposition. The purpose of Christianity is to erect a wall round man, to create a world within a world, to perpetuate an artificial environment in which certain ideas may flourish. The aim of Freethought is to break down the barriers which shut off man from the influence of the widest and best knowledge, to expose him to the full current of contemporary life, and to leave all ideas subject to that healthy competition without which the best is robbed of the greater part of their value. The aim of the one is crystallized as "Keep yourself unspotted from the world"; the ideal of the other is "Keep the world

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free from spot." And these two aims are seen in clear and sharp contrast in the matter of education. For several generations the object of the Churches has been to seclude the child from the full play of contemporary life. The purpose of the religious teacher is to keep certain knowledge away from the child, in order that certain other ideas may develop unchecked and uncorrected. The aim of the secular teacher is to give the child the full benefit of all the world has to offer it, and to so train its faculties that it may use them to the best advantage.

* * *

The Clash of Cultures.

In addition, Christianity suffers from a disadvantage common to all religions. In a civilized country, religion is not something that man creates, as he creates his art, his literature, or his politics. It is something he inherits. The religions of all civilized people, the gods of every civilized race, come to them from the past. They reflect, of necessity, the life of the time to which they properly belong. Can anyone imagine a modern Englishman, or Frenchman, or American, creating a religion like Christianity with its Virgin born Saviour, its doctrine of blood sacrifice, its heaven and hell, its angels and devils? On the face of it, these represent ideas that belong to another stage of culture than ours. And the attempt to force them upon a people to whom they are wholly unsuited, creates that opposition to progressive ideas that religion manifests all over the world. This struggle is not accidental; it is inevitable. Ideas are like organisms, inasmuch as if they are to live, they must find a suitable environment. And a modern environment is, of all, most unsuitable to religious beliefs. The result is, that in sheer self-preservation, Christianity is driven to perpetuate the past so long as it can. It must obstruct if it is to live. And, of necessity, the fight becomes more difficult with the growth of each generation. Every advance makes the next step easier. The freer human life becomes, the easier for more modern and more progressive ideals to find expression. Long ago the physical sciences freed themselves from the control of religion. The science of biology has almost, if not quite, run the same course. Morals and sociology are, because of their greater complexity and later development, still under the influence of religion. But the same process is at work here; it is evident to all who care to observe it. Life, as a whole, is shaking itself free of religion, and those who are working for the complete emancipation of the human mind know that the wailings of a professional priesthood cannot permanently affect the final result.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Essence of Christianity.

II.

WE cannot call attention too frequently or too emphatically to the fact, now incontestably established by the comparative study of religions, that Christianity possesses no uniqueness or originality whatever. It is simply one of many similar cults. This fact is frankly acknowledged by the most enlightened theologians, who account for it by affirming that in no nation under the sun has God left himself without witness, but that the supreme, final witness is Christ. Their contention is that whilst to all peoples God made a partial and imperfect revelation of himself, the complete and perfect manifestation of his redemptive purpose was granted only to the Jews. According to them, there is some truth in every religion, but the whole truth, in the dazzling splendour of its power, is to be found in Christianity alone. When it is scrutinized with critical minuteness, this claim is seen to be founded on the sand of prejudice, the truth being that the adherent of each cult thinks his own is the truest and most holy of all, and that, in reality, there is very little to choose between them. When they are told this fact, Christians generally are shocked beyond measure, and refuse to believe it; but they are led by ministers who are hopelessly biased against the truth, while the majority are culpably ignorant of its very existence. The essence of Christianity, according to the New Testament and the Creeds, is the doctrine of personal salvation by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ on Calvary; and there are thousands of Christians in this country alone who regard this as the distinguishing characteristic of their religion. We have heard it asserted again and again, not so long ago, that the fact of the God-man dying for the sins of the world is peculiar to Christianity, whereas, as now wholly proved, it is common to all the great religions. Pagan mythology abounds with strange stories of God-men and Saviour-Gods doing precisely the same thing. In his incomparable article in the R.P.A. *Annual* for 1918, Professor Gilbert Murray says:—

> "The Faithful Son" is a protector to the helpless. The women, children, and old men huddle together in their hiding-place from some object of terror; the Young Man goes out and faces the Terrible Thing, slays it or beats it back. Sometimes he dies; then they know he has died for them, and only then their passionate gratitude rises to its full height. Of course, in those religions where human sacrifice was customary the death which the Redeemer faced was often—perhaps most often—the voluntary death at the altar; voluntary death to atone for the sins of others. Ancient religion thrills and reverberates with the splendour or horror of these stories. .....You need a Friend like that; one who has died for you, willingly, deliberately, though he was so much finer and better than you. Only of course he must also be alive; otherwise he would not be there. He died and now lives.

Such is the teaching of mythology on the theme under consideration, and we learn that all the great religions are at once concerning it. For lost and ruined humanity the only possible salvation is through faith in a slain and risen Redeemer. The story, differently told in different religions, but essentially the same, falls to pieces the moment the eye of criticism alights upon it. Now, in mythology, the next in importance to the idea of the Faithful Son is that of the Ideal Mother, and the one is quite as unnatural and absurd as the other. This is what Professor Murray says about the second idea:—

> The Christian Mother has rejected all elements of fertility; she has neither lover nor husband, nor even children except the One. She has as little difficulty as Ishtar herself in combining the attributes of Mother and Virgin; but she rejects from both every element that is not consistent with the utmost ideal of spirituality. The Virgin's purity, the Mother's compassion—these she accepts, but no more. Even the joy and pride of motherhood, a birthright of every mother, is too earthly for her.

The Madonna, though exquisitely beautiful, is a contradiction in terms, and the Faithful Son is equally so. They are both anachronisms, and their survival is exclusively due to the persistence of superstition.

Of course, myths have not been created out of nothing, any more than the material world and its contents. Like *logos*, *muthos* etymologically means a word, saying, speech, fable, fiction, story, and is generally employed to signify "a conjectural narrative presented as historical, but without any basis of fact." Myth, then, is a purely imaginary product, or an idea converted into a fact. God is a myth, so is the Christ of theology, and pre-eminently so is the Virgin Mother. Such beings never existed at all save as creatures of the fancy. And yet

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we would not be justified in concluding that a myth does not rest on a basis of truth. Indeed, behind almost every myth there lies an imperishable truth, which the myth, as a rule, succeeds in effectually concealing. That is to say, the myth itself is entirely false, but the idea out of which it was made represented some fact or truth of Nature. God is man supernaturalized; a chimera; and genuine believers in God have very little, if any, faith in man. The result is, that an imaginary Deity throws real man into the shade and causes him to depreciate himself as a lost and guilty sinner, or a despicable worm. Now, what is the truth of Nature out of which the Christian myth grew, but which, instead of revealing, it in reality hides? Professor Murray says:—

> It speaks to those who are oppressed by the struggle of life, who are half blinded by the brutishness and the cruelty of the mutual devouring that rages round them, and it tells them that the struggle is not the whole of life. In the midst of the struggle there is a seed, weak but for ever growing, which is the antithesis of the struggle. Amid all the wrongs done by man to man, man is not all brute, but he is also God; there is an Eternal Mother brooding over her children; there is an Eternal Brother or Champion who, through love, dies for his fellow-man.

On one point, with due deference, we are forced to differ from the learned Professor. It seems to us incredible that a Supernatural myth expresses a natural truth. Is it not rather true that the Supernatural is conceived as stepping in for the purpose of covering and making up for the defects of the natural? What Professor Murray says about the redeeming forces inherent in humanity is, doubtless, perfectly true; but it is not a truth taught by revealed religion. The Son of God is represented as coming into the world to do for man what man could not possibly have done for himself; not to reveal man to himself, but to save him from himself. Self-trust is a crime, and trust in God the only saving virtue. This is the Gospel story which constitutes the inner essence of Christianity. Well, this Gospel story the Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford calls a myth; but he goes on to say that, if this story were disproved, as it easily can be, "the result would probably be the re-birth of a purified Christianity, because, then, Christianity would be set free from its dogmas, which are incredible, and its historical statements, which are improbable in the extreme, and we should be able to see what it was really aiming at." We maintain, on the contrary, that the result would be the complete disappearance of Christianity. Disprove its dogmas, discredit its historical statements, and how much of the religion of the Cross would there be left? As the late Professor Drummond used to say in his orthodox days, humanity is doomed to remain lost for ever on the natural plane unless the Supernatural dips down, lays hold of it, and lifts it up into its own sphere. This is what Christianity has always claimed to be both able and eager to do, but which it has never succeeded in actually doing. What we need is not "the re-birth of a purified Christianity," but the rediscovery of man as at once the child and the potential Lord of Nature, and as possessing within himself all the faculties calculated, when intelligently utilized, to bring out into full activity the glorious possibilities slumbering within him. He has it in him to be his own saviour and the Saviour of all his fellows.

J. T. Lloyd.

In my early days I constantly made the foolish supposition that conclusive proofs would change beliefs, but experience has long since dissipated my faith in man's rationality.—*Herbert Spencer.*

A Loyal Soldier of Freedom.

I would have all men come out of Christendom into the universe.—*John Davidson.*

Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,
Pioneers! O pioneers.—*Walt Whitman.*

The reproach has often been levelled against our insular art that it is Philistine. The French artistic sense lifts itself out of that ruck. It may go to the dogs, but it is not Philistine. As a fact, art in France, in all its divisions, is Bohemian. There is no risk that the bulk of our English writers and artists will ever be Bohemian. Miss Marie Corelli and Mr. Hall Caine are eminently respectable, and Mr. Rudyard Kipling is a robust Tory. Nowadays, with us, James Thomsons are exceptional; but so is the genius of that gifted poet who sang of *The City of Dreadful Night*. If any foreigner shall throw this up in our faces we may take refuge behind the broad backs of Algernon Swinburne and John Davidson. Neither of these singers dwelt beside the still waters. To think of their literary careers is to think of alarums and excursions, of the goddess Grundy in hysterics, of tabernacle calling unto conventicle, of manifold recriminations and vituperations. We may wish that these two poets had not been compelled so often to exchange their pens for their swords; but on their careers all will look with pride to whom the glory of English literature is dear. The bright flame of their enthusiasm has always burned for right issues and nobles causes. Their eagerness for battle has been in the cause of Freedom against conventions and traditions. Swinburne is already a classic, and beyond praise or blame; but John Davidson deserves our attention as he so worthily carried on the splendid tradition of his illustrious predecessor.

John Davidson won his separate place in the literature of our country by his *Fleet Street Eclogues* and his *Ballads and Songs*. The appearance of the latter volume raised a storm, for the frequenters of Exeter Hall could not endure his *Ballads of a Nun* and *Thirty Bob a Week*. Respectable folk were, indeed, startled. Admirers of the placid and comfortable verses of Lewis Morris were not accustomed to the beauty or the freedom of John Davidson's poems. It was a very long way from the sugary *Epic of Hades*, which was irreverently called the "Hades of an Epic," to John Davidson's powerful muse.

Like most pioneers, John Davidson had to be content with soldier's wages. In one of his latest books, *The Triumph of Mammon*, published in 1907, he told his readers he was fifty years old, and that nine-tenths of his time, and that which is more precious, had been wasted in the endeavour to earn a livelihood. He also complained that the age was too commercial, too entirely in the grip of economics, too immoderate in its pleasures of every kind of temporary interest and ephemeral issue, to care for poetry. He pointed out that the mind, the imagination of our time, was not healthy enough, not serious enough, not joyful enough, not passionate enough, for the highest in literature. So John Davidson cast his book upon the waters, and appealed to a court of supremacy—"the dozen superior persons scattered throughout the universe," as it has been called wittily.

Small wonder that John Davidson's later books made a noise in the literary world but brought him little profit. In them he emphasized his belief that Christianity was near its end, and it was upon the great change that this belief involved that he based his poetic visions. For the Christian cosmogony he substituted that of man and science. Being a poet of genius, he breathed life into the terminology of

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science; for, like Swinburne, he blew everything to melody through his golden trumpet.

The poet's description of a world without Christianity palpitates with passion:—

I, Mammon, mean to make
This mighty world a hundredfold itself,
There shall be deeper depths of poverty,
A more distressing toil, more warlike war,
An agony of spirit deadlier
Than that which drenched Gethsemane with blood;
A rapture of dominion hitherto
Unfelt by conquerors, kings, or priests; a power,
A beauty, and a glory of the world
Emerged from Christendom, like love's belov'd
With April from the wrinkled womb of death,
Delivered fresh to Aphrodite's arms.

Now listen to another passage in which Mammon delivers his message:—

The fanes are ruined, spent,
The adoration that was only fond
Expedient, frantic makeshift for delayed
Self consciousness in men; the truest creed
Dies like a mollusc when you crack the shell.
Instead of temples I bring the universe;
Instead of creeds I offer you yourselves,
The greatness of the universe become self conscious
In flames and crimson seas we shall advance
Against the ancient immaterial reign
Of spirit and our watchword shall be still
"Get thee behind me, God; I follow Mammon.

With all its thunder and earthquake, John Davidson's poetry never fails in the sweeter and kindlier note:—

As vibrant as an octave bell that hums
Harmonic mirth to hear his neighbour chime.

There are passages which are very glories of charm and imagination:—

Hush!
The murmur of the seaboard: surges beat
Their slow, uncertain, softly swelling fugue—
The brooding surges fingering the shore.

Life's heavy fruitage and imperial nights
When naked darkness gluts the sky with stars.

As keen as dawn that with a crimson slash
Hews out the darkness and delivers day,

And thunder of the thought shall seem to wait
Upon the nimbler lightning of the deed.

The little child
That lives a year and holds its parents' hearts
In dimpled hands for ever.

High hearts and youth are destiny enough.

It is by means of passages such as these that the reader can see the genius of the poet who found eclogues in the rawness, hugeness, and noise of modern Babylon. As a dramatist, John Davidson was very unlike ordinary playwrights. He regarded Christianity with abhorrence, and he wrote plays with the deliberate object of converting people to his opinions in this matter. He hits the orthodox God hard, and his orthodox worshippers harder. When you read Davidson's *God and Mammon*, for example, you do not greatly care what befalls Prince Mammon or King Christian; what you care for is the beautiful language, oftentimes as resistless as the honeyed perfection of Kit Marlowe. When you think of a really great play you do not think of any single person or passage. The glory of that most perfect tragedy, *Othello*, is neither the Moor, nor Desdemona, nor Iago, but each and all. To recall John Davidson's plays is mainly to think of isolated passages of great charm. His life was a tragedy, deeper than any that he wrote. He possessed literary ability that would have enabled him to make plenty of money had he prostituted his talents. But his mind was set on something higher. He dedicated himself to the service of principles. He was entitled, in his degree, to echo the noble words of Heine: "Lay a sword upon my coffin, for I was a loyal soldier in the war of the liberation of humanity."

When lion-hearted Richard Carlile was fighting the good fight for Freedom, he was unaware that his deeds of daring were watched by Keats and Shelley, two great poets, both Freethinkers and Republicans, who looked out from their towers of song and recognized that he was a hero battling for the most precious possession of humanity. Nearly a hundred years later, G. W. Foote, fighting bravely in the same good cause, was heartened by the encouragement of George Meredith and John Davidson. It was well and happily done. For the Freethought leaders look beyond the tumult and the shoutings of the day, and are touched by what Shakespeare calls "the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

MIMNERMUS.

The Bible and Immortality.

THE OLD TESTAMENT—(*continued*).

As we have seen in the last paper, no mention is made in the Hebrew scriptures of a future life, or of man possessing an internal "something" that will continue to live after the death of the body. We will now examine some of the statements made in those scriptures respecting life, soul, and spirit, in order to see if any of these so-called entities are said or implied to be immortal.

In the Genesis creation story we find the following passages:—

Gen. i. 20.—Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that hath *life*.

Gen. i. 24.—Let the earth bring forth.....*beast* of the earth, etc.

Gen. i. 28.—Every *living thing* that moveth upon the earth.

In the foregoing passages the words italicized are in Hebrew all one and the same—the expression "living thing" being merely a revised substitute for "beast." In all three cases the word in the original is *khay-yah*, which means: "life, animal, wild beast."

Having cleared the way, so far, we can now look at the following passage:—

Gen. ii. 7.—And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the *breath* (*nish-math*) of life; and man became a living *soul* (*nephesh*).

In this passage the words "life" and "living" are the same—*khay-yah*. We have therefore only to consider man's *nish math* and his *nephesh*. This is soon done. Turning to a Hebrew lexicon, we find that the word *nish-math* signifies: "breath, life, a human being, the wind," and is therefore correctly translated "breath"; also, that *nephesh*, which is translated "soul," means: "breath, an animal that breathes, a living person." The latter word (*nephesh*) is further said to be sometimes applied to the feelings, desire, and inclination; but whether this be so or not, it does not affect the primary signification. Hence, in the passage under consideration there cannot be the smallest doubt as to the meaning. Having formed the figure of a man in clay, the Lord God—who was conceived to be a man-shaped being—breathed into the figure his own living breath, whereupon the clay man immediately became a *living, breathing animal*. The story is, of course, pure fiction, like that related of Pygmalion, a celebrated sculptor, whose marble Venus was changed into a living woman. In both stories the internal organs of the figure and its flesh and blood constituents would seem to have never entered the minds of the originators.

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In the narrative recording the death of Rachel (who died in childbirth) we find the following statement:—

> Gen. xxxv. 18.—And it came to pass, as her *soul* (*nephesh*) was in departing, for she died, that she called his name *Ben-oni*.

In the Hebrew version the literal reading of the passage is: "And it was—in going out her breath—that she died—and she called his name, Son of my pain." In the first of these readings (that of the Revised Version) the word *Ben-oni* is left untranslated. Now, in this case, as in that of the formation and vivifying of the first man, there can be no doubt whatever as to the meaning. This is *not* that an immortal "soul" was leaving the body, but that consciousness and the power to breathe were departing. Rachel spoke with her last breath, and then ceased to live.

We find, furthermore, that the word *nephesh* was applied to the whole animal creation, as well as to human beings, as in the following examples:—

> Gen. ix. 16.—The covenant between God and every living *creature* (*nephesh*) upon the earth.
>
> Gen. xlvi. 7.—All the *souls* of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were three score and ten.

In the chapter last quoted, the word *nephesh*, translated "souls," is employed in the plural in the sense of "living persons" (the word "living" being omitted) no less than eight times. The word "soul" thus means nothing more than a *living being*, whether used in reference to man or to one of the lower animals.

We come next to the word "spirit," whose first appearance in the Bible is in Gen. i. 2. In this verse it is stated that "The *spirit* of God moved upon the face of the waters." Here the word "spirit" is *ruakh*, which in the lexicon signifies: "breath, breeze, the wind, spirit." Josephus, in the first paragraph of his *Antiquities*, paraphrazes this sentence by saying "and a *wind* moved upon its surface"—which, of course, is correct. With the first three interpretations assigned to *ruakh*—breath, breeze, the wind—we are all familiar; but we do not know what were the ideas of the ancient Hebrew writers in many of the cases which our translators have rendered "spirit." The following are examples in which *ruakh* is found:—

> Gen. vi. 17.—I do bring the flood of waters.....to destroy all flesh wherein is the *breath* (*ruakh*) of life.
>
> Gen. viii. 1.—And God made a *wind* (*ruakh*) to pass over the earth.
>
> Job xxvii. 3.—My life is whole in me, and the *spirit* (*ruakh*) of God is in my nostrils.
>
> Gen. vi. 3.—And the Lord said, My *spirit* (*ruakh*) shall not strive with man for ever.

In the third and fourth of these examples the word translated "spirit" means nothing more than "breath." As regards the third passage, a comparison with Gen. ii. 7 (already quoted) will make this evident. Job was speaking of the breath supposed to have been given to him by God at his birth—and, as in the case of the first man, through the nostrils. In the fourth example, the Lord is represented as saying that he had long striven with men by giving them warning, reproof, and exhortation (with his breath); but as these had not been heeded, he would waste no more words upon them, but would destroy them by a flood. Similarly, the word "spirit" in Gen. xli. 38, Job xxvi. 4 and 12, Eccl. iii. 21, and many other passages which I have noticed, can all be resolved into "breath." When, however, neither "breath" nor "wind" appears to give sense to the passage, the word *ruakh* should be rendered "spirit"; but, as I have already stated, this leaves the exact signification uncertain.

In any case, whatever may be the meaning of the word *ruakh* in some places, there is nothing in any of the passages in which "spirit" is found that refers to any other life than the present; this fact settles the question of immortality in the Old Testament.

As already stated, the most important point in this connection is that upon the question of a future life there is everywhere a complete silence throughout the whole of the Hebrew scriptures, which plainly implies that in the Old Testament times a life after death had never been seriously thought of. So far from "eternal life" having been bestowed upon man, or the promise of it made to him as a reward for serving the tribal God, we find that the lower animals were raised to his level (save in the matter of dominion), and were given the same earthly life, with its attributes of soul and spirit, as their natural possession. And such being the case, it is not in the least surprising to note that nowhere in the Jewish scriptures is it stated, or even implied, that man's life, soul, or spirit shall continue to exist after the body to which it belonged had crumbled into dust. There was, however, to some extent a belief in "spirits of the dead"—which will be fully considered in the next paper.

The ancient Hebrews, as we know, were very ignorant and credulous, and believed many things which we now know to be absurd. They believed, as we have seen, that one of their prophets had been taken up in the air by a whirlwind, which carried him safely to the dwelling-place of the Lord God and his holy angels, who resided just above the clouds. This belief, though pure superstition, is at least comprehensible; for assuming that no such thing as immortality was known, the prophet, if he was to be rewarded for his good works by being taken to heaven, would have to go there before his death, or not at all; and, being alive, he would take with him his soul and spirit, as well as his brain, without which there could be neither soul nor spirit. But to imagine that at death all the qualities, feelings, thoughts, and emotions, which constitute the mind or soul, would arrange themselves into an impalpable, invisible Something whose personality should live for ever—to imagine such an absurdity was beyond even the credulity of the credulous Hebrew writers, and their "conspiracy of silence" upon this subject is a clear proof that they never believed anything so ridiculous. This form of credulity is found only among Christians and Spiritualists of the present day.

We see from Gen. l. 2 and 26 that the Hebrew writers were acquainted with the Egyptian practice of embalming the dead; for the bodies of the patriarchs Jacob and Joseph, who are recorded as dying in Egypt, are stated to have undergone this process, in order, apparently, to prevent disintegration until they could be conveyed to Canaan for burial.

ABRACADABRA.

The City of Dreams.

WHEN I first saw the Thames, it was under a midnight moon. I was alone in London, and free to rove and muse at my own sweet will. That was a decade ago. The river has been flowing steadily since then. Father Thames and Father Time keep even pace, and outlive all other fathers, temporal and spiritual. I have stood by the river in many moods and on many occasions since, but never with the wild, free, rapt, reverent abandon of that first midnight hour. So the far-travelled Hindoo, if with different emotions, might behold the sacred Ganges. To me it was no sacred flood, but symbolical of much. Perhaps I thought first of the very human Thomas Hood and *The Bridge of Sighs*; of Dickens, and his quaint and curious pageant faded. Sympathy, memory, the association of ideas, all the

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pathos of history and hopes and fears of the present time, mingled with the broken moonbeam as it lit the ripples of the venerable stream. Such, according to varying psychology, explain the passionate pilgrim and the shrine of his adoration.

There be many shrines, many thrones, much pomp and circumstance, civil and military, secular and religious, deeply rooted in the past, but still superficial and inessential. The permanent and fundamental things are more important, if less imposing. One has in mind the few wise heads, in London and elsewhere; common men of common sense, of simplicity, sincerity, and intelligence; quiet, earnest, unassuming men; exalted, too, but only in ideal and aspiration; advanced, also, some five hundred years ahead of their generation. These are the true legislators, and compared with whom our civil, military, and ecclesiastical grandees are but painted savages.

* * * * *

On this, my latest, visit to London, I saw that chivalrous knight and "bonnie fechter" for Freethought, Mr. ——. But, no; let him still be "Mimnermus the Mysterious," and charm us incognita with the magic of his pen. Older readers may remember, in the early Stevenson days, the *Young Folks' Paper*, that used to issue from Red Lion Court. How we used to thrill at the exploits of that knight in shining armour, Don Zalva the Brave, of Selim the Moor, the Young Swordsman of Warsaw, Desdichado, Chairon the Charioteer, etc., all by that voluminous author, Alfred R. Phillips. These great serials are still running in the painted "comics" that now issue from the same Court. Our boys read them still, and why should we forbid them? We can but hope they will follow on, and ultimately find their more modern heroes in the pages of the *Freethinker*.

I spent a most delightful hour in the quiet old Temple Gardens, Inns of Court, etc., with our Chief of Staff as guide, philosopher, and friend. No small honour, surely. It may even seem boastful; but I cannot help that. The marble effigy of Oliver Goldsmith, over his quiet, shady tomb, seemed to await our coming. We spoke of that useful, simple, generous soul, who was "nobody's enemy but his own." We leaned over the prostrate bronze of the Knights Templars, some with legs crossed to show that they had been to the Holy City, and who, my guide facetiously remarked, were perhaps performing a more useful purpose thus supine and still, than they had ever performed in life. The remarkably beautiful interior of the little church of the Crusades period called forth our unstinted admiration, and I am creditably informed the musical services held here are the finest of their kind. In Fleet Street we passed the Temple Bar, which now only exists as a side snow in gilt miniature. A winged effigy in stone, however, has taken the place of the older obstruction.

Later, and still greatly daring, or merely devoted, I saw the affable and energetic manager of the R.P.A., Mr. Charles Watts, and for old time's sake visited Red Lion Court, and Pitman's, at Amen Corner, in the shadow of St. Paul's. Thence to Euston, for the North. Experienced a "midnight alarm," and just left as our friends from Germany arrived. This last was mere nightmare, all the rest a vision of hope and peace and sanity. It was but yesterday, but already it is a memory and a dream. Great old London has hummed itself to repose, and Father Thames flows on for ever "through the mist and shadow of sleep." The City of Dreams will wake to life again when I return.....The wind is rustling softly in the trees beside a quiet road.....It is night, and the household has retired to rest. The fire is smouldering low; the pipe of nutty flavour forgets to burn; the wind growls distantly aloft in the chimney, and more familiarly at the window-pane, and then goes hurrying on, sounding hollowly across the plain.....I have an idea: the world might be saved by simple, honest, and intelligent men. The Bismarcks, Wellingtons, Napoleons, have failed—the War Lord and the Prince of Peace. The normal man is the saviour of the world.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Immortality—A Narcotic.

THE Rev. Dr. Norman Maclean, of St. Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh, is one of Scotland's outstanding preachers, and one whose teaching is followed by many In an address, which he recently delivered in Edinburgh at a war-time service, he remarked that the "great doctrine of immortality was presented in these days in a coarse and material form, as if it were a narcotic that ought to reconcile us to the horrors of war; and that nothing sadder had happened in the world than the way people had become indifferent to the great truth of immortality."

It is a striking fact that it should be found necessary in these times to defend the doctrine of immortality, as if it were recognized that it was being heavily assailed; for, with primitive barbarism in the ascendant, it would be but natural that primitive superstition should spring up with renewed life. When hopes are dashed to the ground, the stars in their courses fight against man, loved ones fall, and aching voids are created in the heart, it would not be surprising were large numbers of people, who were normally indifferent, to adhere to a belief which promised reparation for ills and reunion with friends. Yet here we have the confession of an eminent divine that nothing sadder had happened than the indifference of the people.

It exemplifies the peculiar attitude of mind developed by theological training that indifference to a doctrine, the interpretations of which have filled many books, should be considered sad beyond all this murder, glorified by the name of war; sad beyond the shame of that intellectual paucity which has rendered international arbitration impossible; sad beyond man's ignorance of man. No stronger condemnation of religion as a factor in social welfare has been admitted than this, that it so warps a man's judgment that slavery, pillage, rapine, and murder are as nothing compared with a disbelief in a doctrine.

Dr. Maclean's statements form a serious indictment. They charge some persons with having, for ulterior purposes, taken a despicable advantage of the nation's predicament to present the doctrine of immortality as a narcotic.

Freethinkers have not used this doctrine as a narcotic, in fact, they have offered the antidote. The indictment not having been framed against them, who then are the culprits? Obviously it must be ministers of religion. It is indicative of the use to which parsons put the misfortunes of women, that a preacher of so outstanding ability as Dr. Maclean should reprove them. It is doubtful if there is any body of men, except priests, who would seize on the private misfortunes of a man or woman, with the rapacity of a tiger tearing out the entrails of its prey, and seek to profit thereby. For is it not profit? Do they not make their livelihood out of the gullibility of the people? Do they not label as criminal or indecent all those who will not pay tribute to them? Where abuse fails, and threats of eternal torture are unheeded, do they not seek to have the rights of citizenship withheld? Think of Spinoza, Paine, Carlile, Servetus, and Bruno; think of de

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Heretico Comburendo and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; think of the fires of Smithfield and the extermination of the Waldenses, and say that the tiger has not been outdone. And were not these things done that the immortal soul might be saved?

We recently attended the funeral of a dear friend. The parson who officiated bade us be of good cheer, that our friend only slept, and that in his very flesh should we see him again. This was scriptural, and it was refreshing to hear a parson speak with some regard for what was laid down in the Bible. Was not this a narcotic? Justifiable in the circumstances—perhaps, but, nevertheless, a narcotic.

It is when dealing with social matters that the grave danger of the doctrine of immortality is discovered. There are many who bow to the will of God; who feel that all effort to better life is not only vain, but sin; who, when told that the proletariat require to work longer hours than is really necessary, reply that man must live by the sweat of his brow; who uncomplainingly suffer the indignities of poverty because it is written that the poor shall be always with us and are blessed; and these reply thus because they believe in a future life.

The difference between a "truth" and a "great truth" is a theological subtlety which we have never comprehended; but we have formed a tentative opinion that a great truth is something about which nothing is known. So far as immortality is concerned, we have found no evidence to support it. Were mankind to recognize that the idea of immortality is a figment of the dawning intelligence of humanity, and that life gone, is the candle extinguished, so soon would it set out to put the world to rights. Were that energy which is wasted in logomachy, that thought concentrated on religion, that organization defending superstition, and that teaching spreading ignorance, to be taken from these useless and harmful pursuits, and combined to elucidate the causes of world misery, how soon would progress be made!

The doctrine of immortality is indeed a narcotic—a dangerous narcotic.

John McMillan.

Acid Drops.

The debate in the House of Lords on the sale of "honours" contained nothing of which well-informed people were not aware. We do not see how one party can well blame the other, since all are guilty. And the thing is so flagrant that no one had the hardihood to deny it. A clear way out of the difficulty would be to abolish these absurd titles altogether, with the pantomimic and semi-barbaric accessories. But that would be too drastic a step for the British public; and so we would suggest that, instead of passing resolutions against the sale of titles—resolutions which will be useless when passed—there should be a regular and recognized scale of charges, from a dukedom to a knighthood. Anyone who wanted a title could then have one—if he could pay the price. And we are certain that, even under those conditions, the British public would furnish plenty of purchasers. We have to travel a long way yet before the servility of spirit which gives a mere title importance is sufficiently weakened to divest it of value.

The *Universe*, the weekly Catholic newspaper, has an interesting note concerning priests. It says: "In this War, for the first time, the Navy has provided Catholic chaplains not only at the naval bases, but also in the sea-going squadrons." It would be interesting to learn what the cost of the numerous chaplains attached to the Army and Navy amounts to during the present War.

The pill of religion has to be heavily coated with sugar nowadays. At a recent Presbyterian Church's Sunday meeting at Westcliff-on-Sea, solos were rendered by a lady-singer, selections were given by an orchestra, and trombone solos were indulged in. An address was given by an Army chaplain, in which he said that "outside the hospital, he was a mixture of Whiteley's and Lyons."

Mr. Silas K. Hocking, a former Free Church minister, complains "that Sectarianism has not been kept out of the camps. I wish it had been otherwise. I stood at the door of a (Y.M.C.A.) hut the other day and looked about me. A little to the right was a "Church Army Hut," to the left a "Salvation Army Hut," and I had passed a "Wesleyan Hut" on the way.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who is a Spiritualist, says that "Reports are agreed as to the pleasant conditions of life beyond the grave." Kind-hearted Christians will notice, with alarm, that this puts the lid on hell.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle says there is no reason why an angel "could speak to Jews in Judæa and not to Englishmen in England." Why limit the speech to angels? In the Bible days Balaam's ass was as loquacious as the snake in Eden.

Munition workers must be in a bad way. We wonder why? Recently there was the much-advertised Woolwich Crusade for the Moral and Spiritual Betterment of the Munition Workers. That was a dead failure, from the religious point of view, at least, and now Canon Baillie is appealing for £150,000 to meet the "spiritual needs" of Worcester munition workers. Observe, it is not the munition workers who ask for the help, but the Canon. The money must be spent through the Church. One day we hope to see people generally resent the impertinence of the clergy in thus posing as moral regenerators.

The Prime Minister, who is a Welsh Baptist, has been ingratiating himself with the clergy, and recently entertained a large number of parsons of all denominations at breakfast at Downing Street. The obsequious press made as much fuss as if it had been reporting the Last Supper.

The discussion on "Spiritualism and Life After Death" is still running merrily in the *Sunday Times*, and Spiritualists have sought to make capital of the adhesion of Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir William Barrett, principally because they are scientists. Mr. Nevil Maskelyne, who has had thirty years acquaintance with spiritualistic phenomena, says it is largely a matter of sense deception. "Professed scientists," he adds, "as a rule, have no such knowledge. I very much doubt if Sir Oliver Lodge, for example, even knows there is such a thing as a theory of magic."

"Faith is the only panacea for human woes," says Mr. Bottomley. Indeed! Is it a little thing that grown men and women should have faith in plaster images?

Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, said "the education rate should be the most popular in the country." Unfortunately, so many Nonconformists regard the education rate as being little better than a Church rate.

"The bishops enjoy enormous influence at the Foreign Office," says Mr. E. Ashmead-Bartlett. Now we know who is responsible for Britain being a Continental Power.

According to the *Sunday Times*, the Bishop of London says "a man is much the same five minutes after death, as he was five minutes before." It is, however, a difficult matter to persuade the man's relatives that this is the case, in spite of the Bishop's dictum.

"The Church of England has hitherto been more intensive than diffused," said the Rev. Dr. Chilton, the clerical headmaster of the City of London School. The same thing may be said of the wealth of the Church, for the Bench of Bishops enjoy the lion's share of emoluments.

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Reactionaries everywhere are trying to take advantage of the national crisis to further their own ends. Among others, Sabbatariaps have been active with prosecutions of their more broad-minded fellow-citizens; but, happily, they do not always win their cases. At Grimsby, a soldier was charged with buying cigarettes on Sunday. When before the magistrates, the soldier said that he had to fight on Sundays, and the Bench at once dismissed the case.

Ecclesiastics appear to be imitating theatrical folk in the use of press notices. A short time since a quarter-column announcement appeared in the press extolling the bravery of Cardinal Bourne during a visit of some days to France. The Cardinal's most courageous acts seem to be those of lunching at General Headquarters and visiting the King of the Belgians.

The present can hardly be described as an age of robust faith. The shrine of Saint Edward the Confessor, in Westminster Abbey, is "hidden by a huge pyramid of sandbags built up to protect it from possible destruction in an air-raid." Fancy a "saint" needing the protection of sandbags!

The *Herald Republican* (U.S.A.) has a full-page article on a new translation of the Bible. The translation seems a very convenient one: "Thou shall not kill," being rather an awkward command at the present moment, the new reading has "Thou shalt not murder." Many having stumbled over "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a child," the new version meets the objection with "Behold, the young woman," etc. This is a most comfortable method of translating. All you have to do is to find out what is required and translate accordingly. We shall expect to see presently a verse translated which makes the "great fish" in which Jonah took his memorable voyage into a "submarine." The possibilities of this method are infinite.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton has written *A Short History of England*. He says the most important thing that happened in the Victorian era "was that nothing happened." Mr. Chesterton is as accurate as the writers of the Gospels.

The Ven. Archdeacon Holmes, preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral, told the congregation, "Satan is not God." Indeed! But, as the schoolboy said, "Why don't God kill the Devil?"

A new publication has the title, *A Young Eve and an Old Adam*. The Bible Adam is said to have lived 960 years; but he had the advantage of starting life at full age.

A series of articles by a "Jewish Catholic" have been published in the *Universe*. We have heard of "Chinese Presbyterians," but this latest combination makes us wonder.

The *Westminster Gazette* recently published a protest against compulsory church parades in the Army, and pointed out that "we do not attempt to force attendance at religious services on any other branch of Government servants except the fighting forces." A palpable hit! The protest, however, might have been made some years earlier.

"A debate on the question, 'Where do the clergy fail?' took place a day or two ago at the Base Hospital in connection with the 5th Northern General Hospital Debating Society. Lieut. M. E. Golby (the Queen's) presided. The opener, Lieut. Dick Fletcher (27th Canadians) made a breezy speech, in which he brought forward twelve reasons for the clergy's failure. Lieut. N. E. Carden (K.O.Y.L.I.) replied, and this was followed by a number of short speeches by the R.A.M.C. Company and patients, together with a vigorous defence of the clergy by Capt. the Rev. C. F. Stevens, C.F. After brief replies by the opener and opposer, and a summing up by the chairman, a vote was taken as to whether the clergy do fail, and by a majority of 22 the meeting agreed that they did!"—*Leicester Daily Mercury.*

General Smuts says: "The longer people keep cheerful faces, the quicker the war will be over." Unfortunately, so many Christian folk habitually wear an expression of tired funeral horses.

The *Catholic Review* contains an article by Captain H. N. Gibson on Spiritualism, under the title of "The Direct Attack." The writer sets himself to show that Spiritism is a frontal attack by the Devil on Christianity. Evidently the world-war has roused Satan from his slumber.

A beggar who, it was said, could make tears roll down his cheeks at will, was charged with begging at Thames Police Court. This is not so remarkable as the story of the stone statue in a church which wept on high and holy occasions. Probably, the priest who handled the water-can could explain how the trick was done.

"As an expression of sympathy with sufferers from air raids, the Bishop of Dover has promised to sleep at Ramsgate on a moonlight night and share the anxieties of the population." So runs a paragraph in the *Daily News;* and we are really astounded at such heroism. But we wonder where the Bishop will sleep? Will it be in one of the poorer sort of houses likely to be shaken down by the explosion of a bomb? And why one night? Why not sleep there altogether? And we wonder whether the people of Ramsgate really will be comforted by knowing that a real Bishop is in their midst? The curious thing is that the Bishop does not say he will pray for the people. Perhaps that is taken for granted. Perhaps not.

We have many times referred to the way in which religious organizations are utilized to back up vested interests. We see from the *Call* for November 1 that in one military camp all men in uniform are prohibited attending political or Trades Union meetings. This we can quite understand. The curious thing is that in the same camp meetings are being held in the Y.M.C.A. huts on "The Abolition of Trades Unions."

Mr. Horatio Bottomley says that he speaks "with all the humility of a layman." If he were proud he could hardly make more noise.

What beautiful nonsense gets into prints! Mr. James Douglas writes: "Perhaps we are over-educated and over-civilized." Not yet, Mr. Douglas! Not whilst children leave school at fourteen years of age; nor whilst families reside in single and two-room tenements.

Theosophy seems to be as much a nose of wax as the Christian religion. Many years ago, when Mrs. Besant embraced Theosophy, she dropped all her social and political work because it conflicted with her new opinions. To-day, she takes a vast interest in Indian politics, and has been interned for her activity. The mighty Mahatmas seem powerless before a handful of policemen.

THE SUBMARINE.

Clarence:

O Lord! methought what pain it was to drown!
What dreadful noise of water in mine ears!
What sights of ugly death within mine eyes!
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks;
A thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon;
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalu'd jewels,
All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea:
Some lay in dead men's skulls; and in those holes
Where eyes did once inhabit there were crept,—
As 'twere in scorn of eyes,—reflecting gems,
That woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,
And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by.

—*King Richard III.*, Act. I., scene iv.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 18, Birmingham; November 25, Nuneaton; December, 2, South Shields; December 9, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 18, Manchester; November 11, Glasgow; November 12, Falkirk.

W. DEAN.—Thanks for offer, which we shall be pleased to accept.

H. BLACK.—Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Free Will?* is out of print at the moment, but it will be reprinted at as early a date as possible.

R. L. (Southport).—Shall be pleased to see you when you come to London. But please advise us as to the day and time of calling at this office.

G. T. BOWMAN.—We are also hopeful of pulling through without having to make any alteration in either the size or price of the *Freethinker*. We note your appreciation of the "varied and satisfying menu" provided.

MR. F. C. HOLDEN (Utah, U.S.A.) writes: "Leaflets on the 'Massacre of the Innocents' have arrived, and caused many an eye-opener amongst the intellectually lazy people in this pious community." Very pleased to hear it.

J. L.—We are taking no risks. Our information comes from several sources, and is as authoritative as it can well be.

S. CLOWES.—Thanks for news. It is a common policy to leave untold things we ought to know, assuming that others will be sure to tell us. But it is a mistake. Better be told twice than not at all.

A. R. D.—Your appreciation is very encouraging.

M. W.—Arrived too late for notice.

T. H. E.—Received. Pleased to hear from you.

H. G. MARSHALL.—We note that you succeeded in getting one letter, on the right lines, into the *Star* correspondence on the Zeppelins and God. Our comments referred, of course, to the disproportion of space allotted to the two sides of the controversy.

H. ROSETTI.—Capital! It is a bit of practical and valuable work.

E. PINDER.—Thanks for cuttting. But the clergy seldom profit by open discussion, do they?

CPL. J. BENTON.—If parsons will come round the camp lecturing the men on religion, they ought not to resent questions being asked and opposition offered. Anyway, we are pleased to know that you offered both. It is not surprising the parson did not like your opposition. The clergy prefer silence. Then they can return with a story of how eagerly the men listened, etc.

G. CROOKSON.—We are very pleased to hear from you, and we remember you quite well, in spite of the lapse of time. Will bear your suggestions in mind.

R. V.—We do not think we were unfair to the *Star*. We admit that the *Star* is more liberal than our other London papers, but our remarks referred to the space allotted to the Freethought side of the question.

D. GLOAT.—Next week.

ARTHUR DANNATT.—Order, with remittance, received, but address for despatch of book is lacking. Please send it on.

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.

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

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.

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.

Some time ago we asked the upholders of Secular Education to get their Trades Unions, etc., to pass resolutions in favour of this policy. We were pleased to observe that several had taken our advice, and we have just received notice of the following, passed at the instance of the West Ham Branch of the Operative Bricklayers' Society, at the General Meeting of West Ham and District Trades and Labour Council on October 31:—

> That in the interests of education, and as a means of preventing the obstruction of educational progress by what is known as the "religious question," this West Ham Branch, Operative Bricklayers' Society, is of opinion that education in State schools should be strictly confined to the subjects defined as "secular" in the Education Code, thus maintaining an attitude of complete neutrality towards all questions of religious belief or doctrine.

It was also agreed to send the motion to all Trades Councils in England, to Mr. Fisher, and to the local M.P.'s. This is capital work, and we hope Freethinkers in all parts of the country will see what they can do in the same direction.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (November 11) in the City Hall, Glasgow. The lectures are at 12 o'clock and 6.30. We hope that Glasgow Freethinkers will see to it that the hall is crowded on both occasions.

We have more than once referred to the impression we have as to South Wales being a most favourable ground for Freethought work. It was something to start a Branch of the N. S. S. at Swansea, one of the strongholds of Welsh Dissent, and we are hoping to see something done at Cardiff soon. Mr. Cohen's visit to Abertillery last Sunday showed what is possible. The hall was filled in the afternoon and crowded out in the evening. Many of the audience did a long tramp over the mountains in order to be present, and the number of keen-faced, intelligent-looking young men present gave excellent promise for the future.

This Sunday Mr. Cohen is not lecturing, but on the following Sunday (November 18) he lectures in the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham. On the following Sunday he breaks new ground at Nuneaton. From all we hear the meetings there are likely to rouse considerable interest.

Pte J. Scott writes *apropos* of our remarks, in the *Freethinker* of October 28, on Mr, Bottomley's foolish exploitation of "the miracle of the Virgin at Albert":—

> I am on sick furlough and just out of hospital. I have just received my *Freethinker* and was glancing through it when my eye caught the assumption from *John Bull* in "Acid Drops" about the beaming "Madonna and Child of the Albert Cathedral" Now, Sir, I have been right along the whole Front, from Ypres to Albert and Albert to Ypres Front —participating in the fighting all along.
>
> Mr. Bottomley, Sir, is indeed very gullible, but you hit the mark when you say the British officer was pulling Mr. Bottomley's leg The Monument of the Madonna was not knocked into its present beaming position by a German shell ..... Had Mr. Bottomley used his eyes as well as his superstitious mind, he would have seen several high chimney stalks. They also had not been hit, yet everything round about was ruin and desolation. These stalks were left alone for the same purpose as the Cathedral with the beaming Madonna and Child, and were just a gunnery direction for the enemy.....If Mr. Bottomley had spent the time under the conditions at the Somme as I have, perhaps he would not be so superstitious. Mr. Bottomley would then have seen graves of brave men with crosses at their heads and Madonnas on their graves. Yet the cross or the Madonna did not prevent a German shell from turning up body after body that had been laid to rest, perhaps a few days since, perhaps months. If he had to gather up the parts of the maimed bodies of those dead men in a waterproof sheet, as I have done, and think of their wives and mothers and children, he would talk less about the glory of war; if he had to stand up to his middle in water for six nights in a shell hole in "No Man's Land" and be frozen in every morning in that shell hole, and

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be continually under shell fire; if he saw his chums blown to pieces before his eyes, and men lying huddled in heaps dead in shell holes and had laid there for months; if Mr. Bottomley had the real experience of war, perhaps his pen then would not be controlled by his passions or emotions, though he might wonder what the Hell his God is doing. That is a common expression from the soldier's lips in France to-day. Mr. Bottomley, Sir, to use a soldier's phrase, has opened his mouth and let it say what it liked.

We have left out Mr. Scott's account of the cause of the present position of the statue, which we said we knew, and which Mr. Bottomley, must know, because we think it lies with him to tell the truth to his readers. At any rate, we give him the opportunity of doing so.

Mr. B. Siger writes:—

My son in Salonica writes to say that the *Freethinker* is eagerly read by many of his chums who, at the beginning of the War, laughed at him for reading it. He says he enjoys it more every week, and is quite disappointed when he does not get it through some accident in transit.

This is good but not unusual news. We are convinced, and we have the best of reasons for saying it, that owing to the number of copies read among the troops and the way it is passed round, the *Freethinker* is at present doing a greater propagandist work than it has ever done in its history. Owing to the War, hundreds read the paper who, under ordinary conditions, would never have seen it.

A definite arrangement has now been reached with compositors regarding an additional war bonus. This is to be 4s. a week per man, dating from November 1, and 6s. per week dating from January 1. What with continuous increases in the wages bill and a steady rise in the price of materials, running a paper in War can scarcely be called a humdrum occupation.

The best way of meeting this continuously increasing expense is by pushing the circulation of the *Freethinker* wherever possible; and we are seeing what can be done by a little judicious advertising in local newspapers. One day we hope to embark on a comprehensive advertising scheme; at present, for financial and other reasons, we are forced to move very cautiously. But our experience is, so far, that well-planned advertising always pays.

We beg to remind all intending subscribers to the Sustentation Fund that the closing date is November 20. This will enable the last list of subscriptions to be published in the issue dated November 25.

Mr. R. Chapman writes: "Having arranged with Mr. Cohen for Sunday, December 2, the South Shields Branch is filling in the interval with local talent. Last Sunday, Mr. J. Fothergill opened an interesting discussion on 'The Two Paths,' and Mr. J. Hannan presided over a good meeting. Next week (Nov. 18) the subject is a report of the London Interim Conference, and the separation and divorce question section will undoubtedly prove a centre of controversy, friendly even where antagonistic."

The *R. P. A. Annual* is, this year, raised to one shilling, which, considering the greatly increased cost of production, is not surprising. And no one who lays out a shilling on it will regret the expenditure. Mr. Eden Phillpotts is in his best poetic vein in the "The Rationalists," and Professor Gilbert Murray contributes a cleverly subtle essay on "The Essence of Christianity." It is an essay which destroys Christianity in the act of demonstrating its real character. Professor Bury writes on "Christianity and Roman Criminal Law," and shows what little it was that Christianity added to this department of sociology, while hinting at the ill it did in checking certain developments already at work. Mr. McCabe has written upon the subject of Christianity in Russia, and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner dwells on the importance of the recently decided Bowman Case. But the great significance of this decision is, to us, not that it established the legality of a bequest to an incorporated body, such as the Secular Society, Limited, but that it established the legality of a bequest to any Secular Society whether registered or not. An article by Mr. C. T. Gorham, on "The World after the War," the optimism of which will, we hope, be justified by results, concludes the issue, which contains other articles of an almost equally interesting nature with those noted.

Freethinkers in the Army in Egypt are keeping the (Freethought) ball rolling. In the *Egyptian Mail* a discussion on religion has been proceeding, and there is a long letter in a recent issue from "J. J. B.," one of our subscribers, who puts the case against Old Testament teaching with much force.

The *Ardrossan Herald* is a paper much nearer this office in which a discussion is being carried on by Freethinkers and Christians. The special subject here is "Beethoven's Religion"; and we observe letters, well written and to the point, from quite a number of heretics. We are always glad to see these discussions in progress, and also to find that some editors have a due sense of their responsibility to all sections of the community.

Messrs. Funk & Wagnells publish a useful little *Dictionary of Grammar* by an American Freethinker, Mr. J. A. Hennesy, which appears designed to meet the needs of the busy person. It is a small pocket volume, price 35 cents, and a noticeable feature is the number of illustrative passages from writers such as Thomas Paine, Ingersoll, etc. We are glad to observe the author's silent protest against a number of slang Americanisms which are making headway among writers on this side the Atlantic.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

Nineth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £330 7s. 11d. Pte. J. Scott, 2s. 6d. J. Latham, £1. H. Densham, 1s. E. Garard, 2s. B. Versey, 1s. W. Barton, 2s. E. and A. Bullock, 6s. H. Russell Phillips, 10s. T. Garstang, 1s. G. H., 5s. W. J. Micklethwaite, 5s. E. Taylor, 3s. J. A. Morris, 2s. C. J. Peacock, £2 2s. Total, £335 9s. 5d.

This Fund closes on November 20.

Impressions.

CHILDREN can be safely trusted to say the unexpected, and, generally, it is the unexpected which is true. The significant story, where a naked king walks the streets surrounded by flatterers, will illustrate our point. Sometimes the unexpected is the obvious, and sometimes the obvious is not true. Yet, *mes amis*, truth is a strange bird; a fleeting vision of the flash of a kingfisher's colours in the sunlight is, perhaps, as near to absolute truth as mortals may attain.

Winchester is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It has some of the strange beauty of a sorcerer; it has also some qualities which are downright English; finally, it possesses some aspects which are repellant. We hope we shall not incur the charge of being a disgruntled Freethinker if we attempt to justify our last assertion. Once again, *mes amis*, we dissatisfied ones are hard to satisfy, and, if we flaunt our likes and desires to the four corners of the earth, we shall also give adequate reasons for disliking those matters which pass muster with the easy-going fat-headed public. It is our penalty to see *through* the eye, and not with it.

Autumn was singing its swan-song on a lovely day in October. A blue sky, with Jove's cattle scattered across it, the sun making rainbow colours in running

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water, leaves with colours of delicious green, yellow, and brown, dog-rose berries, mountain-ash berries looking red and fierce in contrast, purple elderberries, and the useful sloe, orchards with rosy apples in profusion; this was our first impression of Winchester. We had forgotten, for the time being, the Cathedral. As a tribute to man's labour this edifice is magnificent; as a mark of anything else, it is as naked as the king whom we have mentioned. Man's ingenuity, man's vision of beauty in this "frozen music," as Schopenhauer's phrase has it, is wonderful, and a thing of perpetual delight. The priests say it is dedicated to God, and we must make no mistake about the intense subtlety of this suggestion. Three parts out of four of our countrymen are fed on assertion. It is the old story of defence by attack, and none know the method better than the members of organized religion. Assert! Assert! Assert! Do not bother about explanations, they will look after themselves, and if you can only tell mankind often enough that it is a sinner there is every chance of it being believed. For the moment we are not concerned with the history of Winchester Cathedral. Sufficient for our purpose it is to know that it was built by human hands, and the design emanated from the human brain. It is also safe to say that leisure in that time was the rule and not the exception; furthermore, as history painfully states, the times were extremely superstitious. In the light of present-day revelations the point is not worth labouring. Therefore, it would be an easy matter to impose this assertion that the Cathedral was dedicated to God *with the virtual ownership in the hands of those who made that assertion*. In this way is the labour of man perverted, and a beautiful human place (since human hands have made it) dedicated to God. It is the assertion *Gloria in excelsis*.

Yes, it was quite possible for us to wander round the massive pillars, to note the many superb arches, the sunlight falling in slanting rays on to the carved oak pews—it was quite possible to do this without the slightest reverence to anyone but those who were dead and gone. Dead hands that had fashioned the stone to curves and spirals, cherubs' heads and dragons' tails; hands that had carved out of oak so many lovely patterns; these all spoke of simple tastes. The oak leaf, the head of wheat, with here and there a trace of a design from the honeysuckle or a sea-shell; these were the outward and visible signs of a simple taste in life to which we shall have to return. There was one little matter we noted indicating an absence of the fitness of things. A tablet erected to the memory of a man bore the inscription after the name: "Angler, author, and traveller." Two lines of doggerel followed in praise of angling in which the name of God was mentioned as having been the creator of the piscatorial art for the benefit of man. We smiled and passed on. Byron wrote to the point about angling:—

> And angling, too, that solitary vice,
> Whatever Izaak Walton sings or says:
> The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet
> Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.

Well, well; we thought they might leave angling as a doubtful sport without attributing it as a gift from the Almighty; but everyone to their taste, as the old lady said when she kissed the cow.

Reader, have you ever been in prison? Have you ever slept on planks, partaken of plain diet, and been alone with your own thoughts? When the gates open for you, does not the wind through the trees sing a melody sweeter than the tongues of nightingales? Every blade of grass seems to greet you. Flowers, like many wondrous coloured stars on earth smile at you, and the touch of a loving human hand completes the change.

From Winchester to the village of St. Cross is a short distance. If you turn to your right from the statue of King Alfred, you may walk by the side of a clear stream until you reach one of the prettiest villages in England. Quaint, old-fashioned cottages seem to grow out of the roads and fields. You will find, even in October, that roses still laugh over the doorways; our best wish to you is that you shall feel the beauty of many a peaceful scene that is to be found between the arrogant and lordly Winchester and the meek little village of St. Cross, where custom hath it, that the good folk wash their linen every Monday. The church is approached through a large courtyard with cloisters on the left, and there is an old-world atmosphere surrounding the place. The interior lacked the magnificence of Winchester Cathedral, but what caught our eye was a facsimile of the document on which is recorded the surrendering of a Charter by a body of men to a bishop! We would give our ears or a shilling for a true record of the transaction. When we remember how dearly a Secular Charter has been bought.....

But there, we set out to register a few impressions. Winchester is a place knee-deep in power and privilege, living on the past, and, needless to say, it is ecclesiastical. You will find great houses with vast lawns and gardens surrounded with walls higher than a pulpit. On the top of the walls you will see broken glass set in an irregular fashion in cement. By our boots we swear that there must be peach and apricot trees the other side. Brick walls and broken glass! God save us gentlemen! the trade of religion is a profitable one from buildings dedicated to God and constructed by human hands. The ramparts of this profession are brick walls and broken glass along with the usual supply of black magic. When you and I have passed to the great beyond (if we may be prophetical) probably a little child will say: "Why, they are not wearing any clothes!" Is this too mystical, too obscure, my readers? We think we can hear you say No. We are a goodly few now; some day we shall be "a people."

Joan says she likes Winchester apples very much; Ellen declares that the folk are good-hearted and kind, though inclined to be narrow; whilst we think that the wood carvings under the choir seats in the Cathedral tell some pretty stories.

William Repton.

Religion in Madeira.

The "Catholics" of this unfortunate land continue, with revolting unconsciousness, making feasts to the whole caste of saints that the criminal and inventive imagination of the Church has created.

They spend rivers of money without any kind of usefulness whatever, when there are so many unfortunates falling with hunger in these streets, and so much misery within the huts that these poor wretches "inhabit"!

It grieves us to the heart to see, day by day, in this city, unfortunate mothers, surrounded by rickety children, dressed in rags that badly cover their flesh, extending their hands to public charity, which, already worn out, is unable to relieve them.

There they go, the poor and unhappy mothers; out in the streets, bewailing their misfortune and cursing the niggard fate that proportions to some all the commodities and comforts, and gives to the others, to the great, immense, majority, only misery and pain!

Meanwhile, the Church dressed itself up with galas and flowers, while within the temple are clouds of incense mixed with bad Latin, stinking of mouldiness; outside, the people are writhing in convulsions of agony, and dying without a

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protest that may shake their tormenters, they may frighten those that insult them in their infinite misery!

Only hardened characters can have no pity for these unfortunates! Only low creatures that treat these poor wretches with contempt can assist at those religious feasts without a phrase of revolt on their lips against this corrupt Church that sacrifices everything to its brightness, as the most base prostitute sacrifices everything to luxury and pleasure!

Traffickers of the Christ and the Virgin, monopolizers of consciences, robbers of their fellow-creatures' pockets, any and every method serves to fill up their coffers and to attain their own ends.

What does it matter that misery might enter millions of homes, that women and children might die of hunger, if to them, to the padres and their followers, nothing is wanting, because in the shadow of Christ and the Church they are exploring the great mine [1] that is the belief of the fanatics of the unfortunate land?

Dastards! Hired assassins of Torquemada and Loyola, putrid excrescence of the worst in the human race, you might, if you wished, do so much good!

It is in your hands to alleviate many pains, much unhappiness! You well know it; yet, nevertheless, you do nothing in that direction.

It is because there does not beat in you a heart that feels and suffers the pains of your fellow-being, but a heart of an insatiable and voracious vulture.

It is satiated, bandits, for the time being! When the people of my land, instructed and conscious of your power, make amends for your lies and trickery, they will go for you with gun and knife, as one does to the foxes that come down on the villages.

Yes! When they day of liberty dawns, when the people of Madeira know how to read, you, oh! sinister cassocks, will have to hold the hoe, or go and work amongst the coal—employment, this, that is in harmony with your black conscience—then, when your "industry" will no longer be "profitable."

Hawkers of the Temple, for whom religion serves only as a business, your hour will strike! As the proverb says: "There is no good that always endures, nor bad that always lasts." This saying, which is applied to you, must be once more complied with. We, and if it be not for us, then our children, must assist in the "debacle" of your well-paying "industry," and the demolition of that home of bestialization and fanaticism, the Church, where is taught only the practice of lying, of vice, and of hypocrisy, and to plant in its place, splendid and radiant, the Temple of Love, of order, and work—the school—where only is taught the practice of Good, of Virtue, and Love of Truth!—Translated from *Work and Union* (Funchal) by

REMIAP.

Correspondence.

GOD AND THE WAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have to thank Mr. Lloyd very cordially for his courteous reply, in the *Freethinker* of October 28, to my letter.

I quite agree with him that a Supreme Being has nothing to do with the War. So far as can be judged, no one could have exercised a stricter neutrality nor a more sublime indifference to the War than God has done.

(1) In his reply Mr. Lloyd admits that, in his opinion, the struggle for existence will never be abolished. The struggle for existence is essentially a fight for food for oneself and one's dependents. It may, of course, have other phases than war. It may take, and does take, the form of competition for commercial and industrial supremacy, the capture of foreign markets, etc. With all deference to what Mr. Lloyd has said, his hope of a "reorganization of society on the basis of security, equality, brotherhood, and universal goodwill, when we shall be able to clasp one another's hands and look into one another's eyes as members of a happy family animated and governed by the royal law of love," while, as he admits, the struggle for existence inevitably goes on, and we are busily engaged fighting one another for food, is a condition of matters which though undoubtedly highly desirable, is not at all likely to be realized. Indeed, as populations increase, the struggle in one form or another seems likely to become more intense and ruthless.

(2) Mr. Lloyd uses the term "Christianity" not as meaning the teaching of the Founder of Christianity, but as the teaching and practice of the Church nominally Christian. In that sense, Christianity has no doubt encouraged Militarism, though he admits that "Origen was bound to maintain that Christianity was incompatible with military service in a Pagan State," and, as a matter of fact, in the first two centuries Christians contemned and abstained from war. This is clearly shown in Gibbons' *Decline and Fall*, chaps. xv. and xvi. Mr. Lloyd therefore is not quite right when he says that Christianity, even in the sense in which he uses the term, *always* encouraged militarism. With the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, Christianity became a State affair, and necessarily favoured war.

(3) Mr. Lloyd says quite truly that neither in the Gospels nor in the Epistles is war, as such, condemned. He regards as significant, in the sense of favouring war, the text, "Think not that I came to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34). The passage, however, continues (verses 35 and 36) "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." I think there is really no doubt that the word "sword" is here used in a figurative sense. This view is borne out by the parallel passage in Luke's Gospel, where we read: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth. I tell you nay, but rather *division*" (Luke xii. 51), and then it goes on very much the same as in Matthew. What is meant is simply that members of one household would be divided in their attitude to himself. It could hardly be intended that the mother and daughter were to fight a duel with swords. I don't think anything worse than lingual warfare was contemplated.

Then Mr. Lloyd quotes the passage (Luke xxii. 36-38) where immediately before the betrayal, Jesus said "He that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one.....And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said unto them, it is enough." Now, it seems to me, Jesus meant simply to indicate the hostility and opposition which the disciples would meet in the world after he himself was taken and put to death. He could not have intended them to use the sword, because when subsequently at the arrest in the garden, Peter drew a sword and wounded a servant of the high priest, Jesus severely reprimanded him and said, "Put up again thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." This prohibition is corroborated by Luke xxii. 50 and 51, and by John xviii. 11.

These passages, taken in conjunction with the life of Jesus and the whole spirit of his teaching, indicate that early Christianity, like early Buddhism, was opposed to war, and that the general practice of the ethical teaching of Jesus would bring about that era of universal goodwill and brotherhood to which Mr. Lloyd looks forward. The question is, however, "Can the teaching of Jesus be applied to rational politics, or is it an unpractical idealism attainable only by a comparatively few individuals?"

As to the Epistles, I don't think Paul specially condemns war, but he definitely forbids litigation by Christians (1 Cor. vii. 1-8). If contests in law for one's rights are to be condemned, much more one would think contests in battle.

A. RUSSELL.

ATHEIST OR AGNOSTIC?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It may interest your readers to know that John Davidson wrote to the late Mr. G. W. Foote in reference to Atheism. In a letter dated August 27, 1907, he says:—

> If we accept the name atheist we limit ourselves, we distort our growth; we will become depraved; we will develop a cancer or a wen. The power of a name when the name stands for a tenet is incalculable, and the effect of its adoption is always disastrous; because a name is adopted only when the

[1] Evidently meaning hell.

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tenet is ripe and ready to decay. Consider, for example, Conservatism and Liberalism; the moment they were named and known they began to putrefy. I think the time has come for Freethinkers to rise above theism and athgism, to come out of it altogether. We must, if we are to grow. There is the word, Man, a virgin word, a zero. Let us call ourselves Man, and begin all things over again.....

William Repton.

National Secular Society.

Our Interim Conference opened at Chandos Hall, Charing Cross, W.C., on Sunday, October 28. Despite the threatened air raids, the attendance was exceedingly good. The Branches represented were: Battersea, Bethnal Green, Glasgow, Kingsland, North London, South Shields, South London, Regent's Park, Swansea, and West Ham.

Amongst the Vice-Presidents who attended were: Messrs. Heaford, Leat, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, and Wood, Mrs. Rolf, Miss Stanley, and Miss Kough. There was also a good muster of individual members.

The President opened the meeting by reading the resolution convening the Conference.

Motion No. 2, by J. W. Hackett, Birmingham:—

> This Conference deplores the fact that Provincial Branches of the N.S.S. have failed to imitate London Branches in conducting Open Air Propaganda during the summer months, whereby the desired increased circulation of Freethought literature has been much impeded, and an opportunity lost at a most favourable time for the presentation of our aims and objects. It records its opinion that in consequence of the War the present time is in the highest degree favourable to the systematic propagation of Freethought principles

was moved by Mr. J. T. Lloyd and seconded by Mr. R. Chapman (South Shields). It met with general approval and was carried unanimously.

Motion No. 3, by North London Branch:—

> The North London Branch greatly regrets that other Branches have not availed themselves of the facilities afforded for the insertion of brief notices of Meetings in the columns of the *Freethinker* through the Motion No. 12, Section B., unanimously carried at the last Annual Conference. This gathering, therefore, requests the President, in his capacity as Editor of the *Freethinker*, to exercise his influence towards this end

was discussed at some length. Various suggestions were offered, and it was finally carried with a reminder from the President that the matter lay with the Branches, who alone could supply the information.

Motion No. 4, by South London Branch:—

> That inasmuch as the National Secular Society has insufficient funds directly under its control for the purposes of propagating Freethought principles, this Conference recommends that the Executive take immediate steps to raise a Propagandist Fund, thus making it possible that the objects for which the Society was formed be successfully carried out

gave rise to a somewhat contentious discussion, during which a considerable amount of ancient history was reviewed. It was ultimately brought to the vote by the reminder of the clock and the Chairman's hammer, and carried by a large majority.

Motions by the West Ham Branch:—

> (a). That this Conference enters its protest against the clergy being exempt from the military duties of citizens whilst claiming all other civil rights, and further protests against all places of worship being free from rates and taxes.
>
> (b). That this Conference views with regret the tendency to introduce the spirit of Militarism into the State schools.
>
> (c). That this Conference desires to call the attention of the Minister of Education to the need for the exclusion of all religious instruction from the curriculum of the State schools as the only fair solution of the question

were all carried unanimously.

An interesting innovation then followed in the shape of a discussion, opened by Mr. A. Eagar, on "Why Our Reformed Educational System Should Promote Patriotism," and in which the President, Messrs. Wilde, Howell Smith, Chapman, Miller, and Palmer took part.

After an interlude for tea, the evening Public Meeting opened at 6.30. The President again occupied the chair, and the subject on the Agenda not reached in the afternoon, *i.e.*, a discussion on "Freethought and the Family," was opened by Mr. T. F. Palmer. Of the several phases of the question touched upon, the greatest interest was shown in the references to the subject of Divorce. Valuable suggestions as to the part Freethinkers should, and do, play in social reconstruction were made by a member of the Bethnal Green Branch, and in closing the meeting the President announced that the success of the day's proceedings warranted the convening of similar gatherings early in the future.

E. M. Vance, *General Secretary*.

The Three Princes.

Once there lived a wise king who had three sons. When this king was growing old he called his sons together and said: "I am now old, my end is near, and I would fain give each of you that which he deserves before I die. All that I know I have taught you. It now rests with yourselves what fortune shall be yours. Each of you shall rule my kingdom for a year. At the end of three years, that son who has won the love of my people will be king."

Now, the eldest son, who ruled first, thought: "I am the eldest prince, and heir to the throne. The kingdom is sure to be mine. Why should I worry?" And he spent his year wearing fine clothes and following pleasure. The king was ill pleased, but said nothing until the year was up. Then he took his son and cast him in a monastery and the second prince ascended the throne.

This prince was crafty, and reasoned with himself: "If I rule ill, I shall lose the people's love, and also the kingdom; if I rule well, I shall lose my brothers' love, there will be war between us, and I may lose the kingdom to boot. To what end, therefore, should I rule?" And he considered long, and said: "I will wait and see who is to be king." And he spent his year waiting. His father marvelled at such craft, and, when the time was come, banished his son to a far country to complete his education.

Then the youngest prince ruled. And he thought: "I am here for one year only. My father would never trust his kingdom to one so young as I. Ruling is work for the wise and old. I am but a boy. The king has put me here for a jest. When my brothers return, the wisest will be crowned, and I shall be sent to seek my fortune. Why not make my fortune now?" So he granted himself many treasures, and taxed the people heavily, and when his time was up he had much wealth, and his father was pleased in secret.

Meanwhile the people, wronged by neglect and robbery, rose and cried: "The old king is nearly dead, and the three would-be kings would be better dead; let us have no more kings to spoil the land. And the king heard the people murmuring, and said: "Have I not always ruled you well? Have I not fed and clothed you, and taken all your cares upon myself? Have I done ill by you?—or have I done well? And the people answered: "O king, thou didst well always, and we were content; but thy sons do ill only, and we will not have them to rule us when thou art gone. Thy sons will die when thou diest."

And the king knew the day of kings had passed, and looked upon the ground. Then he said sadly: "Let it be even as my people say; let there be no more kings, lest evil men govern. But what wilt thou have in place of kings?" And the people were dumb, for they had not considered that. Then the king said: "In a far country are many wise men called Priests and Politicians and Policemen. Those wise men turn their backs upon the world and its joys, and live only to serve the common people. Priests bear the burdens of conscience, and relieve you of all questions of right and wrong. Politicians carry the worries of daily life upon their shoulders, and leave you free to work with unburdened minds. Policemen guard your property, and teach the beauties of liberty. Three of these wise men are now leaving their country in search of people to succour. Is it your will that they come here to take from my hands the guiding of this kingdom?" And the people cried with a loud voice:

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"Yea, yea! Send us the Priest and the Politician and the Policeman, O wise old king!"

Then the king sent for his sons, and disguised them secretly as Priest and Politician and Policeman, and taught them how to act, and presented them to the people, who rejoiced and were glad that the days of kings had gone. But the wise old king retired to his couch, and said: "Now I can close my eyes in peace, for my sons will rule for ever."

F. L. B. G.

The Faithful Disciple.

And a certain Bishop went down from his palace to the poor quarter of the city (in a motor car) and spake unto the multitude;

For though he was a mighty man, he was humble before God, and despised not the poor.

And being a faithful servant of the Lord, he went without purse and without scrip, taking only his cheque book with him.

And he came to the place where he was to preach the Gospel, and there were many people gathered together.

And they were poorly clothed and wan looking, and seemed bearers of great burdens.

And the Bishop prayed and thanked God for his mercy and lovingkindness.

And seeing some little children, he raised his hands and blessed them, saying: Suffer the little children.

And they did suffer, for they were much hungered, and disease was in many of them.

And he preached unto the people, and spake of God's great love and compassion.

And the people were much moved, and many believed and were saved, and went back to starvation and misery praising the Lord.

At eventide, having fared sumptuously, the Bishop called his household unto prayer; his family, and his maidservants, and his menservants, and the stranger that was within his gates.

And blessed the name of the Lord, and praised him with a loud voice for the wondrous works he had wrought that day;

And wrestled earnestly in prayer for other sheep who had not yet found their Shepherd.

And, lo, when he had finished, as many as were gathered together did exclaim with a thankful voice, Amen.

Percy Ripley.

POPE'S EPITAPH ON GAY.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit, a man; simplicity, a child:
With native humour tempering virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight at once and lash the age:
Above temptation in a low estate,
And uncorrupted, e'en among the great:
A safe companion, and an easy friend,
Unblamed through life, lamented in thy end.
These are thy honours! Not that here thy bust
Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust;
But that the worthy and the good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms—"Here lies Gay!"

Obituary.

I regret to state that our friend and fellow-Freethinker, Mr. Stirton, died on October 24 after a brief illness. That he was highly respected amongst us is borne out by the fact that his remains were followed to the grave at Balgay Cemetery by members of Dundee Trades Council, of which he was President for a number of years. Also by the members of I.L. Party, Rechabites, J.P., and Military Tribunal, and Town Council, and kindred bodies, all of which he had in various ways laboured for. In compliance with his own request, there was no religious mummery at his funeral. Speeches were delivered by Messrs. John Ogilvy and Ex-Bailie John Reid, both of whom did justice to his memory.—David F. Gloak (Dundee).

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.

Mr. A. D. Howell Smith's Discussion Class (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Nov. 15, at 7.30.

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, "The Biological Aspect of Socialism." Introduced by Cyril E. M. Joad (Fabian Society); reply by T. F. Palmer.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Tube Station): 7, F. Shaller, "Darwin *versus* Moses."

West Central Hall (31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road): 3.30, Dr. Boulenger, "Alcohol and Morality." Lecture in French.

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Shaller, Kells, Dales, and Swasey.

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Glasgow (City Hall): J. T. Lloyd, 12 noon, "The Message of Freethought to the Times"; 6.30, "Humanism *versus* Christianity."

New Manchester Branch N. S. S. (Bakers' Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6 30, Mrs. B. A. Bayfield, "The Two Enemies of Civilization: War and Religion."

Swansea and District Branch N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, "Elysium," High Street): Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, 3, "Christianity and the Child"; 7, "Belief, Make-Belief, and Unbelief."

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Views and Opinions.

God and the War.

Why doesn't God end the War? Thousands of persons are asking that question to-day, and thousands of others are thinking it. Large numbers have already answered it to their own satisfaction, and the answer has been fatal to their Christianity. Being without any professional or vested interest in religious beliefs, they bring a relatively unsophisticated mind to bear upon the problem. And to them it appears plain that if there is a God, and he can bring the War to a satisfactory conclusion, he ought to do so. If he cannot bring it to a close, what is the use of all the talk of fatherly love, and of the divine control of the universe in the face of the brutal slaughter of the world's manhood? Our leaders in the War have declared it to be a crime to continue the contest for an hour longer than is absolutely necessary. The nations are fighting for peace, for humanity, and for civilization. The people are giving their all. God alone does nothing. He remains the great neutral, under conditions where neutrality spells an evasion of responsibility, and a callousness which outrivals by infinitude the callousness of man. If the world were governed by the orthodox Devil, he could vindicate his traditional character in no more thorough-going manner.

* * *

Pain and Providence.

In the *Manchester City News* for November 10, the Rev. A. L. Humphries, M.A., devotes a column to the consideration of the question put above, and, as is to be expected, leaves the question where he found it. He prefers to discuss it upon the broad issue of the function of pain and suffering in the world; and if he faced that question as we think it should be faced, one could find no fault with the method. Suffering, he says, is educational, it is disciplinary, or it is minatory—it warns us of a danger to which we are exposed. Neither statement meets the point at issue; and even if their relevancy were admitted, their ineffectiveness would be patent. For however educational pain may be, it is quite clear that large numbers fail to derive any educational benefit from its presence. And it is equally clear that pain is just as ineffective as a warning. What kind of a warning has war been to the world. War is nothing new. People went to war thousands of years ago; they are at war to-day. And Mr. Humphries' professional brethren sing of the righteousness of war, and of its influence in developing character. Mr. Humphries says that much suffering comes as the sequel "to some breach of the laws which have been ordained to us." That is untrue. There is no such thing possible as a breach of natural law. Natural law is no more than the expression of causes and consequences. And a true picture of the world would be—granting a Deity—that of a God watchful to punish with the utmost severity, and the most unrelenting cruelty, every false step that human weakness and ignorance takes.

* * *

The Problem.

The real problem of the world's suffering, says Mr. Humphries, is that a large part of it "springs from malignity or folly, and is visited less upon the offenders themselves than upon their helpless and unoffending victims." This is, indeed, a real and a serious problem—to the Theist. It is no problem whatever to the Atheist. His problem is how to reduce the sum of suffering in the world, deserved or undeserved. But the believer in deity has to reconcile the fact to the theory of unmerited suffering, with the existence of a deity who should have prevented its occurrence. How does Mr. Humphries meet the question? In quite the old-fashioned and ineffective manner. Suffering is a sensation, and you cannot have sensations that are pleasant without running the risk of having those that are unpleasant. We are all, moreover, parts of a social whole. We reap the harvests that others have sown, and we cannot complain because we suffer the ills that others have wrought. This may be admitted, but it quite misses the point. For we have here only the bald truism that, given the present constitution of the universe, it is impossible to see how development can be achieved without the infliction of pain. But this obviously does not touch the root of the question. The objection is that, given a deity of the kind posited by the Theist, suffering should not be, and it is simply beside the point to reply that some benefit is derived from the suffering. The old difficulty remains, and it is accentuated by modern conditions. Either God could have brought about the same result by a different plan or he could not. On the first assumption you limit his goodness by implying that he deliberately chose the existing plan with its admitted imperfections. On the second assumption you limit his power by asserting his inability to act differently, and then reduce him to impotence by conditioning his activity to forces and conditions that defy his power of manipulation.

* * *

The Bogey of Freedom.

Mr. Humphries' final argument is that God has given man "freedom." God has given man a free will, and "however misguided its action, He must treat it as the reality it is." And then, becoming alive to the danger of positing a God who sets the world going and then does nothing throughout eternity but watch it go, Mr.

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Humphries reminds us that God, as in this War, "kindles human wills" to effect the defeat of evil. "The non-intervention of God is only apparent." In that case, what becomes of the previous plea that God cannot interfere lest he infringes human freedom? God does, after all, interfere; and once more the question arises, Why does he not interfere effectively? If he can influence human wills to the extent of getting men to fight, why does he not influence them to the extent of getting them to live together in peace? Besides, what are we doing in the War but seeking to interfere with the "freedom" of the German will, as they wish to interfere with the "freedom" of our will? If the Allies had followed the example of God Almighty, and respected the "freedom" of the German will to the extent of non-interference, Germany by this time would have been all over Europe. If man imitated God, in what a state would the world be! If God imitated man at his best, how much a better place the world might become!

* * *

The Nightmare of God.

Well may men ask "Why does not God end the War?" Well may they also ask "Why did he not prevent the War beginning?" If he does indeed "kindle human wills," why did he not influence the will of William of Germany and his advisers? Does anyone, we wonder, really find conviction in apologies, such as those offered by Mr. Humphries? Does anyone really believe that pain and suffering are always, or even generally, beneficial? We doubt it. Of all the idle tales told by defenders of Deity, this is the most idle. How many homes can each of us count in our experience as having been purified through suffering? How many lives can we not count that have been broken, and their usefulness destroyed, through pain and hardship? The problem of how to harmonize God and the world did not commence with the War, nor has the War added anything new to that question. All the War has done is to arouse many to the utter falsity and uselessness of the theistic philosophy. Lurid pictures have been drawn of what Europe dominated by a war-drunken military class would be like. But it could scarcely be worse than the prospect of the world dominated by an intelligence to which all this three years' horror was part of the divine plan of human education.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A SONG OF SIGHING.

Would some little joy to-day
Visit us, heart!
Could it but a moment stay,
Then depart;
With the flutter of its wings
Stirring sense of brighter things.
Like a butterfly astray
In a dark room,
Telling outside there is day,
Sweet flowers bloom,
Birds are singing, trees are green,
Runnels ripple silver sheen.
Heart, we have now been so long
Sad without change;
Shut in deep from shine and song,
Nor can range:
It would do us good to know
That the world is not all woe.
Would some little joy to-day
Visit us, heart!
Could it but a moment stay,
Then depart;
With the lustre of its wings
Lighting dreams of happy things,
O sad my heart!

—*James Thomson (B.V.).*

Faith and Doubt.

WE congratulate the Rev. Dr. Fort Newton upon his having crossed and recrossed the Atlantic Ocean with safety during the ruthless submarine warfare, and wish him a prosperous career in his adopted country. His first Sunday sermon after his return from America appeared in the *Christian Commonwealth* for November 7, and proves to be, in some respects, eminently suggestive, if not instructive. It is certainly one of the most remarkable discourses ever delivered from a pulpit, as well as one of the truest. Dr. Newton's admissions are delightfully refreshing, and their sincerity is undeniable. Even the text is perilously illuminating: "Lord, I belive; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark ix. 24). The preacher's first important admission is that "faith and doubt jostle one another in the multitude of our thoughts"; "the two struggle in every heart, and the struggle never ends." We do not accept as true the statement that "even the hardest Sceptic must be tempted at times to believe," for we know many unbelievers who are never subjected to such a temptation. Of course, we are aware that if the term "Sceptic" be taken in its etymological sense of one who reflects, suspends his judgment, or is in a state of uncertainty as to what is true, the statement quoted may be right; but even the dictionaries tell us that a Sceptic is "one who doubts or disbelieves the statements and doctrines of revealed religion, especially of Christianity." Surely, then, the "hardest Sceptic" is not at all likely to be much troubled, at any time, by the temptation to believe. This is a point, however, to which we do not attach any serious importance; but we are in complete agreement with the other admission, namely, that "the loftiest saint is often tempted to doubt." Dr. Newton says:—

> Only a few years ago it was a fashion to say that doubt in respect to the truths of faith is due to moral impurity. Not so. Happily, the tendency was checked somewhat by Edna Lyall in her story entitled *Donovan*, which had a great vogue. There is a doubt born of moral impurity, but it is easily identified, being flippant, cynical, and irreverent. But not all doubt may be so defined or dealt with so glibly. They have learned little of life who do not know that the warfare with doubt is no incident, but a part of the life of faith. Each believing soul—aye, and each doubting soul—is a battlefield, and there is no discharge from the war.

We are convinced that the reverend gentleman is wrong when he affirms that doubt born of moral impurity is easily identified by its flippancy, cynicism, and irreverence. Are not flippancy and kindred qualities more matters of temperament than of character? Is not the reverend gentleman aware that a person may be flippant, cynical, and what he calls irreverent, without being morally impure? In the argument, however, this may be dismissed as a very minor point, the point of supreme importance being that in every believing soul there is going on a never-ending conflict between belief and unbelief, belief being never, for any length of time, absolutely cloudless and serene. In his *Holy War*, Bunyan describes Incredulity as unexpectedly stepping in and confounding Christian. "Such is the testimony of saintly lives in all ages."

> One day a friend came to Luther, sorely grieved, complaining that he found himself at times unable to believe anything. Whereupon, to his amazement, the Reformer began praising God loudly for the confession, saying that he had long thought himself alone in that temptation, and had feared it might be a token of Divine displeasure. Thus the eternal debate lasts on into the Christian life, half the soul mistrusting God and the other half adoring him.

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Dr. Newton goes on piling up the evidence. During a voyage in the summer he re-read the lives of Maurice, Kingsley, and John Stirling, and what he found therein was further testimony of the same import. Maurice and Kingsley were, each in his own way, leaders of religious thought, and yet both were tormented almost continually by doubt. "More than once Kingsley wrote to Maurice telling him that his faith was all gone, and asking him for a word of comfort and cheer." But Maurice was himself generally in the same predicament, and had very little real comfort and cheer to impart to his friend. Why does the minister of the City Temple tell his congregation all these darksome facts? This is his own answer:—

> My purpose in recalling these inner struggles of noble minds is that we may learn that our experience of uncertainty, of misgiving, of dark doubt is not unique, and that the knowledge of how it was with others may bring solid comfort and help.

We frankly admit that Dr. Newton puts his case in a highly plausible, if not, cogent, manner, which is as follows:—

> Surely if great, pure, and beautiful souls were thus pursued by doubt, and in spite of their doubts—perhaps because of them—wrought so richly, we may take new heart and new hope. By knowing that this conflict of faith and doubt has been appointed, for ends we can imagine if we cannot define them, we are forearmed in advance.

Such is the argument of the sermon under discussion. It is a reasonable assumption that Dr. Newton is himself often, if not chronically, in a state of uncertainty as to whether Christianity is true or false. This is a fact which he does not even wish to hide from his congregation, and the only comfort he offers is, "We are all in the same boat." There is, naturally, some consolation in the possession of that knowledge, man being, after all, a gregarious animal. According to the reverend gentleman the only questions that matter are the following:—

> Is there a God? What is the purpose and worth of life? Has it a purpose? Or is all mere chance, a ship on a shoreless sea, drifting—if we can speak of drifting when there is no direction, no star? Does death end all? Compared with these questions, all else sinks into insignificance.

And yet these are the questions concerning which the firmest and loftiest believers are, most of the time, in a state of painful uncertainty! This is amazingly curious, to say the least. Dr. Newton inclines to the opinion that "this conflict of faith and doubt has been appointed," though he cannot explain the reason why. "Appointed" by whom? Is it conceivable God has appointed that his own servants, the offspring of his love, should go through life without knowing for certain whether their Father and Employer exists or not? Is it thinkable that he has flung them on time's theatre without giving them the ghost of an idea for what purpose?

In reality, Dr. Newton's argument is left woefully unfinished. Had he proceeded but one step further into it, the inevitable conclusion would have startled both him and his hearers. Why is there a perpetual conflict between faith and doubt? Because doubt is natural, and faith unnatural. Supernatural religion was born in the mists of the race's "Primal Stupidity." It is the child of fear based on ignorance. It is one of the incontrovertible facts of evolution that in proportion as knowledge of the natural advances faith in the supernatural declines. Superstition thrives only in the dark. What is being borne in upon us more and more is that we are in the hands, not of a Supernatural Being, but of the great law of universal causation, a law that operates infallibly and unceasingly everywhere in spite of the preaching of all the clergymen in the world. And, by-the-bye, why are there clergymen, and what is their business? In a word, clergymen are living witnesses to the truth that belief in a supernatural religion is by no means natural to mankind, but must be forced down its throat in the days of its childhood and youth, and then prevented by all sorts of persuasive and even coercive ministries, in school and church, from oozing out again, which, on Dr. Newton's own showing, it is all through life threatening to do, and, in so many instances, actually succeeds in doing.

Towards Dr. Newton, personally, we entertain the kindliest feelings, and our criticism is conceived in the friendliest spirit. There are a few points on which we should like to set him right. In the minds of convinced Freethinkers there is never the faintest shadow of a disposition to believe in the Supernatural. They know nothing of any conflict between unbelief and faith. It is our privilege to be acquainted with Atheists of the third generation, and they have never had the least experience of the struggle. They are totally ignorant of "the lonely horror of unbelief which no one escapes." Dr. Newton is entirely wrong in his characterization of the effect of unbelief upon those who conscientiously hold and profess it. Besides, there is no such thing as chance in the universe. We are all under law, and in knowledge of and obedience to that law alone can life be found which is worth living.

J. T. Lloyd.

Christianity in the Melting-Pot.

> 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."*

Science and religion have ever been mortal 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 invariably been brought to bear against science on the ground that it is a most powerful solvent of religious faith. This resistance of the Church of Christ to the prevalent opinions of scientists has no indisputable 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 in the same venerable quarter with all the firmness of a mule, we are inclined to attribute that resistance, not to the weakness of the arguments of the scientists, but to the priestly dislike of knowledge itself.

Chemistry was opposed as an impious prying into the secrets of God, and the early chemists were regarded, charitably, as agents of the Devil. Physiology and medicine were opposed on similar grounds. Geology and biology were also opposed tooth and nail by the Bride of Christ. She bitterly resented all inquiry, and preferred explaining natural phenomena by mythological invention.

After these many centuries of opposition, however, 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 the Gospel according to Mary Baker Glover Eddy bids fair to-day 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 nearing its two hundredth edition.

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The new evangel has been received by tens of thousands of half-educated religious men and women, reverent of learning, quite unable to discriminate it from its adulterated imitation. And Mrs. 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. Words were Mrs. Eddy's stock-in-trade. Her pomp of court and her priesthood were verbosity. 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 polysyllables. 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 cognizance; that which mortal mind sees, feels, tastes, and smells in belief.

The author of this evangel from Earlswood, this farrago of nonsense, has been appropriately hailed 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 not 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 Mrs. Eddy, with pain, regrets that ontology receives less attention than physiology, and relates the following improving anecdote, worthy of the saucy and mendacious Baron Munchausen:—

> It is related that a father, anxious to try such an experiment, plunged his infant babe, 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.

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" This beats the audacity of the story 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. 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 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, Mrs. Eddy was a religious "boss," like the late-lamented "General" Booth.

Fortunately, the high-priestess of the newest and most successful form of religiosity did not escape ridicule. Mark Twain, the prince of jesters, with that characteristic twinkle in his eye, that irresistible drawl in his voice, that gravity of manner, tried to convince the lady-saviour's devotees that they might be mistaken. This is the way Mark burlesqued the Yankee Abracadabra:—

> There is an account of the restoration to perfect health, in a single night, of a fatally injured horse, by the application of Christian science. I can stand a good deal, but I recognize that the ice is getting thin here. That horse had as many as fifty claims; how could he demonstrate over them? Could he do the All Good, Good Good, Good Gracious, Liver, Bones, Truth, all down but nine, set them up on the other alley? Could he intone the scientific Statement of Being? Now, could he? Wouldn't it give him a relapse? Let us draw the line at horses. Horses and furniture.

This is genuine fun, and more effective than reams of prosaic argument. It never affected the enormous popularity of the Eddy evangel. For when a person joins the Christian Science temples, he must leave his brains at home. He must leave them locked up in an iron safe, or else have them removed by a skilled surgeon. If he should forget himself, and think but once, the bye-laws provide that he shall be fired out—instantly—for ever—no return ticket.

We set out in a spirit of inquiry to make a serious examination of the claims made by Mrs. Eddy. But this nonsensical system makes us giddy and tired; for, of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have emanated from the half-crazy brains of religious maniacs, this book takes the first prize. It is more incoherent than the ravings of Joanna Southcott. Beside it Joe Smith's *Book of Mormon* is a plain, unvarnished tale. The *Forty Coming Wonders* of the late Prophet Baxter is shrinking modesty compared with the impudent effusion of Mary Eddy. This Yankee Bible fairly takes the breath away, and makes the head swim. No other less colloquial phrase can so aptly describe the effect of claims so far transcending sanity. One reels back from the insane heights of "Christian" Science to the simplicity of a rational system like Secularism, suited to the requirements of the age, and freed from the absurd aberrations of ignorance.

MIMNERMUS.

The Bible and Immortality.

THE UNDERWORLD.

IN the story of the "Witch of Endor," king Saul said to the woman "Bring me up Samuel," and when the spirit of that prophet appeared, it asked "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?" Samuel had died some time before, and his body was then in the "grave." This last word, as well as that translated "hell," is in the Hebrew termed *Sheol*, which the lexicon defines as "the abode of the soul after death."

We have incontrovertible evidence that many ancient peoples believed that man possessed within him something that was able to leave the body during sleep and go wandering about, seeing and acting just as the man himself did during the day, after which it returned and re-entered the body. Upon waking up in the middle of a dream, and remembering what he had been doing in it, the primitive man, after having it proved to him that he had never moved from his couch, naturally came to the conclusion that the actions which he remembered in the dream must have been performed by a second self that had power to leave the body at will. Later, when this idea became a settled conviction, the question would arise as to what would become of the "double" at death. By the more rational of the people the answer would be that it died with the body; but many among them would think otherwise—and hence we come to *Sheol*, "the abode of the soul after death."

The decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions of

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Assyria has thrown much new light upon Old Testament literature, and amongst other matters, upon the origin and meaning of *Sheol*. From this source we find that the Hebrew *Sheol* was derived from the Assyrian *al-Sualu* —"the great city of the dead." The Assyrian idea of the abode of the so-called "spirits of the dead" was that of an immense tract of ground enclosed and surrounded by seven walls, each having a gate guarded by two cherubim for entrance, outside which, and flowing all around it, was the dark river of death—across which the dead were ferried by a pilot in his boat. Finally, this last home of the "departed spirits," where complete silence reigned, was imagined to be somewhere under the earth, and to be wrapped in total darkness. The names by which this "city of the dead" was most generally referred to are: "the land whence none return"—"the house of darkness"—"the house of corruption." The Assyrian legend of the descent of the goddess Ishtar into this region thus commences:—

> To the land whence none returned, to the land of corruption, Ishtar, the daughter of the Moon-god, turned her mind.....To the house of darkness.....to the house from which none come back, by the road which none can return, to the house from which light is excluded.

The Greeks, as we know, had a similar underworld called *Hades*, around which flowed the river Styx, with a pilot named Charon to ferry the spirits across.

The ancient Hebrews were of the same race as the Assyrians, and were acquainted with much of the literature pertaining to those people. From the Assyrians they took the names of their months, their sabbath, and the plan of their temple, as well as a large portion of their civil laws. It is not surprising, then, that they should adopt some of the Assyrian ideas respecting *Sheol*. Hence, we find that some of the Hebrew people also believed in a vast underworld, a dark, dreary, subterranean region, in which lay past generations of the "spirits of the dead" who amidst filth, worms, stench, and corruption, were sleeping their long last sleep, which would continue unbroken until the end of time. The story of the Witch of Endor, even admitting it to be a fiction, plainly indicates that there were individuals amongst the Hebrews who professed to have the power to call up spirits from *Sheol*, to which place, when done with, they were compelled to return. These wizards and witches are denounced in the Pentateuch as wicked impostors that should not be allowed to live. The Endor story also shows that inquiries such as there described were practised in Old Testament times in the later period of the Jewish kings. Thus Manasseh, king of Judah, who "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord," in addition to other delinquencies "used enchantments, and *dealt with* them that had familiar spirits and with wizards" (2 Kings xxi. 6). The words in italics signify "appointed" or "placed in office."

We will now see what the Hebrew writers say upon the subject, and will commence with what the Lord is reported as saying to the prophet Ezekiel.

> Ezek. xxxii. 18-29.—Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down.....unto the *nether parts of the earth*, with them that go down into *the pit*. .....The strong among the mighty.....in the midst of *Sheol*.....they are gone down, they lie still, even the uncircumcised, slain by the sword. Asher is there and all her company.....all of them slain, fallen by the sword——Elam and all her multitude.....all of them slain by the sword, are gone down into *the nether parts of the earth*——Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude .....slain by the sword.....shall they not lie with the mighty that are fallen, which are gone down to *Sheol* with their weapons of war?

Here we see nations that were enemies of the Israelites doomed to go down to "the pit," which is but another name for *Sheol*, as was also the expression "the nether parts of the earth."

In Isaiah xiv. 3-20 we find a long "parable" directed against a nameless king of Babylon, who was "the great oppressor of nations," in which the sleeping inhabitants of *Sheol*, having somehow heard of his death, wake up to await his coming.

> Isa. xiv. 9.—Sheol down beneath is moved for thee (*i.e.*, the king of Babylon) to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth: it hath raised up *upon their thrones* all the kings of the nations.

Upon the appearance in Sheol of the king of Babylon, the kings and princes there greet him with the questions "Art *thou* also become as weak as we?" "Art *thou* become like unto us?" Then, looking at him from head to foot, they turn to each other and ask "Is *this* the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms, and overthrow the cities thereof?" One verse in this "parable" appears almost startling. This reads:—

> All the kings of the nations (in Sheol) sleep in glory, every one in his own house.

According to this statement, the spirits of the dead kings in Sheol had each a small chamber to himself, and sat there propped up dressed in his robes of state.

We will next see what some other Hebrew writers have to say of Sheol.

> Psalm xlix. 14.—Like sheep they are laid in Sheol; death shall feed on them.
>
> Job vii. 9.—As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to Sheol *shall come up no more*.
>
> Job. xvii. 13.—If I look for Sheol as mine house; if I have spread my couch in the darkness; if I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister; where then is my hope? It shall go down to the bars of Sheol, where there is rest in the dust.
>
> Job x. 21, 22.—I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of thick darkness, as darkness itself; a land of the shadow of death, without any order, where the light is as darkness. (See also Job xi. 8; xiv. 10-12; xvi. 22; Psalm xxxiii. 4; xlix. 19.)

Looking now at the foregoing passages, there can be no doubt as to the belief of many of the ancient Hebrews with respect to death. That condition of the body, or of the imaginary "spirit" within the body, was regarded as an eternal sleep, from which there was no awakening. There can be no doubt, also, that they knew nothing of a life after death, to be passed in eternal bliss in heaven or in eternal torments in hell, as taught in the New Testament. It is clear, then, that the only life they had ever heard of was the natural one lived on the earth. It may, further, be noted that the books in which reference is made to the underworld are of late date. The book of Ezekiel was written during the Exile; that of Isaiah is made up of paragraphs composed both before and after the Exile; the date of the book of Job is unknown, but its long discussions clearly indicate a late period in Jewish history.

There is a paragraph in Ecclesiastes, which is often quoted, that may here be noticed. This reads:—

> Eccl. iii. 19-21.—For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath (or spirit); and man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts.....All *go into one place*: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth.

Here the writer makes no distinction between body and spirit, and plainly implies that the body, when living,

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constitutes the whole man. Both man and beast had the same breath or spirit, which, he seems to have imagined, kept them alive; after death both man and beast returned to dust. He appears to have thought that people died simply because the breath placed in the body by God at birth had departed, and that in the case of man this breath or spirit went upward "unto God who gave it," while in that of the beast, it went downward to the earth. Thus the same writer, or possibly another, says:—

> Eccl. xii. 3, 7.—Because man goeth to his *long home*, and the mourners go about the streets.....and the dust (*i.e.*, man) shall return to the earth as it was, and *the spirit return unto God who gave it.*

As we have already seen, the so-called "soul" or "spirit" in man was in the majority of cases nothing more than "breath"—the chief exception being the "spirit of the dead," which, apparently, was supposed to be a species of ghost or phantom. That the "abode of departed spirits" was a purely imaginary place goes, of course, without saying.

ABRACADABRA.

A Shepherd's Death.

[The following story is published by the Librejo Esperanto, Moscow, in *Orienta Almanako*, a collection of Eastern stories translated into Esperanto, and was originally written by J. Bukurauli in the language of the Karfvelians, one of the many races of the Caucasus.]

IT was the end of September. The sky over Trialeti was covered with brown-grey clouds. The cold mountain breeze made one shiver.

On the summit of a mountain a shepherd pastured his flock. The sheep, huddling close together owing to the cold, greedily ate the sweet mountain grass, and the shepherd, sitting by a stream, began his miserable breakfast.

Too modest was the shepherd's meal, but his lively and healthy youthfulness was enviable. Having lived from an early age on the very breast of nature, and hardened by unfavourable winds, he looked as healthy and blooming as nature, whose son he was. On his sunburnt face there was no sign of evil; he looked about him sincerely and without affectation. It was cold, but he did not even think of complaining about that. He would have been a bad shepherd if he had not been contented with his lot, if he would not have tolerated uncomplainingly hunger and cold, or would not have passed the night in only his burka[1] without sleeping.

He had been accustomed for some time to what one calls "a dog's life," but, at the same time, there flamed in his heart the hope that, in the near future, he would have his own flock of sheep.....

Dreaming attracted him: he recalled his unhappy childhood, when he, an orphan, trembled in the presence of his uncle's second wife; he remembered how she mercilessly beat and tormented him, turned him out of doors, and he, hungry and clad in rags, lay the whole day and night under the open sky. He remembered, too, how he quietly disappeared and came on to the Shiraka steppe. There a good hearted old man gave him shelter and "made a man of him." The disagreeable thoughts gave place to pleasant musings: Behold, he looks and almost sees his loving and unselfish young wife. She sits by the fire cuddling their sturdy little child. He kicks, smiles, and triumphantly watches the roaring fire throwing out golden-coloured flames.

Then comes the long-waited minute: one week will pass, then a second, and he will go home, rest in his own house, be among his acquaintances, and see once again his native village, the fields, and his friends.....

The sky became more and more disturbed, it grew angry and enraged. It began to thunder and blow terribly, it darkened. The stormy tempest and lightning and thunder terrified everything round about, and seemed to wish to wipe out of existence every being on the earth. The sheep bleated pitifully with fear, wildly running here and there, and, in the end, looking for a calm place, they ran without understanding, towards a chasm. The first running sheep, failing to preserve its balance, fell in and was killed; a second and a third followed. Wishing to save his flock from death, the shepherd barred the way. He ran now to this side, now to that, shouting and beating the sheep with his crook, almost beating some to death, but in vain; they madly pushed one another and innocently fell into the depths. The shepherd, seeing that they would all perish, threw away his burka and took off his long fur in order to act more freely. Convinced that his crook was not effective, he started to shoot, but again without success: the chasm was becoming filled with living bodies. The wind strengthened and scattered around grains of sand and little stones. The shepherd hopelessly lowered his hands and looked on. Drops of sweat appeared on his sunburnt face, which was getting blue.....

The tempest ceased and the sky became calm. It began to snow. Gradually the sheep became covered by a white shroud, and in only a few hours they were entombed in the snow. All perished. Only the shepherd remained alive, standing motionless and looking into the chasm with sorrowful eyes, and with him, his faithful shepherd dog.

"Oh! God, where then is thy justice?" groaned the shepherd, throwing his gun into the chasm and sitting down by the edge.

Night fell. Clouds covered the mountain top.....The stars began to shine. The moon appeared also, lighting up with its rays the snow-covered Mount Trialeti. The mountain slept, while somewhere at the base, shepherds guarded their flocks.

Two days later, a villager brought on an ass from the village some salt for the sheep, and food for the shepherd. He searched in vain. "Perhaps he is on the top," he thought.

"Ah-oo-oo!" he called to the shepherd. There came back in reply only the heartrending whining of the dog. He turned towards the latter, who seeing him, whined more pitifully. He came nearer, and found the shepherd on the ground.

"Alex! Alex!" He commenced to shake him. Alas! he did not succeed in waking him. Alex, like his flock, was no longer alive.

Translated from the Esperanto by
A. H. WORTMAN.

[1] Circassian fur cloak.

The Blank Wall.

II.

UNDER the abnormal stress of war the mind of man contrives to associate moral ideals with those actions which are naturally involved in the manifestation of war, such as the killing of men, etc.; and, indeed, all the various inhuman and monstrous objects contained in the fact of brute force. These things are now being associated with the popular picture paper idealism which seeks to melt "Christianity" with War; Love with Hate; Justice with Cant; Dignity with Degradation; and Truth with Lies.

"Ministers of God," agents for the "Spiritual Father of all Men," parade solemnly into their Churches in order to induce their congregations to swell the money-bags of the State, so that a Great War may be won as efficiently as

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possible. The result is this, that the concept of money as a power is immeasurably intensified. The triumphant evilness of the money-fetish is brought home with such force into the minds of the populace, that it will be a truism for the majority that hard cash has done as much for the success of brute force in a war as the primitive instincts of the men who have been sacrificed in the trenches.

This will, doubtless, be a correct impression. In this lies the stupefying tragedy of the popular mentality. War, as a barbaric argument which chokes Reason with blood, and being the negation of all idealism and sanity, must, logically, be substantially aided by so low and corrupt a force as the commercial force.

By investing money in the War Loan a man may feel that he is indirectly firing bullets at the enemy. He may sit comfortably at home in his arm-chair and visualize his five pounds "doing their bit."

Every fit man into the trenches for slaughter, and the rest obsessed by the power of money to win the War.

Arthur F. Thorn.

Acid Drops.

A young Belfast girl of 23 years of age, summoning a printer for the recovery of wages, declined to take the oath, and professed herself an Agnostic. The affirmation was allowed, but the following conversation occurred between the Recorder and the plaintiff:—

> His Honour—You don't see agnosticism running about the country. Where did you pick it up?
>
> Plaintiff—I read books of Ingersoll.
>
> His Honour—That is very bad reading for a young girl like you.

We take this report from the *Belfast Evening Telegraph* as one more example of the "insolence of office," on which we have so often commented. The judge's remarks were uncalled for, and insulting. The slander on Ingersoll may pass, his reputation is not likely to suffer from the remarks of an Irish judge. But the insult to the young lady is unpardonable. Had she been a reader of some of the erotic piety of the Catholic Church, no such remarks would have been made. Miss Mitchell was not there on any criminal charge, and that made the comment the worse.

About the same date as the above case an inquest was being held at Dromore, Co. Tyrone, on the bodies of Patrick and Michael M'Gurgan. The latter had not been reading "bad" literature, such as was given to the world by Ingersoll. He had been reading "good" literature, of the kind provided by the Churches. Result—a religious mania, which led Michael to shoot his brother and then himself. Had he read Ingersoll and other Freethinkers, there might have been one tragedy the less in Ireland.

How history repeats itself! During the Napoleonic wars, Mr. Edmund Gosse tells us, "the average Englishman believed the French to be a race of dissolute Atheists." During the present War the same pleasant opinion is held concerning the Germans.

The Rev. H. C. Walker, of Warley, Essex, who has been an Army Chaplain in Mesopotamia, says that the Arabs did a good trade with our soldiers in selling them chips from the "tree of knowledge of Good and Evil" on the site of the Garden of Eden. Evidently, soldiers are not classified as "Church of England" for nothing.

The Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell, writing in the *Daily News*, says "the Church professes to place in each parish an official teacher of religion and morality." "Professes" is quite good. A large number of citizens regard the clergy as exponents of superstition and conventionality.

Oh, those dear bishops! What would the poor world do without their precious words of wisdom? Here is Bishop Welldon telling us that "the War has brought men like Mr. Wells and Mr. Bottomley back, not, indeed, to Christian orthodoxy, but to the religious or spiritual way of looking at the universe." Is that the only consolation that the Bishop can derive from the spectacle of thirty-five millions of men arrayed for murder?

The *Church Times* continues in a state of disturbance over the marriage question. Its great dread appears to be that of a general recognition of the supremacy of the Civil Law in determining the conditions of the marital relation. It is even willing to accept the Scotch principle of agreement before witnesses so long as the State has not the decisive word. "The fundamental truth," it says, "is that marriage is a natural relation, not an artificial relation created by law." So far we agree; but that misses the point at issue. The State does not claim to create the natural relation of marriage, nor to order it. All it does is to decree the conditions under which it should exist, and the conditions under which it is prepared to enforce the agreement. What the *Church Times* is aiming at is the recognition that husband and wife "are joined together by God," and that, as Euclid says, is absurd.

The story of a Sunday-school superintendent, who took advantage of a man's absence in France to lead his wife astray, was told in the Divorce Court recently. The superintendent's letters were pious. In one he wrote: "My great consolation is that I have not put asunder those who God has joined together, because I know that God is the God of Love, and He would not permit those who do not dearly love one another to be joined together." The husband, on his return, gave the co-respondent a sound thrashing, and a decree *nisi* was granted by the Court, with costs against the superintendent. The restraining power of religion is not apparent in the case.

There were 134,029 lunatics in England and Wales at the beginning of the year—3,159 less than last year. Providence is getting quite tender-hearted.

Canon Chichester, speaking at Weybridge, said "a serious defect of the times is the starvation pay of the clergy." Perhaps the dear bishops will devote a portion of their salaries to provide bread for the unfortunate rectors and vicars.

From *John Bull* for November 10:—

> Apropos of our story of the Madonna and Child leaning over the town of Albert, from the heavily shelled tower of the ruined Cathedral, the *Freethinker* charges us with "gulling" the public, and says it "happens to know the truth." Then why not tell it?

So we could; but we gave, and still give, Mr. Bottomley an opportunity of stating the facts. And we repeat that neither German nor English shells have anything to do with the present position of the statue. Some religious papers saw a chance of working a "miracle," at the expense of truth, and Mr. Bottomley followed their lead. Mr. Bottomley's picture of the "folk of Arras and Albert" believing that "God raised His hand to shield from harm" the statue of the Virgin is ridiculous. Pious folk away from Arras and Albert may believe it. The people at Arras and Albert know better. So do our own soldiers who are near the spot.

Christian institutions have benefited largely by the death of Mr. W. P. Hampton, house furnisher, of Pall Mall, who left estate of the value of £153,325. He gave £5,000 to the British Foreign Bible Society; £2,000 each to the London Missionary Society, Barnardo's Homes, and the Salvation Army, and smaller bequests to other organizations. This is a wholesale endowment of superstition.

As a result of the recent breakfast-table conference between the clergy and the Premier at Downing Street, there will shortly be a big pulpit campaign advocating self-sacrifice during the War. So a Sunday paper informs its readers. What the public would like to hear is what sacrifice the clergy themselves propose to make in the fourth year of the War. So far they have done nothing except give advice, often unsound.

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No fewer than 200,000 out of 250,000 members of the Brotherhood Movement are serving their country, said Dr. Clifford, president of the movement. And, presumably, enforcing the idea of brotherhood at the point of the bayonet.

While cycling to church at Kingston-on-Thames, Annie Keane was run over by a motor-lorry and killed. Had she been on her way to a Freethought meeting, there would have been an awful and impressive moral.

Caradoc Evans, the author of *My People*, the novel which greatly annoyed Welsh Nonconformists, replies vigorously to one of his critics in a recent issue of *Everyman*. His critic, he says,—

> is angry that I have discovered Welsh Nonconformity, showing the three evils by which it thrives: hypocrisy, brutality, lust. Its god is wicked and crafty; he rules by the hand of his preachers—black-coated, cunning rascals, whose avarice is never appeased. They demand offerings from the widow and the orphan, and they fill their stomachs and clothe their bodies as though they were princes in the land. Their arrogance is awful.....
>
> Fashioned by such rulers, is it surprising that we are the most backward race in Europe? Spiritually and morally we are unsound. I know a Welshman who asked God to help him to cheat his brother. I know another who, while despoiling a young girl, sang one of Pantycelyn's hymns. I know another who committed a sin with the chapel-keeper in an open grave. I know a man who hated his sister so much that he set an angry bull upon her. I know a preacher who condoned incest in a member of his congregation and who practised it himself.....
>
> We are as Welsh Nonconformity has made us. Not until the last chapel is a cowhouse and the last black-coated worker of abomination is hanged shall we set forth on our march to the light.

There is nothing wanting here in the direction of vigour. It is small wonder that young Wales, which is taking the task of education very seriously indeed, should be in a state of revolt against *all* the Churches.

A farmer, fined at Widnes for selling carcases above the maximum price, made the excuse, "Everybody's doing it." "Pity 'tis, 'tis true." You can always trust Christians to rob one another.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, replying to a criticism that "spirits" needed clothes, said that "modesty does not cease with this life. Has it ever been the custom for any of the churches to describe the angels as nude?" This reminds us that some of the celestial visitors mentioned in the Bible had some of the qualities of Don Juan. Whilst it may be correct to say theologians do not describe angels as nude, it must be borne in mind that cherubs have nowhere to put any clothes.

Germany, says the *Church Times*, "is what Protestantism has made it. Protestantism is morally and spiritually bankrupt." This, after being told so frequently that the state of Germany was due to its rejection of Christianity. But if Protestantism is morally and spiritually bankrupt, we should like to know what form of Christianity is in a better condition?

Fireworks being prohibited on Guy Fawkes Day probably means the end of this once popular festival. It is interesting to recall that not until the middle of the nineteenth century was the Guy Fawkes service deleted from the Prayer Book.

Addressing the members of the National Liberal Club, Mr. Augustine Birrell urged that "everybody should dedicate some small part of each day to a good book, as, for example, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* or *Tristram Shandy*." Oh, Mr. Birrell! Fancy Nonconformist politicians reading "Gibbon" and "Sterne," for the former was a Freethinker and the latter a Churchman.

The myth of a Germany formally repudiating Christianity, and perpetrating all the atrocities with which it has stained its reputation as a consequence, is almost dead. The lie was too gross even for a time when credulity in some directions has surpassed itself. And the myth of our own soldiers made religious as a result of the War is rapidly breaking down. We have given numerous instances, from religious sources, of the carelessness of our men about religion, and our columns have provided evidence of the number who have formally repudiated religious belief since the War began. Now we see, from a report in the *Birmingham Gazette* of November 7, Canon Adderley admits that "the sense of prayer, of other worldliness, of mystery, is almost dead among our common people." And speaking of his experience in a hospital in France he says: "It was the German prisoners, with their little Christmas tapers by their bed-side—and they were Protestants, who seemed to be more mystical and other-worldly than our own dear Tommies who mixed up "Tipperary" with "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." We wish Canon Adderley had given his audience the actual words sung by many of the "dear Tommies" to hymn tunes.

Evidence to the same end is given in "As Tommy Sees Us," by A. Herbert Gray. He says: "It remains true that the majority of men in our Army are almost quite indifferent to the Church, if not contemptuous about it.....It is an extraordinary thing how the average man dislikes ministers." This is quite a different picture from that drawn by the Bishop of London. He found the men quite eager to listen to parsons—at least, he said he found them so. And who are we that we should cast doubt upon the word of a Bishop?

Mr. Elliott O'Donnell, speaking at a meeting of the Psychical Research Society, suggested that "spirits" may be untruthful. Surely that is an open question. There is no doubt, however, that Spiritualists are not all George Washingtons.

The Rev. W. M. Pitcher, curate at Whitkirk, near Leeds, is reported in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* of November 5 to have said: "We will not follow a King who does not follow Christ, but we will follow the Kaiser if he follows Christ." This was said in connection with the proposed reform of the Divorce Laws. But all it means is that the Church will support anyone or anything that supports it. And there is nothing new. That is the policy of all the Churches.

Mr. Alfred Ewen, who has been for twenty-seven years Official Receiver at Northampton, is retiring from office under the age limit, and will enter "Holy Orders." He is to take up a curacy near Truro. This we regard as a direct instance of the fitness of things. Having had a long experience in winding up bankrupt concerns, we can foresee a busy time for Mr. Ewen in dealing with the Church.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* reports a meeting of the Congress of Christian Workmen, representing 1,750,000 members, of whom 737,000 are serving with the Army, which strongly condemned all peace talk as being against the interests of Germany. The Secretary declares: "We went to war by the side of the Kaiser and the Princes, and we will return side by side with them." We hope the Bishop of London will note the activity of his brother Christians in Germany.

"Our business is to see that the enemy starves before we do," says the *Daily Mail*. A beautiful and touching Christian sentiment!

The Rev. A. D. Belden, speaking at Leigh-on-Sea, said that "the broken condition of the Church before the War was evidenced in Disestablishment and the New Theology." What does the reverend gentleman mean? Disestablishment is not yet an accomplished fact, and the New Theology is as dead as Queen Anne. The statement is as confusing as the tangle of the Trinity.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 18, Birmingham; November 25, Nuneaton; December, 2, South Shields; December 9, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—November 18, Manchester.

F. Steiner (New York).—Sorry both works are out of print. Pleased to have your good opinion of our reply to Mr. Clodd.

W. Barton.—We are obliged for your good offices in getting new readers. We should say that if twenty out of one hundred soldiers said they had prayed, the proportion was a good one as things go. But we presume they did not have to produce evidence.

Mr D. G. Gloak (Dundee) writes that he is willing to act as agent for the receipt of all such commissions in connection with the support of the *Freethinker* as were undertaken by Mr. R. Stirton, whose death we recorded last week. Mr. Stirton was a staunch friend of this paper; we know he has a worthy successor in the case of Mr. Gloak.

Mrs. E. Taylor.—Mr. Cohen will be delighted to meet you when he is again in Manchester, which will be on the first Sunday in January.

H. Irving.—Sorry we couldn't find space for your note last week. It is hardly worth while reopening the matter now.

W. T. Newman.—We are obliged. Shall be pleased to make an early use of your communication.

R. S.—We have no special organization for sending out literature to the men at the Front. We do send out a fair quantity, so far as our means permit, and we are pleased to know that it is read and is evidently doing useful work.

H. Black.—We are not thinking of reprinting that particular article as a leaflet. But we do intend writing some special leaflets, so soon as we can get sufficient time from our other occupations.

T. Dixon.—Thanks for contribution to Fund, and good wishes for a good big total before the Fund closes.

T. Clunin.—The value of Paley's theological writings is much greater of late years—owing to the increased price of waste paper.

Mr. J. A. Reid suggests that, when finished, readers should send their copies of the *Freethinker* to their local papers. That is an idea well worth following up.

J. B. Selby.—A religious service cannot be "forced" at any funeral against the wishes of the next-of-kin. A burial without a service of any sort is quite in order, and many occur.

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.

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

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.

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.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

We have one more issue of the *Freethinker* in which to acknowledge additions to this Fund, which means that all subscriptions should reach me by Tuesday, November 20, the day on which next week's issue goes to press. We are gratified at the prompt and generous response made to our appeal, and we continue to receive letters from readers, which serve as an added encouragement to press on. We have not had space to quote from many of these of late, but we venture on two or three in this last time of writing.

Mr. W. Moore writes from Belfast:—

> May I congratulate you on the sustained excellence of the paper these troublous times. It is a marvel how you "carry on" under present difficulties. Considering the number of periodicals that have gone under in the struggle, and the much greater number that have increased in price and decreased in size, you should feel extremely proud of your very fine work in the cause of Freethought. I sincerely hope sufficient will be contributed to free you from further anxiety until the end of next year. In my opinion, you have a big enough burden to bear without having to shoulder so much worry through lack of funds to obtain supplies.

"Deneb," in sending a further subscription, writes:—

> In view of the fact that the King has decided to win the War at the latest by January 7 by means of a National Day of Prayer, I feel justified in dipping into my very limited funds and sending you a third small subscription.

That is a very prompt answer to the prayers that are to be offered. We hope the clergy will be satisfied.

From Captain Sinclair:—

> To have kept the *Freethinker* going during these three years of War is a triumph, as signal as any ever achieved by *our* paper. It would be a thousand pities, now that you have so brilliantly conquered the ridges, if you were prevented peppering the enemy well through want of ammunition. Please find herewith a few bullets, and, believe me, it is not lack of will that prevents my sending a high explosive shell of the largest calibre.
>
> C. C.

Tenth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £335 9s. 5d. T. Dixon, £1. W. Morris, 2s. 6d. A. Beale, 2s. 6d. Deneb, 5s. W. Moore, 2s. 1d. A. W. Davis, £1 10s. T. C. Riglin, 2s. 6d. H. Sinclair, 10s. J. B. Selby, 1s. W. T. Pitt, 10s. 6d. C. N. B., 2s. 1d. W. H. Quinlivan, 3s. J. E. Cooper, 1s. 6d. J. R. White, 2s. 6d. A. L. Pickering, 2s. 6d. R. B., 2s. 6d. J. B., 2s. 6d. Three Atheists (per F. Lonsdale, Glasgow), £1 1s. A. W. Coleman, 9s. 6d. D. F. Gloak, 4s. 6d. J. Thornby, 4s. Mrs. N. Wilcock, 2s. 6d. T. F. G., 2s. J. Smith, 1s. C. Heaton, 2s. 6d. R. W. Dowding, 5s.

Per H. Anderson, Leicester Secular Society: A. Wain, 2s. 6d.; H. Adkinson, 2s. 6d.; W. Leeson, 5s.; P. Wykes, 2s. 6d.; E. A. Wykes, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Richards, 2s.; J. Cartwright, 1s.; F. J. Smith, 2s.; H. E. A., 2s. 6d.; W. J. Marston, 2s. 6d.; Collected, 5s. Total, £344 14s. 11d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day in the Repertory Theatre, Station Street, Birmingham. The lecture commences at 7 o'clock. Subject: "Do the Dead Live?" Birmingham friends are looking forward to a crowded house and we hope they will not be disappointed.

The Pioneer Press has just added to its list of bargains a volume that will be of interest to a large number of readers. This is *The Positive Evolution of Religion; Its Moral and Social Reaction*, by Mr. Frederic Harrison. Mr. Harrison has been for many years one of the leading Positivists in England, and the volume summarizes his—to use the author's words—"final thoughts in the general problem of religion." It is a sustained criticism of all forms of established supernaturalistic religion, and written in Mr. Harrison's attractive style. The work was published in 1913 at 8s. 6d. net, and is now offered for sale at 2s. 6d., postage 5d.

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To-day (November 18) Mr. Lloyd lectures at the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick, Manchester. The afternoon meeting is at 3 o'clock; the evening at 6.30. We hope there will be a good rally of Freethinkers, and also of Christians. Both are sure to be repaid for their attendance. Tickets, 6d. and 1s., may be obtained from the hall-keeper, from 68 Tib Street, and from 4,6 Great Cheetham Street East, Higher Broughton. There are a few free seats. Tea will be provided for visitors from a distance.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Lloyd's meetings on Sunday were highly successful. Mr. Lonsdale, Local N. S. S. Secretary, writes in high praise of both the audience and of Mr. Lloyd's lectures. In the evening a resolution, moved by Mr. Pairney and seconded by Mr. Howitt, protesting against the proposed "Day of Prayer" as being calculated to bring the country into ridicule, was moved and carried unanimously. Our Glasgow friends evidently had a field day, and we wish them many others.

The Secretary of the North London Branch asks us to draw the attention of our readers to the debate on "Nietzsche, the Immoralist," to be opened by Mr. A. D. Howell-Smith at the St. Pancras Reform Club at 7.30 this evening. No modern writer has been more widely misunderstood and misrepresented than Nietzsche, and Mr. Smith's careful study of the life and writings of the great philosopher has made him most competent to deal with the subject, and we hope the debate will be well attended. There will be ample opportunity for discussion.

English readers will welcome a translation of M. Deshumbert's *La Morale Fondee sur les Lois de la Nature*, under the title of *An Ethical System Based on the Laws of Nature*. The work is an able attempt to base morality upon natural considerations, and the author shows considerable ability in arguing his case, and great ingenuity in the illustrations he provides his readers. The only adverse criticism that may be passed upon the work is a too great a tendency to justify Nature to man, and the anthropomorphism involved in expressions about Nature's "aims" and "ends" and "desires." Nor is M. Deshumbert sufficiently alive to the consideration that things may be inevitable without their being desirable or admitting of justification. And the function of the naturalistic philosopher is not to justify Nature so much as it is to point out how man may control natural forces and direct them to his own betterment. M. Deshumbert achieves this task with considerable success, in spite of his laying himself open to criticism in other directions. The book is published by The Open Court Co. at 2s. 6d. net.

Owing to the vagaries of the Post Office, a parcel containing "copy," posted from Mr. Cohen's private address to the office, failed to reach its destination. This involved an unusual amount of writing on Tuesday (publishing day), and many letters have had to remain unanswered until next week in consequence.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

Our love and hate have aims, but Thine
Are idle bolts at random hurled;
Impotent, hidden, yet divine,
Brood o'er Thy broken-hearted world.

Cold to the prayer of human sorrow,
Deaf to the sob of human strife,
Thou workest grandly, night and morrow,
On Thy great masterpiece of life!

For Thine own pleasure is it done,
Since art's delight is in the doing;
Thine own enjoyment, slowly won,
Is the sole end Thou art pursuing.

—*Robert Buchanan.*

The Everlasting Hills.

In all countries and ages where the mountains have formed an imposing feature of the landscape, the myths and marvels of religion have largely centred themselves among the inaccessible peaks that rise from the plains beneath. Ruskin's eloquently expressed conviction that mountains "are as a great and noble architecture, first giving shelter, comfort, and rest; and covered also with mighty sculpture and painted legend" is a quite modern conception. Among primitive peoples, and even with the cultured Romans and Greeks, the hills were regarded with feelings of wonder and fear. In our more prosaic period when science has proved to us that the uplands, so long supposed to date from the world's beginning, are really quite recent in origin; when the very Alps are tunnelled, and the altitudes of the most majestic mountains are determined; when roads or railways approach or traverse the earth's noblest elevations; much of the old-time romance has been shattered, and then replaced in the instructed mind with far loftier concepts of the mountain ranges of the globe. We have discovered that

> those desolate and threatening ranges which.....men have looked upon with aversion or with horror, and shrunk back from as if they were haunted by perpetual images of death, are in reality sources of life and happiness, far fuller and more beneficent than all the bright fruitfulness of the plain. The valleys only feed; the mountains feed and guard and strengthen us.—(Ruskin, *Modern Painters*).

The literary masterpieces of classic civilization provide abundant proof that the lowlands and valleys, the meandering rivers and lower eminences, with all their floral and faunal treasures, were themes which inspired the poets with thoughts sublime. But the mysterious mountains that seemed to ascend to heaven itself appeared too sacred for secular speculation, and were viewed as the everlasting abodes of the eternal gods. In their high dwelling-place the divinities ruled the winds, the thunder, the lightning, and the rain, for all these came from above. Unwilling for religious reasons to trespass upon holy ground, there was in addition small inducement to wander among the harsh and barren highlands in search of plant or animal food.

In the Dark Centuries of Christian ascendancy in Europe every secret place was the haunt of nymphs, fairies, elves, and other weird beings. Nor need we now travel outside our own islands to meet rustic communities which still cherish a firm belief in the existence of dwarfs, fairies, and other uncanny folk who preside over the destiny of hill and heath in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

The children of Israel looked upon the mountains as the house of the Lord. On Mount Sinai Moses is reported to have received the Law from Jahveh, although owing to the long absence of their leader the people became restless, and demanded new gods which Aaron the priest promptly provided in the guise of the golden calf. Thus:—

> Israel made their gods of gold
> Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

In India the story is much the same. From the earliest ages the Himalayas have been venerated by the native races of Hindostan. As Hutchinson writes in his *Story of the Hills*:—

> Thousands of people from all parts of that vast country still continue to seek salvation in the holy waters of the Ganges, and at its sacred sources in the snowy Himalayas. And to those who know India the wondrous snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas still seem to be surrounded with somewhat of the same halo of glory as of old.

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Before the coming of the aviator's art, the possibilities of which we are only beginning to surmise, there was, probably, no more exhilarating experience available than that afforded by mountaineering. Those who have been privileged to enjoy the scenery, inhale the bracing breezes, and, at the close of a hard day's climbing among the Alps, or amid the rugged Scottish Highlands, have felt themselves ready to sleep, if necessary, on the hardest of stones, may be said to have truly lived. A sunset over the sea is unspeakably beautiful, but the effects of an Alpine sunset and afterglow, perhaps, defy portrayal, save from the pen of the poet, or the artist's brush. And when in the twilight of eve pale mists softly ascend, the peaks stand out in imperial grandeur, until the queen of night rising in the eastern sky sets her seal of loveliness alike on earth and heaven. Ruskin's worship of the mountains is displayed in many passages of deathless prose, while Wordsworth, one of the grandest of Nature poets, has immortalized the hills. The divine genius of Turner has transferred the painter's vision of mountain scenery to pictures precious beyond all praise. Tyndall's description of an Alpine evening is very striking:—

> After sunset the purple of the east changed to a deep neutral tint; and against the faded red which spread above it, the sun-forsaken mountains laid their cold and ghostly heads. The ruddy colour vanished more and more; the stars strengthened in lustre, until finally the moon and they held undisputed possession of the blue sky.

There is no known instance of a mountain race that is destitute of the qualities of hardiness, physical power, and bravery. Their stern surroundings have stamped themselves upon the people. In such circumstances there is little chance for weaklings. These last are weeded out, and only those endowed with muscular strength and endurance are permitted to perpetuate the race. The fighting propensities of mountain stocks are notorious. The Balkan peninsula has long provided a mournful instance of this verity. The dwellers in the Afghan hills are famed for their fierceness in warfare. The martial spirit of the Scottish Highlanders continued to burst forth at the slightest provocation centuries after the Lowlanders had learnt to properly appreciate the blessings of peace. Although other factors are unquestionably involved in the maintenance of the martial spirit, there can be little doubt that a mountainous environment promotes the passion for adventure, a passion that is closely related to the readiness for strife.

Professor Bonney, in his instructive *Alpine Regions of Switzerland*, has adduced a number of quaint superstitions which still prevail in what Leslie Stephen termed "the playground of Europe." Credulous peasants solemnly attest that they hear the wail of the wild huntsman as he and his spectral companions rush past the solitary chalet. Then there is the bold, bad boy who crucified an aged male goat, and compelled the herd to worship it. As a penalty for his sin the wicked youth was smitten by lightning, and ever since he has wandered among the mountains bewailing his crime. Satan himself figures in these legends, and ghostly animals, brownies, and pigmies are common, while traditions of the havoc occasioned by the fall of rocks and avalanches have given birth to a host of fabulous beliefs.

Men marvelled in antiquity when Hannibal invaded Italy by crossing the Alps, and many centuries later Napoleon's successful march over the same formidable barrier was the occasion of much astonishment. Nevertheless, mountain ranges have in all ages served to separate State from State. One need only to glance at the map to note the extent to which elevated areas and rivers have operated in establishing political boundaries. Austria's chief defence against the armies of Italy consisted in her Alpine barrier. The possession of the heights is immensely important just now on the Western Front. The Pyrenees separate France and Spain. England and Scotland again are divided by the Cheviots in conjunction with the Tweed.

Our planet's true mountain masses are the huge continents which rise above the level of the sea, for, in comparison with these, our mountain chains are insignificant wrinkles. But, although when related to the entire earth, our elevations are so small, yet, to a little land mammal like man they appear supremely great. Still, however inferior absolutely, relatively the mountains are sufficiently important to exercise a potent influence on animal and vegetable life. The average annual snowfall on the Alps is estimated at 33 feet. Were this snow to accumulate from year to year by the end of a century the height of these mountains would increase to the extent of 3,300 feet. But much of the snow is melted by the sun and evaporated by the action of the atmosphere, while, above all, stupendous snow fields gradually sweep down the declivities and become transformed into rivers of ice whose terminals are thawed by the warmer air which embraces them, thus producing the glacier streams which course down the hills.

The sublimities of these magnificent mountains are tempered by their terrors. At certain seasons of the year the avalanche is a source of constant dread to the Alpine population, although familiarity with the ever present danger tends to promote a spirit of resignation. The avalanche is classified into three kinds. The fury of the first of these is expended on the mountains with little harm to man. The minor glaciers in the upper Alpine regions frequently end abruptly on the margin of a precipice. This arrested ice is subjected to the pressure of the growing masses of ice above it until it is dashed down the cliffs. The fall of these crystalline masses is a wonderful sight, and when the great cloud of powdered snow has disappeared below, and silence once more reigns, "the thunder of the avalanche is suddenly heard reverberating in deep echoes in the mountain gorges, as if it were the voice of the mountain itself."

In winter the fresh fallen snow, when disturbed, slides down the declivities and overwhelms the valley beneath. From time to time whole villages have been buried in huge graves of snow with tragic results. This is the second or dust avalanche.

The third variety of avalanche is the ground avalanche which is caused by the descent of dense and indurated masses of weathered snow. The ground avalanche is the most destructive, and trees are thickly planted on the mountain slopes to prevent its fall. The Swiss death-roll from these catastrophes is a serious one. In the Rhone valley in 1720 one of these accidents caused the death of eighty-eight human beings, the destruction of 120 cottages, and the loss of 400 head of cattle.

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer.

Science, no less than common sense, dispels Christian superstition. Evolution destroys the idea of a general catastrophe. There was a time when life could not exist on the earth, and there will probably come a time when it will cease to exist. Long before then man will have disappeared. But the æon of our race may extend to millions of years. Is not this time practically infinite? And do not those who make it a cause for lamentation and despair resemble the man that Spinoza ridicules, who refuses to eat his dinner today because he is not sure of a dinner for ever and ever? Sit down, you fool, and eat.

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The Church and Liberty.

MANY who think Mr. G. K. Chesterton most impossible as a philosopher, historian, and publicist, will agree that he is hard to beat as a poet and a rhetorician. He once wrote a poem on the English working-classes which contained these lines:—

Smile at us, pay us, pass us; but do not quite forget,
For we are the people of England, that never has spoken yet.

. . . . . .

There are no folk in the whole world so helpless or so wise.
There is hunger in our bellies, there is laughter in our eyes;
You laugh at us and love us, both mugs and eyes are wet:
Only you do not know us. For we have not spoken yet.

Mr. Chesterton's *Short History of England*, just published, is an essay in amplification of this poem. I have read the book and several reviews of it, including a very stupid review in the *Morning Post*. That review exhibits the ignorance of its writer by denouncing Mr. Chesterton's *History* as a revolutionary Socialist pamphlet. Socialists and Freethinkers differ from Mr. Chesterton more profoundly than the *Morning Post* does, and they will know better than that. What his book reveals to me, at any rate, is simply the extraordinary limitation of his understanding. Again and again, in the course of it, he has occasion to refer to some important movement, which he not only does not understand, but which he seems too lazy or too impatient to try to understand. It is not surprising to find him failing in this way to understand Mohammedanism, or Puritanism, or modern science. But we open our eyes when he apparently fails to understand the French Revolution, in which he has always posed as something of a specialist; and when it turns out that he does not even understand the Christian religion, of which he is a distinguished champion, we feel instinctively for a penny that we may present him with the proverbial bun.

The thesis of Mr. Chesterton, on which his book centres, is that the liberties of the English people were created by Catholic Christianity, and destroyed by the rejection of Catholic Christianity. He naturally begins with the old assertion that the Church put an end to slavery; and not content with this historical misrepresentation, he gives reasons *a priori* why it had to be true. Christianity, he tells us, "was the most revolutionary of all revolutions, since it identified the dead body on a servile gibbet with the fatherhood in the skies." I am afraid that if Mr. Chesterton had written this when Catholic dogma was a living force, instead of a mere political convenience as now, he would have been sharply dealt with as a Sabellian, or, at the very least, as a Monophysite. It would have been more profitable if, instead of explaining what the Church should, *a priori*, have taught about slavery, and explaining it wrongly, Mr. Chesterton had told us simply what it *did* teach.

At no period of its history has the Catholic Church declared slavery to be wrong. Paul exhorts slaves to be obedient, and masters to be kind to their slaves; he nowhere enjoins emancipation. Between the time of Paul and the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire, slavery had considerably weakened from economic causes. The high-water mark of ancient slavery was about the date of the Christian era, when the rapid expansion of the Roman Empire by successful war had thrown on the market a flood of captives of all races, and made slaves a cheap and profitable investment. When Rome ceased to extend her conquests, slavery ceased to be so cheap or profitable. As the basis of industry, the institution had serious disadvantages. Slaves could not be trusted to perform other than the most elementary and least skilled tasks, to which they could be kept by the whip of the overseer. Hence ancient slavery lasted longest on agricultural estates; and even there the soil was ruined by this form of cultivation. By the time Christianity became politically supreme, the effects of these disadvantages were being felt, and slavery was slowly receding before serfdom. The last traces of slavery, however, as distinct from serfdom, did not disappear from Europe until the twelfth century. That the much-praised "efforts" of the Church should have taken eight centuries to extinguish an institution, which was already on the down grade economically, does not say much for the seriousness with which the Church went to work on this question. That the Church had no rooted objection to slavery is, moreover, proved by the fact of its revival, with the blessing of the Church, so soon as European nations began to seek expansion in the East, and later in the New World. Negro slavery, in the modern world, began with the conquests of Catholic Portugal and Catholic Spain.

The place of slavery in Europe as the basis of society was taken by serfdom; that is, instead of the labourer being a chattel to be bought and sold, he became a fixture on the soil, with a right to his holding subject to the due performance of various services to the feudal lord. Mr. Chesterton, not being able to make out that the Church was opposed to serfdom, has to argue that serfdom was really rather a good thing. The serf "could not be evicted; he could not even, in the modern fashion, have his rent raised. At the beginning it was merely that the slave was owned, but at least he could not be disowned. At the end he had really become a small landlord, merely because it was not the lord that owned him, but the land. It is hardly unsafe to suggest that in this (by one of the paradoxes of this extraordinary period) the very fixity of serfdom was a service to freedom." We would be the last to deny that there is something in all this; serfdom *was* an improvement on slavery. But how Mr. Chesterton would foam at the mouth if anyone ventured to apply similar reasoning to modern social conditions! In dealing with modern social reform, he continually harps on the theme that the tendency of such measures as Workmen's Compensation and Old Age Pensions is, not to make the wage-earner cease to be a wage-earner, but to enable "employees to claim certain advantages *as* employees, and as something permanently different from employers"—which he calls "the Servile State." Surely, on Mr. Chesterton's own principles, the modern social reformer might reply that in securing the worker against unemployment, and providing him with a minimum wage, we should make for liberty and not for slavery. "At the end he would really become a small capitalist, merely because it would not be the employer who owned him, but the industry. It is hardly unsafe to suggest that in this (by one of the paradoxes of this extraordinary period) the very fixity of employment would be a service to freedom." Mr. Chesterton's argument!

This, however, is a digression, which I permit myself to make because I cannot resist the temptation of cornering Mr. Chesterton on his favourite battle-ground. To return to the Church and mediæval serfdom. The Church, no doubt, could not reasonably be expected to oppose the system from the outset; but we are fairly entitled to scrutinize the attitude of the Church when others began to attack it in the interests of freedom. In describing the great peasant rising of 1381, Mr. Chesterton significantly omits all reference to the attitude of the Church. Let me supply the omission. John Ball, the prime mover of the revolt, was a heterodox priest, who had been imprisoned by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the tendencies of his sermons. The whole official influence of the Church was on the side of repression.

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The Archbishop was beheaded by the peasants when they were masters of London. After the betrayal and suppression of the insurgents, in which the Church gleefully assisted, her representatives in Parliament, the abbots and bishops, joined with barons and knights in declaring that their serfs were their goods, and that they would never consent to free them. All this Mr. Chesterton omits.

He suggests that the unpopularity of the Catholic system was started by the "diseased energy" of the fifteenth century bishops who persecuted the Lollards. It is very gratifying to find that Mr. Chesterton's Catholicism actually permits him to express a mild disapproval of persecution. The unpopularity of the Church, however, dated from before the persecution of the Lollards. What the laity thought of the clergy in the later Middle Ages may be gathered from Chaucer's descriptions of the "summoner" and "pardoner," and from the satire of Langland. The gilt was off the Catholic gingerbread. The Church had sponged on society for centuries, and swallowed the livelihood of the poor and the abundance of the rich with equal avidity, on the pretence of being able, for these considerations, to insure people against everlasting torture by slow fire after death. Men were beginning to doubt if this claim was well founded—that was all.

Mr. Chesterton speaks of it as "a commonplace" that the monks "kept the world's diary, faced the plagues of all flesh, taught the first technical arts, preserved the pagan literature, and, above all, by a perpetual patchwork of charity, kept the poor from the most distant sight of their modern despair." There is an element of truth in this. The monks "kept the world's diary"—that is, they belauded every potentate who endowed them, no matter how ruffianly, and vilified every potentate who flouted them, no matter how beneficent. They "faced the plagues of all flesh"—after doing a great deal to aggravate them by their filthy cult of dirt for dirt's sake, of which we have abundant records in the lives of the saints. They "preserved the pagan literature"—so much of it, at least, as they did not destroy, or deface by scrawling their wretched martyrological romances over the original.

I must pass over Mr. Chesterton's modern history, much as I should like to dissect it. His essential perversion is summed up in that passage where, after attributing "complete and complacent paganism" to the English ruling class of the eighteenth century, he calls the French Revolution "a riot that broke up the very formal funeral of Christianity, and was followed by various other complications, including the corpse coming to life." No one would guess, from Mr. Chesterton's references to it, that the French Revolution, so far from being a revival of Christianity, was the culmination of eighteenth century scepticism; that its precursors, Voltaire and Rousseau, were the men of whom Dr. Johnson said that "it was difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them"; that the Revolution confiscated the estates of the Church in France, just as Henry VIII. had confiscated the estates of the Church in England, only far more completely; that relics were burnt and churches smashed by the Revolutionists in France, as by the Puritans in England; that the Englishmen of the nineteenth century who *did* try to revive Catholicism, such as Newman, loathed the Revolution and all its works; and that a modern stanza added to the revolutionary song, "La Carmagnole," runs as follows:—

Que demande un republicain?
Vivre et mourir sans calotin:
Le Christ a la voirie,
La Vierge a l'ecurie,
Et le Saint-Pere au diable—
Vive le son, vive le son—
Et le Saint-Pere au diable—
Vive le son du canon!

Robert Arch.

Economic Superstition.

The total of the world's War Debts now exceeds £25,000,000,000, and will probably be the double of that before the War is over. Moreover, every £1 subscribed now will be worth £2 when the present universal inflation of the currency is overtaken by the productive labour of the millions of workers now engaged in nothing but destructive work.

The population of the world is estimated at 1,640 millions, so that allowing one millionaire to every million would give 1,640 millionaires. Many of these, however, are multi-millionaires, *e.g.*, John D. Rockefeller is said to have control of £100,000,000, and there are some thousands of men with fortunes but little less than £1,000,000. I am, therefore, not far out when I say that about 25,000 persons own £25,000,000,000.

Now these cosmopolitan millionaires, among whom are several German-Jews, have trustworthy agents in every country, and by their control of the currency they make a prey of every public enterprise. Peaceful enterprises now being at a standstill, they have, of course, subscribed largely to all the War Loans, of which they very likely now hold one half, amounting to £25,000,000,000. And as inflation is overtaken, this holding will increase to £50,000,000,000 without any effort on their part, not even the signing of another cheque. In a few years, therefore, the workers of the world, including, of course, all the professional classes, will find themselves confronted with a fraudulent War Debt of £50,000,000,000, compelling them to contribute goods and services of the value of £2,500,000,000 annually to these 25,000 millionaires.

Tolstoy said that the rouble would be made a more powerful instrument of oppression than the knout, and our professional classes, with an income tax of 10s. in the £ for many years to come, are likely to have this driven well home. Every worker in the world will be the virtual slave, for one half of every working day, of these millionaires who are quite able to evade any attempt to impose an adequate super-tax on their huge unearned incomes. On p. 128 of his *Trade Fallacies*, Mr. Arthur Kitson says: "The late Pierpoint Morgan could make and unmake whom he chose, and woe to the man who opposed him! His power far exceeded that of the President of the United States."

Their mode of operation is quite simple, *e.g.*, the Government wants £950,000 to pay the soldiers. It gives an Exchequer Bond for £1,000,000 to Midas and receives in exchange his cheque for £950,000. The Government then cashes this cheque at the bank and receives 950,000 Currency Notes for £1 each, which it has itself given to the bank to save it from bankruptcy. Besides that the Government undertakes to pay Midas £50,000 annually until it can repay him the £1,000,000 which he has not advanced. Socialism has been described as something for nothing, so Midas must be a Socialist of a very pronounced type.

Now, an Exchequer Bond for £1,000,000 is a promise to pay bearer goods and services of that value, based on the honour and productive power of the British Empire. A Currency Note for £1 is precisely the same for the smaller amount, and both are, therefore, the best kind of money now in circulation.

On the other hand, Midas' cheque for £950,000 is an order to his bank to pay the Government £950,000 in

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gold, which he knows the bank has not got, and even if it had, it would be of no more use than the Government's own Currency Notes, because both are merely so many contrivances, for enabling the soldiers to obtain the goods and services they are entitled to. Thus we see another striking analogy between the twin superstitious beliefs in God and gold.

Here is some common bread and wine; a priest of God mutters some unmeaning words over them, and lo! they have become the actual flesh and blood of the useless God, and the poor devotee will gratefully hand over a large part of his hard-earned wealth for the imaginary service thus rendered to him by the priest of the useless God. Here is a piece of common paper, on which Midas writes a few untruthful words, and the poor devotee, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, gives him £50,000 of the people's hard-earned wages and an annuity of £50,000 for many years to come; and not one out of every ten thousand educated men can see anything queer in this performance—nay, positively resents any interference with it as destructive of the Empire! It has been well said that when God flies in at the window, common sense walks out at the door; and the same may be truthfully remarked about gold.[1]

G. O. Warren, Major.

ANECDOTAL.

Being junior curate in this gigantic parish of 20,000 souls I was allotted to the old women's almshouses; the old women there were the joy of my life. One of them was ninety-five years of age, exactly seventy years my senior, and she ruled the clergy, and especially myself, with a rod of iron. One snowy midnight I received an urgent summons to her bedside, and I hastened thither, fully expecting she might be dead by the time I reached her. Nothing of the kind.

"A nice time you've been, Mr. Blackpool"—they never could manage my name, anything with a B and two syllables served their purpose—that was her greeting. "I want yer to wind that yer eight-day clock o' mine."

"What, at one in the morning!" I indignantly cried. "Drag me out of bed into the snow to wind up your confounded old clock! Really, it's too bad of you, Mrs. Johnson."

"Nice languidge for a parson!" she ejaculated; raising her eyes to the heavens with irritating piety. "Yes, Mr. Brassplate, wind up my clock; them's my very words. The vicar says 'isself, the very last time he was 'ere, you was to do anything I required. Them's his orders, and well you knows it, Mr. Blackpool! So there's no good swearin' about it, which I don't 'old with parsons usin' such disgustin' languidge in my 'ouse. I allus tells a servant-gal wot I thinks of her, straight and done with it, and I allus tell a curick the same; then you know where you are!"

Of course, one wasn't not only one little bit angry with the dear old soul; but, as a matter of fact, I absolutely enjoyed her violent denunciations of me.—*Raymond Blathwayt, "Through Life and Round the World."*

Obituary.

It is with regret we report the death of Mr. Alfred W. M. Buscall, of 46 Newington Green Road, London, N., which occurred on November 6, in the 72nd year of his age. Mr. Buscall was a working member of the Mildmay Radical Club for upwards of twenty years. He was also a convinced Atheist, and made no secret of the fact. He left a will in which he requested the Secretary of the Club to arrange for a Secular Service at his funeral, which was accordingly done. He was held in high esteem by those who knew him. His burial took place at St. Pancras Cemetery on Friday, Nov. 9, in the presence of relations and friends.—J. T. Lloyd.

[1] Exchequer Bonds are now being used as currency, and by simply making them legal tender, the same as currency notes, the huge fictitious War Debt can be cancelled and every British worker's home relieved from the incubus that now threatens it.

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.

Kingsland Branch N. S. S. (44 Jenner Road, Stoke Newington): Nov. 15, at 7.30, Meeting of Members. Business: Election of Auditors and Discussion of Conference Report.

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "Nietzsche the Immoralist." Open debate.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Tube Station): 7, T. F. Palmer, "Christianity at the Bar of History."

OUTDOOR.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Kells, and Ratcliffe.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, C. Cohen, "Do the Dead Live?"

New Manchester Branch N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Downing Street. Ardwick): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Humanism Our Only Hope"; 6.30, "Self-reliance v. Trust in God."

South Shields Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, Fowler Street): 3, "(*a*) London Conference; (*b*) Separation and Divorce."

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Views and Opinions.

Boloism.

"Bolo" is the word of the hour. It has taken its place as one of the many words, sinister or otherwise, given us by the War, and is a new name for an old thing. There is nothing new in men selling their services for a cash equivalent, nor in the consequent manipulation of public opinion. It occurs at all times, and thrives lustily during a war period. During the French revolutionary period the French saw English gold everywhere, and "Pitt's money" became a veritable bugbear. To-day German gold occupies the same position. Mr. Lloyd George warns us to look out for "Boloism" in all its forms, and our flesh is made to creep by the pictures of German emissaries bribing men and women right and left to sell the interests of their country. Hair-raising revelations are foreshadowed, without materialization, and one is left marvelling at the wickedness of human nature, and at the almost criminal negligence of a Government which fails to lay by the heels people who so vilely sell the interests of the community to which they belong.

* * *

The Day of Prayer.

If "Boloism" had to do only with the world of politics, we should not concern ourselves with it here. Indeed, if the only Boloism were political boloism, we should be inclined to dismiss it with the reflection that it is in its proper habitat. But it covers a much wider sphere. Two or three weeks ago, in commenting upon the number of clergymen entertained at breakfast by Mr. Lloyd George, we warned our readers to be on the lookout for developments. These have not been long in coming. The King has issued a "Call for United Prayer." But it is a part of our constitution that the King acts only by and with the advice of his ministers. That relieves the King of responsibility—and dooms him to impotence. And, therefore, although it can only be a suspicion, we may be excused the assumption that this is one of the developments we anticipated. Moreover, Mr. H. W. Gooch, Secretary of the World's Evangelical Alliance, has announced that a national day of prayer has been considered by the War Cabinet and by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a statement from Mr. Lloyd George may be expected. The clergy do not give something for nothing. They are the profiteers of the spiritual world. If they are to help the Government the Government must help them. Very early in the days of Christianity one of the disciples of Jesus sold his services to the enemy for thirty pieces of silver. Judas was the first Christian Boloist. And the professional Christian preacher is, in the main, descended from that stock. The price has gone up; that is the main difference.

* *

The Day of Prayer.

January 6, 1918, is fixed for a special day of "prayer and thanksgiving." Thanksgiving! For what? Is it thanksgiving for the overrunning by Germany of Belgium, of France, of Poland, of Serbia, of Roumania, of Italy? Or are we to thank God that, while he has not preserved these countries, he has preserved us from a like calamity? Thanks to the men who have stood between us and disaster we can understand, and such gratitude is richly deserved. But thanks to God! That is a dangerous experiment. It may invite reflection, and people may ask what it is they have to thank God for And why a day of prayer by command? Anyone can pray who wants to. And voluntary service, even in prayer, looks better, and is better than conscription. Perhaps it is thought that as heaven is obdurate against individual sniping, it may yield to a mass attack. Everybody praying at once may be more effective than each one praying separately; and "high heaven" dazed into complaisance by the concerted din of millions of animated praying machines, may yield to noise the assistance it declines to human necessity. Above all, it will enable the clergy to pretend they are playing a useful part in the national life, and they will be able to present to the world a picture of Britain animated by the spirit of prayer and filled with a zeal for religion. In a world stricken with a great sorrow there is, perhaps, something to be said for even that poor joke.

* * *

Our Christian Bolos.

Now, I call this "Boloism" because the Day of Prayer, if carried through, will represent no more than the efforts of an interested professional priesthood. In this respect the Christian clergy represent the greatest organization of Boloism in the world. Germany spends, it is said, large sums of money all over the world in creating and fostering a public opinion favourable to its own designs. But what is this beside the millions spent every year by the Christian Churches to the same end? What opinion is there that would not secure champions under the same conditions? Christianity buys its defenders, and its emissaries are largely advocates arguing a brief, not men stating a conviction. As Boloism buys its advocates, so does Christianity. As Boloism corrupts the press, so does Christianity. As Boloism, by the suppression of facts, by the dis-

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semination of falsehoods, by the cultivation of an artificially created opinion, is able to represent the product as the expression of a normal and healthy conviction, so is Christianity. Look out for Boloism in all its forms, cries Mr. Lloyd George. That is good advice; only let us bear in mind that it has wider and more permanent application than Germany and the War. Let us by all means make a clean sweep of our Bolos—and let us not forget the pulpit in the course of our operations.

* * *

Boloism and the Poor.

As our religious Boloism buys one class, so it bribes another. Consider the intense anxiety of the Churches to control the charities of the world! Careless, criminally careless, of the causes of extreme poverty, they are feverishly anxious to control the distribution of money given to meet some of its consequences. Some years back, Mr. Charles Booth, in his great survey of London life, spoke of the churches competing with all the eagerness of commercial travellers for the patronage of the poor. The purpose is patent. To share in these charities, attendance at church is imperative. In that way only are the poor known to the parson, and considered properly deserving. The church or chapel "mumper" is a well-known character in all poor districts. There is small wonder that the more far-seeing of the leaders of the working classes see in the church-controlled charities a fruitful cause of demoralization. Servility and acquiescence in religious formulæ become the condition of relief. Servility takes the place of independence. The support of the poor is purchased by the bribe of charity, just as surely as the advocacy of the better educated is purchased by the funds which the Churches have at their disposal. The removal of all endowed charities from the control of the Churches would strike a deadly blow at the prevalence of Christianity among the poor.

* * *

Boloism in Education.

Only one more example can now be given of the prevalence of "Boloism" in connection with Christianity. Much has been heard of late on the subject of education. And it is being urged, none too soon, that the position of the teacher should be surrounded with all due honour and importance, while he should bring to his work a character marked by dignity and independence. What are the facts? All over the country there are large numbers of teachers who are convinced of the inutility, if not the positive harm, of religious education in schools. There is another section which, while believing in Christianity, would willingly leave it out of the school course, recognizing that, in the present state of society, it should be given, if at all, in other than school hours and by hands other than theirs. And yet how few of these teachers dare say what they really think on the subject of religious education. Everyone knows that for them to speak out would mean endless annoyance at the hands of petty councils and managers and inspectors, with a loss of promotion, if not of position. How can we expect the right kind of teacher under such conditions? The better type is largely eliminated. The subservient chiefly remain; while those who assert their independence pay a price they should never be called upon to pay. The power of the purse is again in evidence in the interests of Christianity. It is a case of Boloism in the schools. It buys the advocacy of one class, it bribes the sullen acquiescence of another, and it cows yet a third class into silence. Let us, to again quote Mr. Lloyd George, beware of Boloism in all its forms, and let us bear in mind that its political aspect is neither the only, nor the most dangerous, form of its activity.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Impetuous Lord."

ST. AUGUSTINE maintains that God is wholly everywhere, yet so that nothing contains the whole of him. The whole of God is in this room, but the whole of him is in every other room as well. According to this doctrine, nothing can be more absurd than the habit of praying for his presence. At religious meetings it seems to be taken for granted that the Lord is absent, for the burden of every prayer is, "Come to us, O God," or "Make thy presence felt." In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine gives expression to the unreasonableness of many of the petitions addressed to Heaven. He says: "And how shall I call upon my God, my God and Lord? For in truth when I call upon him I call him to enter into me.....Why then do I pray that thou shouldest enter into me seeing that I also am? For I should not be, if thou wert not in me." In an article entitled "The Impetuous Lord" in the *Christian World* for November 15, the Rev. Herbert Brook says that some Christians do not need to look forward to the second coming of Christ because they "are thrilled, subdued, solemnized, by the deep conviction and experience that he is already here. The prospect of our Lord's future advent is an alluring vision, but the certainty of his contemporary presence is a living, fruitful, working faith." And yet Mr. Brook himself appears to ignore this alleged truth in this very article. He assures us that "many of our painters and artists are obsessed with the idea of Christ's presence in our midst." He thinks that this is specially the case with pictures painted during the War:—

> In one scene Christ stands near the young widow who has lost her young husband in battle—and their sturdy boy is playing unconcernedly on the bed. In another, he is near to the young lad lying dead in the trench—with his face upturned to the stars.....Such pictures are plentiful, and one feels that they would not be painted if they did not express and satisfy some deep conviction and experience in modern life.

Mr. Brooks singles Mr. H. G. Wells out as a man of letters who "is obsessed with an idea that is somewhat similar to that of the painters." He reads *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* in the light of Mr. Wells' later work, *God the Invisible King*, in which is expressed the author's faith in an ever-present Deity of some sort.

But later on in the article Mr. Brook forgets the Divine omnipresence, and speaks of the Lord's peripatetic habit. No other interpretation can be put on the following words: "Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for our God." Evidently the whole of Jehovah was not everywhere, and Mr. Brook is of opinion that the same limitation applies to the Christian God. He says:—

> What can we Christians do to help him in his work? Surely one great task is literally to prepare the pathways for the feet of our Lord.....They are the paths that Christ treads. Christ is to be met on them, just as surely as the disciples met Christ on the lonely path leading to Emmaus.

The idea of helping God in his work is preposterous in the extreme. Surely if God existed he would require no help to do his work. Clergymen sometimes admit that he *could* do without their services well enough, but that in his infinite wisdom and mercy he had seen fit to confer upon them the honour of being his helpers. What is meant by preparing the ways of the Lord we are not told; but the fact that he is supposed to have ways shows that he is by no means omnipresent. Mr. Brook tells us that "Make his paths straight" would be more accurately rendered thus, "Make his paths easy to run on"; but he does not inform us what to make them easy

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to run on signifies, or how it can be done. From the new version, however, he draws the inference that the Lord is in a big hurry to accomplish his work:—

> What kind of Lord is he who treads these well-worn by-paths? Obviously an eager and impetuous Lord. Some people seem to think of the Divine One as always moving through the world with leisurely and unhurried tread.....We get the inspiring interpretation, "Make the well-worn by-paths easy to run on." Why should this be done? Because the paths must be prepared for the passing, not of a leisurely, slow moving, but an eager, impetuous Lord. Christ is eager to get there..... Is not that the true picture of our Lord—eager, impetuous, anxious to reach the sinful, the repentant, the bereaved, the lonely? Make his well-worn paths easy to run on—that is the duty of all modern Christians.

In a closing sentence Mr. Brook ventures to point out that we can make God's paths straight by doing the work which he alone is usually supposed to be able to perform. We are called upon to blast national or individual sins into fragments by the dynamite of righteous denunciation and to awaken indifferent churches out of their lethargy. In other words, we must set a disjointed world right before the Lord can come to us. Furthermore, "here are ourselves, cold, hard, cynical, unbelieving—always standing in the way of the eager advance of an impetuous Lord—let us get off the path." When we shall have done the work, then God will appear and receive all the glory.

The portrait of God presented to us in Mr. Brook's article is by no means a flattering one. He is at once omnipresent and a traveller; omnipotent and yet dependent upon us. The whole of him is everywhere, and yet there are paths along which he moves. He is eager, impetuous, anxious to reach the sinful, the repentant, the bereaved, the lonely, and yet after nineteen centuries of his so-called redeeming career the world is still groaning under its sin and misery. The only inference we can intelligently make is that, like King Arthur and his Round Table, he and his salvation are merely the creation of the religious imagination. It is delightfully easy to talk and write about him with the utmost cocksureness; but not one of his official representatives has ever adduced the slightest evidence of his objective existence. They pray to him; they claim to be his spokesmen, delivering messages entrusted to them by him; whilst nominally giving him the credit for all their accomplishments, they hold him responsible for all their blunders and failures; but they have not a single shred of proof that he exists at all. The work they do is his; it is his cause that they have at heart, and the money they collect is for him. Ministers often excuse themselves for begging so pressingly for liberal contributions, on the ground that it is the Lord who needs them. Now, there are people who verily believe that all religious work is the Lord's and that the money spent in carrying it on is money given to the Lord; but ministers not a few are fully aware of the hypocritical character of all such representations. They know only too well that the Church has never been what she pretends to be, and that what she calls God's work is wholly her own. As already stated, the Church and her work are of such a nature and on such a scale that the Christian God, if he existed, could not think of them except with infinite shame. The only possible conclusion is that the Christian God is a myth, and that the Church is an exclusively human institution. Mr. Brook's "impetuous Lord" has never made his appearance, and his anxiety to reach and save mankind is an empty dream of the pulpit. Had he been a living reality there would have been no need of the Church and her ministrations. He would have done the work himself with complete success. The pulpit has been necessary simply because of the absolute powerlessness of the supernatural. The need for preaching testifies to the non-existence of the Holy Ghost.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Genius of "George Sand."

> Authors who have influence are merely those who express perfectly what other men are thinking; who reveal in people's minds ideas or sentiments which were tending to the birth.
> —*Joseph Joubert.*

Among the cheap reprints of the works of the French classic authors it is doubtful if there has been one that is more satisfactory than the fine edition of some of the works of "George Sand," which has been issued by the enterprising house of Messrs. George Bell & Co. Beautifully printed, and finely illustrated, these books form a welcome addition to any bookshelf.

Literary reputations are set up and demolished with such provoking rapidity, that it is pleasant to turn to a really great writer who is beyond the reach of the journalistic turmoil of the day. Long ago, Sainte-Beuve, the prince of critics, placed "George Sand" at the head of the then living French writers. How far "George Sand" deserved the exact place indicated by the foremost of French critics we cannot venture to determine, but her name has since been inscribed among the Olympians.

The life-story of Amantine Dupin, better known by her pen-name of "George Sand," is a veritable romance. She was a descendant of the famous Marshal Saxe, a natural son of Augustus of Poland, and one of the bravest of Marlborough's companions-in-arms. Little Amantine was brought up by a grandmother, and a tutor who held Voltairean views; consequently, she was left with no religious teaching at all during her early years. Some stories, impartially told her, of Jupiter and Christ, and other mythical personages, were all the theology that she remembered at this time. At the age of ten, with the precosity of genius, she had invented a god of her own, but this deity was dethroned as she grew older. Unfortunately, the young girl was sent to a convent school at Paris to complete her education. The Christian superstition was there presented in its most winning form by the nuns, who adapted themselves to her highly imaginative and sympathetic nature.

After two years' pressure the poor girl succumbed, and was on the verge of spoiling her life by taking the veil. Her grandmother became seriously alarmed, and removed the girl not a moment too soon. The nuns had done their work only too well, and Mdlle. Dupin's faith and her wish to renounce a life of which she was wholly ignorant, persisted long after the gates of the convent had clanged behind her.

She was not like other girls, however. Her mind was too virile to be permanently affected by priests' opium. Recovery came slowly, but surely. Her first shock came from reading Chateaubriand's *Genie du Christianisme*, a book, unwittingly, recommended by her unsuspicious confessor. She found the ideas so antagonistic to her preconceived views founded on the *Imitatio Christi*, that she was led finally to doubt the truth and unity of a religious system which could thus be expounded in two different senses. She then glided gently and imperceptibly into Freethought.

Family troubles supervened. Her grandmother died, and her home was broken up. Her father's family was alienated by her mother's relations. Her mother, who should have been her best friend, proved to be the worst guardian possible to such a girl. In her pitiable distress, deserted by her own kindred, Mdlle. Dupin committed

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the great mistake of her life. A few years before she had, by the help of her sceptical grandmother, escaped from the life-long imprisonment of a convent. Her wise old counsellor was now dead, and she wrecked, unknowingly, her life on a marriage of convenience. Only eighteen years of age, troubled and lonely, she allowed Baron Dudevant to persuade her that he would be a true friend, and, in an evil moment, she married him. She never loved him, and he never loved anybody but himself. He got drunk, kept low company, and was a beast. He found his wife's cleverness a nuisance. After nine years of torture, after the agony of a miserable marriage, the unhappy wife procured a judicial separation and the custody of her two children. During these wretched years her eyes opened. She lost her trust in a vague optimism. Like Candide, she was disillusioned by the logic of facts.

Her first novel, *Rose et Blanche*, was published as the work of "Jules Sand"; but she used her famous pen-name of "George Sand" on the publication of *Indiana*. From this time she continued to write an immense number of works, which reflect the strange shifts of her life. *Lelia*, and other novels, reveal the tumult and revolt that mark her early years in Paris. *Consuelo*, *Spiridion*, and many another volume show her engaged with political, philosophical, and religious speculation. *Elle et Lui* and *Lucrezia Floriani* are the outcome of her relations with Alfred de Musset and Chopin. The calm of her later years is reflected in *La Petite Fadette*, *Francois le Champi*, and other charming studies of rustic life.

As a novelist, "George Sand" is inferior to Balzac. Her stories are too didactic to be perfect. Novels with a purpose have been effective and, at the same time, artistic. Voltaire, whose swift, live pen was always wielded in the service of liberty, wrote many masterpieces filled with propaganda. His *Candide*, in spite of its obvious purpose, remains the wittiest book in the world. Rousseau, who flamed his social views over the civilized world, influenced men through the medium of prose fiction. In a lesser degree this is true of Bernardin de St. Pierre, Chateaubriand, and even Charles Dickens.

"George Sand," aiming at the same power, almost overloads her stories with masses of reverie. Her language is beautifully rich and pure, and her sentences melodious and full. She never runs her thoughts to death, but leaves the reader at the end of one of her opulent sentences, with plenty of food for future thought. Especially is this noticeable in *Spiridion*, in which she openly attacks the Christian superstition; and in *Consuelo*, which treats of the rights of women.

A great woman, "George Sand," is free from the effusive egoism so common with Continental writers. There was something of the Stoic in her nature, and she soared above the uneasy vanities of her contemporaries. Indifferent to luxury and fame, she did her work bravely. Intellectuals welcome in her a sister, not silenced by the terrors of theology, or limited by the bonds of conventionalism; but capable of pioneer work in life.

A woman of this stamp, like our own "George Eliot," must be judged charitably. With all the inevitable drawbacks of her womanliness, this gifted woman fought the battle for Freedom. It was a warfare not without scars; with rallyings on the stricken field; with its moments of triumph. If her works exhibit this warfare and this perplexity on too many eloquent pages, we judge with the forbearance springing from that larger wisdom which tempers justice with sympathy. Her first claim on us is, indeed, genius; but we should be hardly less interested in the record of a woman born of that heroic temper to which, after life-long recognition of the vanity of vanities, Liberty never waxed old, nor Love failed of its loveliness.

MINNERMUS.

The Everlasting Hills.

II.

THE destructive snow and ice-slips are, however, mild visitations in comparison with other evils which befall the Alpine folk. Rocks may at any moment come rattling down in bomb-like fashion, or the entire side of a mountain may crash into the valleys, occasioning far-flung ruin. This form of landslip is termed the Bergfall, and all the Alpine countries bear sorrowful witness to its capacity in spreading desolation and woe. In Roman times the ancient city of Velleja was blotted out by the sudden crumbling of the mountain of Rovinazzo, and there is little evidence that any of the population escaped injury and death. Taurentum was overwhelmed in the sixth century, A.D., by falling rocks. The waters of Lake Geneva are still strewn with the mountain fragments then hurled into them. The dwellers throughout the Alpine regions have been the victims of many hundreds of such bergfalls within the historical period. Happy and prosperous villages, and immense tracts of cultivated land have been swept away. Streams have been diverted from their beds, and new lakes have arisen. Once smiling valleys remain as pitiful spectacles of utter desolation. For the second time Rossberg collapsed in 1806, when a wet summer having saturated the underlying clay, the mountain broke away. In the words of Hutchinson:—

> The part which fell was about three miles long and 350 yards wide and 33 yards thick. In five minutes one of the most fertile valleys in Switzerland was changed to a stony desert. Three whole villages, six churches, 120 houses, 200 chalets or stables, 225 head of cattle, and much land were buried under the ruins of Rossberg; 484 persons lost their lives.

The sudden collapse of Monte Conto in 1618 proved even more disastrous, when 2,400 people were entombed in the debris. Every effort to save the victims was useless, for all that could be recovered consisted in a few mangled corpses and the bell of the village church. To these happenings may be added the earthquakes which occur more frequently in highland regions than elsewhere.

The apparently frozen pinnacles are not destitute of organic forms. Plants and animals have admirably adapted themselves to their Arctic environment. Much as we see the crocus and the snowdrop timidly peeping above the softening snow during winter's stern reign, so do blooms of most exquisite beauty make themselves a home on the storm-lashed hills. Alpine shrubs and blossoms are diminutive when contrasted with those that thrive in more genial surroundings, but this in no way detracts from their loveliness. Temperature has much to do with the proportions of plants. As we journey northwards in Europe the monarchs of the woodlands dwindle in size until they ultimately shrink to mere shrubs and shrublets. It is stated that the dwarf willow, which extends to the Arctic regions, becomes so tiny that seven perfect trees may be placed on the page of an octavo volume.

Alpine flowers flourish on the fringes of the splendid forests which rise above the fertile valley lands. They grow in multitudinous masses on the sloping pastures, thus adding to the splendour of the landscape. They emblazon the emerald grasses with their glowing colours, while still higher, where the turf no longer grows, the flowers find a refuge in nooks and crannies, and even adorn the edges of the glaciers as they bud and blossom at their appointed season. Probably all these flowering plants would perish were they not protected from the terrible winter frosts by their warm mantle of snow. The more delicate forms are preserved during severe seasons

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by lying concealed under the snow throughout the year while patiently awaiting more favourable times. An extraordinary diversity of vegetable life dwells on the mountains, and the Alpine floras present us, at some altitude or other, with miniature representatives of almost every plant-type native to the temperate and northern climes. Among plants selected for special mention are the

> tiny orchids quite as interesting in their way as those from the tropics; liliputian trees, and a tree-like moss branching into an erect little pyramid as if in imitation of a mountain pine; ferns that peep cautiously from narrow rocky crevices as if clinging to the rocks for shelter from cold blasts; bulbous plants from lilies to bluebells; evergreen shrubs, perfect in leaf and blossom and fruit, yet so small that one's hat will cover them.

The climate of the lower southern slopes and openings of the Alpine valleys is more propitious than that of the plains of Lombardy. There the evergreen oak flourishes, and the wild olive ripens its fruits. Other spots enjoying a sunward aspect are, unfortunately, exposed to the cold mountain blasts, and although their plant population is extensive, only the most hardy perennials can withstand the severity of the winter. The vine is widely cultivated in higher regions than the olive. The olive thrives on the lowest slopes, while the tougher vine grows vigorously on the higher levels. Vineyards abound among the Alps, and even in their northern regions splendid grapes are ripened at a considerable height where the vines are protected from the nipping and eager winds. The vine has apparently adapted itself to the bitter Alpine winters, and it almost invariably resists a temperature which proves fatal to it in warmer climes.

In the upper regions, where the vine grows indifferently, various cereals are extensively sown. This zone also coincides with the area of trees whose leaves are shed as winter approaches. Our deciduous trees, such as the beech, the ash, and the oak, mingle in the woods and forests; but in the Alps these plants seldom grow in company. Still, the Alpine areas in which deciduous trees thin out and disappear represent fairly accurately the beginning of the arctic girdle of the hills. This frigid region varies in altitude, but its average may be reckoned at about 4,000 feet above sea level on its northern side, while it rises to 5,500 feet on the southern slopes, for these are favoured with warmer air currents and an ampler supply of sunshine. In the Austrian Alps beech forests flourish, but in other Alpine districts the woodlands are merely a shadow of their former glory. Much of their timber has been utilized for building, and numerous forests have been uprooted to prepare the soil for pasture and mown crops. In some places the scenery is almost Scottish, for the pine and Scotch fir now stand on sites once occupied by the oak and beech. The mountain goats ravage the saplings of the beech and oak, but the pines and firs prove less vulnerable to the attacks of these animals. The dwarf pine figures prominently on heights to which other trees do not climb. The peasantry are alive to the fact that the mountain forests not only exercise a beneficent influence on rainfall and climate, but also serve as a barrier against the baleful powers of the vernal avalanche. The destruction of trees is viewed with aversion; the felling of timber in certain forests is sternly forbidden; while, where it is permitted, timber cutting is very carefully supervised by the authorities.

In the upper Alpine retreats peculiar plants live, and some of these thrive even above the permanent snowline. Yet the rhododendron, willow, and other familiar friends display their dwarfed forms in this frigid habitat. Chalets are met with in Piedmont at a height of 8,500 feet, and plants are quite numerous 1,000 feet higher. Below these great altitudes many strange and beautiful growths bloom in sheltered spots, and derive their moisture from the streamlets leaping from the melted snow. Giant anemones, sky-blue gentians, asters, daisies, primulas, forget-me-nots, saxifrages, poppies, solandellas, the edelweiss, and countless other floral gems flourish in such sweet profusion that a glorious flower garden gladdens the eye and refreshes the mind. Even on the very heights themselves, where glacial conditions prevail, in retreats free from snow and ice, where a modicum of soil and moisture is at hand, various species of flowering plants bloom at an altitude of 11,000 feet. Most of these vegetable organisms are arctic in character, and date from the Great Ice Age. From foothill to mountain-top, in one zone or another, most modes of floral life are encountered. There we meet the "Tree for the builder's yard—flowers for the bride's chamber—corn for the granary—moss for the grave."

The rocky retreats of the Alps provide a refuge for several large mammals now rare elsewhere in Western Europe. The urus, which roamed through the forests of prehistoric times, has long since passed away in company with the marsh-hog and many other animals. The wild boar lingers, and the black and brown bears tremble on the brink of extinction in the Tyrol, and perhaps in the Jura mountains. The black bear plunders the crops, while the brown variety is a serious enemy to the sheep and goats. The wolf survives in several secluded Alpine areas, but his doom is certain. This fierce and intelligent beast devours any kind of flesh available, but the domesticated animals form its favourite prey. Only in the depth of winter, when driven by hunger, will the Alpine wolf venture near the habitations of man. The crafty fox is common, but he carefully shuns observation. The sheep-stealing lynx is now rare, but the wild cat continues to lead a precarious existence in the more remote regions. The streams and lakes have their otter residents, while the weasel, stoat, and polecat wage war upon the poultry. The beaver is probably extinct, but the squirrels are abundant. Mountain hares are few, but rabbits are very numerous. The active chamois ranges throughout the Alps, but its numbers sadly decline. The steinbok, recently so common, is now confined to certain spots, where it is preserved. The roe, the fallow, and red deer, once so familiar in the Swiss and French Alps, are now rarely seen there, although they are still found in the Austrian and Bavarian highlands. The bearded vulture—the lammergeier, a rapacious bird of prey, originally widely distributed—now only persists in the least frequented mountains. Normally a carrion feeder, this fierce bird appears to prefer living prey, and will attack wild or domesticated animals with equal impartiality. The golden eagle, ten or a dozen species of owls, and other carnivorous birds abound, while game birds are plentiful, and the smaller songsters are well in evidence. Most of the tarns and lakes contain fine fresh-water fish, the trout and pike being remarkably large. Reptile life is poorly represented, but the common frog is extraordinarily abundant in the Rhone valley. Snakes, including a couple of adders, are not unknown. Among insects, moths and butterflies are richly represented, and various magnificent species rare in Britain are ubiquitous in the Alps. An Alpine tour has therefore been recommended to the collector as affording the fullest opportunity presented in temperate regions for the exercise of his art.

(To be continued.) T. F. Palmer.

Give me liberty to know, to think, to believe, and to utter freely, according to conscience, above all other liberties.—*Milton.*

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Priests and Politics.

THERE is an opinion abroad that the political power of the priest is, if not dead, moribund, and it is well that Freethinkers should have their attention drawn to the significant appearance of the priest in various quasi-political guises, the more especially as these are such as to mislead effectively the ordinary citizens who, having left school with a bias that what priests do is honourable and that what newspapers print is above suspicion and therefore requires no analysing, is neither inclined nor, if inclined, energetic enough to draw original conclusions. Such a one cannot admit the failure of Christianity because he has not been taught so; cannot admit the loss of liberty because he does not see the chains; cannot believe that religion is still intolerant because the fires of Smithfield are not burning. It is this "healthy stupidity" which makes the work of the pioneer so difficult as almost to exhaust his patience.

Bismarck saw the uses to which religion might be put when he encouraged the Roman Catholic Church in Germany that he might—as an inelegant phrase has it—"dish the Socialists." Although he did not succeed completely in his project, yet this move rendered their propaganda more difficult of accomplishment and at the same time fostered a recognition of the need for respectability, by which all revolutionary tendency was effectively damned. A cloak for hypocrisy, an ogre for fainthearts, a refuge for the weak and an excuse for folly, respectability is a brake which politicians and parsons apply to the wheels of an energetic progressive movement.

As one can examine dispassionately a cause operating in a foreign country, whilst the same examination conducted with regard to this country would have to surmount not only the ordinary difficulties inherent in the problem but the greater difficulties interposed by prejudice, it might be as well to call to remembrance the political power of the priest in Russia aud the reactionary tendencies of the Orthodox Church. We are reminded of the evil effects of priestly control by a criticism of *The Fall of the Romanoffs*, in which it is stated that Russian aristocratic circles held the view that the security of that country lay in the *invulnerability of Czarism with its powerful religious sanction*. When we remember that Czarism stands for political repression, serfdom, vodka, ignorance, and Siberia, we recognize what a meet husband Religion has clasped to her bosom. It is rather curious that in the same paper in which the criticism of *The Fall of the Romanoffs* appeared should be published the summary of a speech by Professor Russell, before the Medical Guild, in which he said that he had too great an admiration for, and appreciation of, what Christianity and Christian Ethics had done for the English-speaking people to yield to the proposal that voluntary hospitals should be abolished. Why Christianity should be for the benefit of English-speaking peoples and in the same age should support such a soul-destroying institution as Czarism is not very apparent.

Priests, however, even in English-speaking countries, are taking steps to ensure that their political power will be wielded, whether for the general welfare or not, is a matter upon which there is little doubt. It probably was overlooked by many Freethinkers that there were a number of priests at the Sinn Fein Conference held in Dublin, and that at least three spoke. The most amazing suggestion came from a priest. It was that the Conference should constitute itself a constituent assembly! The president sat severely upon him by pointing out that the Conference had no power to do that, as that power rested with the Irish people.

We cannot see that priests have any reason for attending a Sinn Fein Conference, unless it be that, fearful that the Irish people will fall away from the Church as the result of an enlightened educational policy which must follow so soon as Irish political aspirations for political autonomy are fulfilled, and that people concentrate on removing from its life such evils as at present sicken it, they must needs do anything which will discredit any movement which might result in domestic peace. Had the Conference accepted the suggestion, the feeling of the Sinn Feiners can better be imagined than described. It would have been the French Convention over again, and the resulting political turmoil would keep men's minds off the question of religious domination.

That religion should have become national, instead of remaining international, as it was intended to be by the early Church, is a problem which has suggested itself to many. We know how actively ministers of religion, both in allied and enemy countries, supported the idea of war, and how, in those countries where voluntary enlistment obtained, they were active workers in recruiting campaigns. From this it is obvious that the opinions of those in charge of a Church are such as obtain general acquiescence in the nation to which they belong and in which they usually work. In political matters such steps have to be taken as will obtain the greatest benefit to the form of religion which chances to be supreme, and each step tends to render that Church more susceptible to national opinion. It is, therefore, necessary that that opinion should not be inimical, with which purpose in view we find priests of all denominations on the School Boards, fighting tooth and nail for the retention of the Bible in schools, and, where they find an indifferent electorate, attempting to bind posterity to perpetuating Biblical teaching by putting denominational schools under public control. It is, perhaps, insidious quasi-political action such as this which requires watching. The general public does not look ahead: to it the future means nothing. No greater duty devolves upon Freethinkers than that of educating the public to inquire closely into all the suggestions of priests, as these, even though apparently of temporary effect, may have such an aftermath as to make shudder all who look upon freedom as the birthright of man.

JOHN MCMILLAN.

The Book of the Words of Americus the Prophet. 1917.

1. The words of Americus the son of Americ which he spake in the ears of the people:

2. List unto me ye children of the earth, give ear while I show you the folly of your ways and doings.

3. For behold the cunning men have got you in their toils, and the men of Belial, yea, the sons of the strange women triumph over you.

4. And ye say wherein have the cunning men obtained the mastery over us, and in what manner do the men of Belial triumph over us?

5. Verily I say unto you, that inasmuch as ye are satisfied with your state of life; insomuch are ye stumbling blocks to your own progress, evolution, and happiness.

6. For if ye would inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, ye must make it for yourselves.

7. And, moreover, if ye desire a double portion thereof (as do the priests) ye must make it for yourselves, on earth.

8. But some men will say, What know ye of the Kingdom of Heaven; and who hath enlightened thee as to life after death?

9. Hearken unto me ye children of men, Listen to the words of Americus the son of Americ.

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10. I know not, and no man knoweth, the secret of the grave. No soul returneth from the other side of the river of death.

11. For death hath been, for ever, the greatest marvel of life; the King of Terrors; the Stock in Trade of all who profit by the ignorance of their fellow-men.

12. For behold the ignorance that pertaineth to death goeth back to the beginning of life upon the earth. Yea, and man knoweth no more thereof than the beasts of the field.

13. Science toucheth it not, and study taketh not away the veil which hideth it. Priests and prophets are alike unacquainted with it.

14. Wherefore, O man, take thy soul unto thine own keeping. Search for wisdom and learn the ways of life, but leave thy death and destiny in the hands of the Allwise.

15. For he speaketh not into the ears of men. His silence is as the silence of the Stars. No man hath seen him at any time, and none has heard his speech.

16. No archbishop, nor archdeacon, hath heard his voice, No Pope nor Nonconformist hath seen his face.

17. Neither did Moses the lawgiver, as he hath himself declared.

18. Then how cometh it that men claim a knowledge of his thoughts and desires, his jealousy, his vengeance, his dark designs for punishment of evildoers?

19. Are not the men who profit by this doctrine more sinful than the sinners?

20. Doth not the little chapel minister receive £5 per week for explaining the mysteries?

21. Lo! he is clothed in comfort, and fareth sumptuously. He hath a bath-room and a library, a study, and a with-drawing-room.

22. He urgeth the working-man to be content, and unto him that hath but little he saith: Ye shall receive the balance due when ye shall be dead.

23. This hath been the teaching of the priests for many generations; yea, for many centuries; and the people murmur not.

24. They walk in darkness and do reverence to the priesthood, yea, they are astonished at their knowledge and respectability.

25. They call upon them when they marry, and when they die. They pay them fees, and bring their little ones to be admitted to the Church.

26. With their guidance the world has gone astray. We have heard the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war, the terror that flyeth by night.

Acid Drops.

The German advance into Italy gives God another chance to work a miracle, and incidently an opportunity for Mr. Bottomley to advertise it. The Campaniles, those slender towers which are so conspicuous a feature of Italian landscapes, are in danger—some in process of destruction. Serving as they may for observation posts and target directors, both sides, Italian and German, are compelled to remove them. There is, therefore, going on what military correspondents have well called a "massacre of Campaniles." Hence the opportunity for a miracle. And it would be quite easy for "Providence" to either divert the shell or upset calculations—that is, if Providence really cared about the matter.

A decree *nisi* was granted in the Divorce Court to a driver in the R.F.A., owing to the misconduct of his wife with a W. W. A. Phillips, superintendent of a Sunday-school. No moral this time.

The Bishop of London complains that young men leaving public schools seem "to have no enthusiasm about the Church." Why should they? If the Bishop of London could only see it, he might find the explanation close at hand. How could any decently educated and intelligent young man feel any enthusiasm about a set of doctrines that are not worth the paper they are printed on, or a set of religious leaders that are monuments of opportunism and intellectually inefficient?

When journalists drop into theology, they usually distinguish themselves. Referring to the victory at Gaza, the *Star* opened a leading article with the words: "Since the first of war correspondents wrote the Book of Joshua." As God is popularly supposed to be the author of the Bible, it follows that our contemporary regards the Deity as a journalist. Which, as old Euclid says, is absurd.

The *Daily Express* printed a bold headline, "Archbishop as Labour Leader." It referred to a soft-soapy speech made by the Archbishop of York in the House of Lords on the question of labour unrest. Why is the Church displaying so much zeal in wooing the working man? "Aye, there's the rub."

Cosmo Gordon Lang, who is posing as the friend of labour, lives in a palace, and has a modest income of £10,000 yearly. He should be an authority on the blessings of poverty.

The War does not appear to benefit Christianity. "Religion," says the *Star*, "was never at so low an ebb, so openly repudiated, or, what is worse, so travestied by charlatans and blackguards." The latter remark seems to be a sly dig at some journalistic Christians.

The holding of the Lord Mayor's show and banquet this year has been described as an "expensive and possibly dangerous farce." Among those present at the banquet were the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London.

The Bishop of Norwich writes in the *Sunday Times* on the question of education. In the course of a couple of columns he succeeds in saying very little about education, but does succeed in showing his professional interest in the subject. His great concern is for religious instruction, and not that alone, but for religious teachers.

> We are not drawing a sharp line between the religious training to be given in the Church schools and the Council schools. It is our wish that the religious instruction in both kinds of schools should be efficient, and this will not be the case unless the religious education is in the hands of those who believe and care, and all the teachers of religion have had satisfactory preparation.

If that means anything, it means that none but teachers who believe in religion are to be employed in our schools. There will be religious tests, and the non-religious will be eliminated. We quite agree that there is a certain amount of reason in the Bishop's contention—if religion is retained in the schools. But we hope that one result of reconstruction after the War will be to leave religion to the clergy and to the parents, who alone should be responsible for its inculcation.

Already the Food Controller has knocked the stuffing out of the Christmas pudding, and if our lords and governors get their way, the Merry Birthday of the Man of Sorrows will be a fast-rather than a feast. This will affect adversely the ancient association between godliness and gluttony.

An advertisement in an Essex paper states that the Vicar of South Benfleet is prepared to offer £28 yearly for the services of a church organist. Does he want a Christian martyr as well as a musician?

Miss Rebecca West, writing in the *Daily News*, says we "must cease to think of Charles the Second as 'the merry monarch,'" and learn to think of him as "our only king with sufficiently mental movement to indulge in religious speculation." If this modern Solomon is the most intellectual of British monarchs, it does not say much for the others.

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In an illuminating article on the Sinn Fein Movement by Mr. Arnold Bennett, the following significant sentence occurs: "There are priests who remain in the movement chiefly in order to keep the movement in order." This remark is true of other political organizations.

It is curious that Christians should be so reluctant to admit Thomas Paine's undoubted gifts as a writer. For a century he has been abused, and yet his written words still have vitality. Recently the *Daily News*, in an impressive editorial on the Russian crisis, quoted Paine's vigorous phrase concerning an earlier revolution as the times that "try men's souls."

The British Government has recognized Zionism, and this has provoked a very witty remark from the *Jewish Chronicle* that the Jewish people will become "a nation, and not a hyphenation."

Mr. S. P. Willis, a member of the well-known Bristol family, has published a pamphlet on *Teetotalism, Arrested, Examined, and Exposed*. In dealing with Paul's advice to Timothy, he says:—

> We need not dwell long on the advice of Paul to Timothy to "take a little Wine for thy stomach's sake" and his often infirmities. How was it Paul recommended Wine? He was not a doctor! He was giving advice to one too abstemious, and he desired him to take a little stimulant. What would have been the benefit of liquor of grapes or grape juice? Why, he might as well have advised him to take jams, jellies, lollypops, and treacle. No mother would give these to a sick child with a weak stomach. Paul's advice shows there must have been Wine which did good to a weak stomach, and to take it was no sin in his judgment.

We do not know whether Mr. Willis has read Mr. G. W. Foote's *Bible and Beer*, but we are sending him a copy. And we take this occasion of commending that pamphlet to all our readers who are desirous of seeing how far Christianity supports teetotalism. The published price is one penny, and some good propagandist work might be done with it just now.

The latest appeal for cash of the Salvation Army is on behalf of "the refugees of North Italy." We had the idea that the Italians mostly belong to an older and more respectable religious organization.

Sabbatarians are busy taking advantage of the national preoccupation with the War. At Wareham, Dorset, five Army officers have been fined for shooting game on a Sunday. When will these Christians realize that they are living in the British Empire, and not in Ancient Judæa?

American papers state that Harry Lauder is speaking and singing on behalf of the Young Men's Christian Association. Billy Sunday and other Transatlantic revivalists will be pleased.

Bishop Welldon sneered recently at Spiritualist mediums receiving money for their services. This provoked an answer from the Rev. G. V. Owen, of Warrington, who said the "Christian ministry go to the length of foretelling the future, of groups as of individuals, of wicked as of good. I have heard Bishop Welldon do this most eloquently, in public and unashamed, and I believe that, in payment for such good service, to use an old phrase, his hand is crossed with silver."

The dear Bishop of London says that "there was no more religious body of men in the country than our public school masters." Exactly! But so many of these gentlemen are clergymen.

There are moments, says the *Daily News*, commenting on the Bishop of London's utterances on the divorce question, "when he appears to rival the prophet Habakkuk and to be capable of anything. It is a great pity in all seriousness that such grotesque utterances should be allowed to proceed as the considered opinions of a distinguished ecclesiastical dignitary. Rank blasphemy would be a less grave occasion to the enemy than such humourless and almost indecent lack of sense." Very strong for the pious *Daily News*, but not undeserved.

The Sunday papers are not entirely given to religion. The *Sunday Pictorial* says: "The Bible tells us how Samson carried the gates of Gaza. Now General Allenby has gone one better and carried the whole city."

Some of the newspapers have been getting highly indignant with Dr. Lyttleton, late Headmaster of Eton, for having said that newspapers were primarily commercial undertakings, and were mainly concerned with those things that make for increased circulation. But everyone knows this to be the cold truth. Why are certain classes of opinion boycotted in the press, if not because they would offend readers and so lead to a diminished circulation? It is not because editors always disagree with these opinions, often they are identical with their own. But they are dealing with a public that values independence of opinion less than anything else, and the aim of the successful newspaper editor becomes largely that of giving the readers what they want. They become a sounding-board for prejudice instead of a platform for the free expression of opinion. And it is surely the last word in smug hypocrisy to pretend that most newspapers are not commercial undertakings.

"Should the Parson Pay?" was the neat paraphristic heading to a report of the Rev. A. J. Waldron's dispute with a money-lender over payment of a promissory note for £100. In the end the Court decided that this parson should, with costs.

Sir Harry Johnson finds, in the course of a short article in *Reynolds*, a rather curious reason for recommending missionary activity amongst savages—non-European it should be said. Sir Harry admits that he "is not a believer in the phantasmagora" of the Churches, but he says: "A variety of religions tend to hamper human intercourse, and is among the reasons why the black races are uneducated." He thinks, therefore, that the missionaries by breaking down native religions make for civilization. There seems quite a nest of fallacies here. (1) We do not agree that the Africans are uneducated because they are religious. Primarily they are religious because they are uneducated. (2) Missionaries do not civilize in virtue of their religion; whatever civilizing influences follow are due to the secular and scientific developments that accompany them. And is there any need, save a commercial one, for the missionaries being there at all?

Intercession.

Oh, God in Heaven! cease thou to be dumb;
We crowd into thy Church this day with pride,
To pray that thou wilt beat our Army drum,
And beating, take thy stand upon our side.
Oh, put thine arm into the War with zest
(Our soldiers fight on Sundays at their best).

Stand thou aloof from all our enemies;
Help with the guns our foes to overthrow:
Slumber no more in peaceful Paradise;
Send all thy winds the wicked Zepps to blow;
Smash with thy power this military pest
(Our soldiers fight on Sundays at their best).

So, when the War at last is surely won,
And we once more assemble in thy Church,
We shall give thanks for all that thou hast done:
Oh, God! thou wilt not leave us in the lurch.
The Allies make thee here and now their guest
(Our soldiers fight on Sundays at their best).

ARTHUR F. THORN.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 25, Nuneaton; December 2, South Shields; December 9, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

G. J. GRASSIE.—After reading your letter, we are gratified at your thinking our leaflet on "The Massacre of the Innocents" "blasphemous, scornful, and derisive."

A. SPENCER.—Thanks. Came in quite useful.

W. H. QUINLIVAN.—Pleased to hear from a new reader, and still more pleased to know that you have been the means of introducing the paper to others. That is as it should be. The *Freethinker* is too good to keep to one's self.

W. R.—Received. Thanks.

TWO BROTHERS.—We very much appreciate your help in securing new readers. Pleased also to have your good opinion of our work.

E. A. MCDONALD (Johannesburg).—Your second donation to Fund safely received. The first was acknowledged in our issue for September 16. You will be pleased to learn that the outlook for Freethought is very cheering, and although the struggle is a hard one, it brings its own compensations. And there is much pleasure in a good fight in a good cause, and with the right kind of weapons.

H. MCLEOD.—The lecture was under the auspices of an Association of Continental Freethinkers in London.

(MRS.) A. ANDREWS.—We are pleased, but not surprised, to find that you so much enjoyed Mr. Lloyd's Glasgow lectures. Not to have done so would have been uncomplimentary to yourself. It is good to know that the *Freethinker* serves as a weekly stimulant.

PHOENIX.—It is good to find so many new readers—yourself among them—keenly interested in the paper, and bent on securing new readers.

G. MOORE.—You do not say in what way you think we can help you. We shall be pleased to do anything that lies within our power.

J. BREESE.—Paper sent as directed. Thanks.

MRS. TURNBULL (Glasgow).—Your many years' devotion to Freethought makes one proud of the Cause which can enlist such unselfish devotion. We hope to see you in the near future.

W. S. WHITE.—Naturally your soldier son was able to give you the reason—which, as you say, is a prosaic one—for the present position of the Virgin of Albert. But we are still waiting for Mr. Bottomley to own up. Shall be very pleased to see the portrait.

G. WEBB.—Of course, the belief that the human race is the aim and object of the universe is, scientifically, rubbish; but we have to deal with things as other people take them. We note your subscription is sent as "a thankoffering to Almighty God for having successfully piloted the *Freethinker* through these troublous times."

F. MARSON.—To send 4s. 4d. to the Sustentation Fund, being one penny per week for the year during which you have bought the *Freethinker*, is a quite nice form of "conscience money."

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

W. J. ROBINS.—Considerations of space and the nature of the subject—which is a little outside our scope—prevents our publishing your interesting communication.

F. W. LLOYD.—Yes, we have thought of reprinting. It is the paper trouble that is in the way. But we may surmount that in the New Year, if not before.

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"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

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This Fund is now closed.

Sugar Plums.

We close the Sustentation Fund in this issue with a total of £366 5s. 7d. The deficit of last year is quite wiped out, and a balance left to meet the recurring weekly loss. The response has been generous, and we beg to thank most heartily all who have contributed to the result. We have had ample evidence in the letters received of the affectionate esteem in which the *Freethinker* is held, and it is gratifying to note the number of new readers who have expressed their warm admiration of this journal. From the older readers we have been much encouraged by the many expressions of appreciation of all we have done, and of confidence in our judgment in the conduct of affairs. Some few of these letters we have given to our readers in these columns, but we value them all as a source of inspiration for the—we are afaid—very troublous times ahead. And so we press on with the courage born of a good cause, and a confidence desired from the whole-hearted support of our readers.

We cannot resist the temptation to publish the following letter which we hope we deserve—at least we have tried to deserve it:—

> Dear Mr. Cohen,—Mails just received, and I note from the *Freethinker* that the annual Sustentation Fund is on the carpet again. I therefore lose no time in sending you the enclosed draft for £5, as my contribution to the worthy cause. The £250 loss incurred during the past year is only really a flea-bite, which I feel sure your readers will easily and quickly make good.
>
> I do not think there is much chance of the *Freethinker* either "departing this life" or deteriorating in tone as long as you are in charge of it, and I hope that the time is not far distant when a man of your abilities will get a better respectable living wage out of the job than you at present appear to be getting.
>
> Since our late Editor died, you have done wonders—no one could have done more—and I only hope that you are looking after your health, to enable you to keep on with the good work for many, many more years yet.
>
> You are a business man as well as editor.
>
> Hoping you are in the best of health and with kindest regards, I remain, yours sincerely, G. F. DIXON.

To-day (Nov. 25) Mr. Cohen lectures twice in The Palace, Nuneaton. The afternoon meeting is at 2.45, evening at 6.30. Mr. Cohen is breaking new ground here, and it is hoped that all Freethinkers in the neighbourhood will make

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the occasion a special one. The meetings are being well advertised, and the intention is to start a Branch of the N. S. S. There should be no difficulty in doing this, or in starting a dozen new Branches in other places within the next few months.

There was a fine audience at Birmingham on Sunday last to listen to Mr. Cohen's lecture on "Do the Dead Live?" The address was followed with the closest attention, and frequent outbursts of applause. It is intended to continue the lectures, and we sincerely hope the Committee will receive the support of all local Freethinkers. The Repertory Theatre is centrally situated; it is a new and tastefully decorated building, and provided the proper amount of local help is given, the Movement in Birmingham should profit considerably by having its lectures in this place.

We were pleased to receive a letter the other day from Mr. R. H. Rosetti, who writes that he is fit and well, despite the unasked for and unwelcome attentions of "Fritz.":—

> The clerk of the weather still appears to have plenty of water on hand, and lavishes a good portion of it this side of the channel. God has apparently been with us on the Western Front, for we are slowly pushing ahead; but to appear strictly impartial, he has done a bit for Fritz on the Italian Front: so it gives both sides an opportunity of offering thanks.
>
> I notice dear old, but hypercritical England is to have the farce of a National Day of Prayer. With two or three hundreds of thousands of its young men killed, with countless war hospitals full of wounded, with the civil population struggling for the bare necessities of life, and being killed, injured, and harassed by bombs from enemy aircraft, God is to be asked for his guidance during the assumed last phase of the War, apparently along the same lines as the preceding phases.
>
> With the newly inspired Mr. Bottomley insisting on a Christmas peace, whilst the Church, whose inspiration is encrusted with age, intends on the first Sunday in the New Year to ask for God's guidance during the last phase of the War, one has a striking example of the value of inspiration, whether amatuer or professional, when weighed in the scales of common sense.
>
> Will you please remember me very kindly to all at home. I hope they are in the very best of health and spirits, despite the attentions of Fritz. Needless to say, I wish the same to yourself.

Freethinking friends residing in the neighbourhood of Goldthorpe, Bolton, or Thurnscoe, are cordially invited by the Committee of the new Goldthorpe Branch to attend the Branch meeting to-day, November 25. Further particulars can be obtained on application to the Secretary, Mr. Harold Austin, 2, Nora Street, Goldthorpe. For the time of meeting, etc., see Lecture Notice.

We are glad to hear that Mr. Lloyd had good meetings at Manchester last Sunday. The Secretary writes that the audiences were good and enthusiastic. There were plenty of questions and discussion, with a good sale of literature, and many applications for membership forms. The new Branch is working well, and bids fair to have one of the largest memberships in the country. Anyway, the Committee mean to get it if it is at all possible.

The *Daily Chronicle*, after holding out as long as it was able against an increase of price, has been compelled, despite a decrease in the number of pages, to advance from a halfpenny to a penny. Its reason is, it says, paper at 500 per cent. above pre-war prices, and a generally increased cost of production. We can appreciate the reason, and we count every month that we can keep the *Freethinker* unchanged in size and price as so much gain.

Mr. Cohen is booked for South Shields, and for the convenience of friends at a distance who may find it difficult travelling these nights, an afternoon meeting is being arranged. The meetings will be at 3 o'clock and 6.30. Will any friends interested in these meetings, and who feel themselves able to give assistance of any kind, please communicate with the Secretary of the Local Branch, Mr. R. Chapman, 6 Wenlock Road, Simonside, South Shields? Mr. Chapman will welcome suggestions as well as actual help.

The Bible and Immortality.

The Apocrypha.

We come next to the interval between the Old and New Testaments, in which we find a number of writings that are collectively called "the Apocrypha."

These apocryphal writings are the following: the books of Baruch and Judith, both relating to the time of Nebuchadnezzar; the history of Susanna, the Song of the Three holy children, and Bel and the Dragon, which are later additions to the book of Daniel; the Prayer of Manasses, which is referred to in 2 Chron. xxxiii.; the book of Tobit, a fictitious story of the exile in Babylon; an addition to the book of Esther; 1 Esdras, a later addition to the books of 2 Chronicles and Ezra; 2 Esdras, a pseudo-apocalypse; 1 Maccabees, which contains a history of the Jewish people under the tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes and for a generation later; 2 Maccabees, a work giving a more detailed account of the persecutions of the last-named Syrian monarch; the Wisdom of Solomon, a dissertation in praise of the works of God and the acquirement of wisdom; the book of Ecclesiasticus, containing no less than fifty-one chapters, of a similar character to the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

Of these writings, we find evidence of the belief in "eternal life" in three; namely, the Wisdom of Solomon, 2 Maccabees, and 2 Esdras. In none of the others is any such belief expressed or implied. In Ecclesiasticus, however, there are many passages which show that the writer did not share that belief. The following are examples:—

> Eccl. xvii. 27-30.—Who shall give praise to the Most High in *Hades*?.....Thanksgiving perisheth from the dead, as from one that is not: he that is in life and health shall praise the Lord.....For all things cannot be in man, because the son of man is *not* immortal.
>
> Eccl. xxxviii. 23.—When the dead is at rest, let his remembrance rest; and be comforted for him, when his spirit departeth from him.
>
> Eccl. xli. 3.—Fear not the sentence of death; remember them that have been before thee, and that come after; this is the sentence from the Lord *upon all flesh*.

The apocryphal books were nearly all written in Greek; we therefore find *Hades* employed instead of *Sheol*. We will now look at some of the passages in the three books mentioned which refer to a future life, commencing with the "Wisdom of Solomon." Speaking to "the ungodly," the writer of "Wisdom" says:—

> Wisd. i. 12-16.—Court not death in the error of your life; neither draw upon yourselves destruction by your works: because God *made not death*, neither delighteth he when *the living perish*: for he created all things that they might have being.....for righteousness is immortal. But ungodly men by their works and words *called death unto them*.....and they made a covenant with him (or it),

The ideas expressed in this passage were evidently those only of the writer himself, not of the people of his time. Of the latter, whom he calls "the ungodly," he says:—

> Wisd. ii. 1, 2.—For they say among themselves, reasoning not aright, Short and sorrowful is our life; and there is no healing when a man cometh to his end, and none was ever known that returned out of *Hades*. Because by mere chance were we born, and hereafter we shall be as though we had never existed.

These ungodly men, it will be perceived, showed far more sense than the godly writer, who appears to have been a religious crank standing almost alone amongst a rational people. His ideas of immortality will be seen in the following passages:—

> Wisd. iii. 1-8.—The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them. In the

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> eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died.....But they are in peace.....their hope is full of immortality. They shall judge nations, and have dominion over peoples, and the Lord shall reign over them for evermore.
>
> Wisd. iv. 7-11.—But a righteous man, though he die before his time, shall be at rest.....Being found well-pleasing unto God he was beloved of him, and while living among sinners he was translated: he was caught away lest wickedness should change his understanding, or guile deceive his soul.

Thus, according to the first passage, every godly man who obtained "eternal life" was to be a ruler of nations—that were then, or would be in the future, sleeping in Hades or Sheol. What a truly grand idea! It reminds us of the twelve apostles that were to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But how would it be if there were more godly men than nations or tribes? According to the second passage, the spirit of the righteous man did not, apparently, enter Sheol at all, but was prematurely "caught away" into heaven, lest he became ungodly if allowed to live long upon the earth.

Coming next to the book of 2 Maccabees, we find in chapter vii. an account of seven brothers who, with their mother, were all barbarously tortured and slain, one after the other, by order of Antiochus Epiphanes, because they refused "to taste swine's flesh" which had been offered in sacrifice—such being forbidden by the Jewish law. In this frightful drama all seven sons, as they were undergoing torture and mutilation, censured the king, who was present, and gave utterance to their hopes of a future life. The following are the last words of three of these martyrs:—

> 2 Macc. vii. 9 (second son): Thou, miscreant, dost release us out of this present life; but the King of heaven shall raise up us, who have died for his laws, unto an eternal renewal of life.
>
> 2 Macc. vii. 14 (fourth son): It is good to die at the hands of men and look for the hopes which are given by God, that we shall be raised up again by him; but as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection unto life.
>
> 2 Macc. vii. 36 (seventh son): For these my brethren, having endured a short pain that bringeth everlasting life, have now died under God's covenant; but thou, through the judgment of God, shalt receive in just measure the penalties of thine arrogancy.

These three young men would seem not to have known that no such promise of "eternal life" had ever been given by the "King of heaven." They might, however, have heard of the immortality taught by the writer of "Wisdom," or they might have imagined that as martyrs they deserved it.

We come, lastly, to the unhistorical book of 2 Esdras. In this work of fiction the writer, who calls himself Esdras, discusses matters relating to the future life of man with "the Most High," who replies to him by the mouth of an angel named Uriel. Foremost among the information which he thus received is the following statement respecting the last judgment:—

> 2 Esd. vii. 32-38.—And the earth shall restore those that are asleep in her, and the secret places shall deliver those souls that were in them. And the Most High shall be revealed upon the seat of judgment.....And the pit of torment shall appear, and over against it shall be the place of rest: and the furnace of Gehenna shall be shewed, and over against it the paradise of delight. And then shall the Most High say to the nations who are raised from the dead.....Look on this side and on that: here is delight and rest, and there fire and torments.

After hearing the foregoing conditions of the proposed "eternal life," Esdras pleads for more mercy to be shown to men, but without success. He then says he sees that "the world to come shall bring delight to few, but torments unto many"—a reflection which suggests the Gospel words "Many are called, but few chosen." The reason assigned by the Most High for the age-long torments about to be inflicted upon the ungodly of the human race are thus stated by the angel:—

> 2 Esd. vii. 72.—They that dwell upon the earth shall be tormented for this reason, that having understanding they have wrought iniquity, and receiving commandments have not kept them, and having obtained a law they dealt unfaithfully with that which they received.

The reference here is to the commands supposed to be given to the Jews by Moses in the Pentateuch—which were unknown to nearly all the other nations that were to be tormented for not keeping them.

We will now look at the three forms of belief respecting "eternal life" held by a small minority among the Jews in the period which preceded Christianity. The first of these is that found in the "Wisdom of Solomon." In this book a future life of peace and bliss was to be given only to "the righteous" of the Hebrew nation; all the remaining people—the so-called "ungodly"—were to lie in Hades for ever. The next form of eternal life is that of 2 Maccabees, in which those who gave up their lives by refusal to act contrary to the laws of Moses were to receive them again, and, presumably, were to live for ever—all the rest of the Hebrew nation, apparently, going to the land from which there was no return. The third form of "eternal life" is that described by Esdras, in which the whole of mankind were called up for judgment, after which a few thousands were to be conducted into a "paradise of delight," and the countless millions remaining were to be cast into a lake of fire. It was this last form of immortality, after it had been adopted by the primitive Christians, which has been handed down to our day.

But, it may be asked, whence did the writer of 2 Esdras get this inhuman doctrine? The answer is that he probably borrowed it from another work of fiction—the "Book of Enoch the Prophet"—which came into circulation among the Jews half a century before his time. This will be noticed in the next paper.

Abracadabra.

New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

VII.—The Rich, the Proud, the Poor, the Lowly.

Onwards the Pioneer and his band travelled to Jerusalem city, on one side of which was the Mount of Olives, and on another, a hill with a round top like a man's skull. Though it was yet miles away across the stony hills, Jesus spoke to the city:—

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you kill the prophets; you stone the pioneers. But how happy would I be to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings; but no! you refuse, you refuse; and your house shall be desolate!"

Crowds followed. He would often halt, and, to the multitude that sat on a hillside, as in an open-air theatre, he would tell his tales, or parables.

"None of you," said he, "not even the lowliest, need be lost. A shepherd who misses a sheep from his flock roams the hills till he discovers it, and he carries it home on his shoulders. A woman lights a candle when she has lost a piece of silver at night, and she searches till she finds it. So the King of Heaven will search for you, and the angels will be joyful when you are found."

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The crowd murmured their applause,—except the learned Lecturers and the Pharisees.

"A certain man had two sons," so Jesus went on. "The younger son was wild of spirit, and loved adventure. Having got from his father all the money and jewels the good-natured old man could spare, he left home, and took his journey into a far country. There he lived a gay life, spent his money freely, and at last had not a coin left; and just then, a famine brought woe and want to all the land. The spendthrift was obliged to labour as a pig-keeper, in order to earn a little bread. As he watched his grunting herd one day, out on the moors, he remembered the old home, the old days, the old father, and thought how even the slaves had plenty to eat, while he was perishing with hunger. He rose up, and tramped the weary way homewards. When he was yet a distance off, his father saw him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. The spendthrift, with breaking voice and tears, said he was not worthy to be called a son, but would work for his bread.....The old man would hear nought of such talk, but he bade the servants take off the spendthrift's rags, and give him shoes, a good robe, and a ring for his right hand; and before long the whole household was merry-making, eating a feast of roast veal, and tuning joyously on pipe and harp. But the elder son, coming from the plough-field, and learning how the good-for-nothing spendthrift was being feasted, was angry and would not come in".....

At this point in the tale, the common people could not help glancing at the Lawyers and the pious Make-believes.

"And the old father went out to beg him to enter; for it was a jolly time when a lost brother returned; the dead had, as it were, come to life again; the spendthrift was lost, and now was found."

The people all hung upon him, listening.

"There was a certain rich man," said Jesus,—

A great silence fell on the crowd. Not many rich folk were among them! They were a poor and lowly multitude. They were the "masses."

"His dress was white linen, and fine purple; and he fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who was laid at his gate, full of sores; and he very much desired to eat the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. The beggar died, and was carried by the angels to heaven, where he sat at meat on the seat next to Abraham, the patriarch; and he leaned on Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and the place he went to was the fire of hell, below; and from hell he looked up, and he saw the heavenly table, and the feast, and Lazarus. He cried to Father Abraham, and besought him to send Lazarus with water, if only to cool his parched tongue. Abraham replied that a wide pit yawned between heaven and hell, and none could cross the gulf. He reminded the rich man that the Poor Man had had a horrible time on earth, and he, the Rich Man, had had a very easy and delightful time; and now affairs had changed to the opposite. The rich man thought a few moments, and then put in a word for his five kinsmen, who were still enjoying a fat living on earth. Could not Lazarus take a message and warn these five gentlemen? To this Abraham answered No; for if they had sense to read the old books for themselves, instead of listening to make-believe Lecturers and Pharisees, they could find in the teachings of Moses and the Prophets that it was their duty to think of their neighbours. The rich man argued that surely they would repent, and change their selfish life if a man from the tomb came and spoke to them. But no; Abraham thought that that hard-hearted sort of person would not be moved, even though Lazarus rose from the dead."

"True, it is true," murmured the crowd of peasants, slaves, fish-picklers, fruit-pickers, and women whom none called "ladies."

Nearer to Jerusalem; nearer to the cross the Pioneer and Wonder-worker journeyed; and he was still passing through Samaria.

Ten men stood at a hundred paces from the road. A dreadful row of ten they were, ragged, with scant hair, with skins scarred and blotched by disease. They were lepers.

"Master, mercy!" all the ten shouted in chorus.

"All is well," he replied, "and you can now go to the priests to show that your skins are healed; and when the priests have spoken the sacred words, you will be able to go back to home and friends."

Nine of them rushed towards Jerusalem, hot-foot! One turned back, and raised a cry of joy, and he made a most reverent salaam to the Master of the jinn, and gave thanks.

He was a Samaritan.

Ten had been cleansed. Only one had the good heart—and good manners—to utter a word of gratitude.

At every step of the road, Jesus met the jealous lawyers and the Long-prayer Men. They hated to see him surrounded by the common villagers and working-class; yet they could not help listening to his tales and speeches. And here is a tale that stung them deep:—

"Two men," said Jesus, "went up to the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, the other a tax-collector, whom Scribes and Pious Ones despised as low-class fellows who squeezed money out of unwilling tax-payers. The Pharisee stood bolt upright, and exclaimed in a voice which the bystanders could hear: 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are—grabbers, unjust, adulterers, or such a cad as this tax-man! I fast twice in the week, I pay away to the priests Tenths of everything I possess.' The tax-man stood much farther from the Holy Altar than the Pharisee, for he was a modest and simple man; nor would he even lift his eyes skywards. He bent his head, and smote upon his breast, and said the few words: 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'"

The peasants and common townsfolk understood. They knew that the tax-man was genuine. He meant what he said. He did not pretend to be better than he really was. They loved him.

A very different way Jesus had with the children. Mothers and fathers brought little maids and lads for him to touch with kindly hands of blessing. In these small folk he saw no make-believe, no pretence, no vain and priggish airs.

The Apostles, however, snubbed the parents, thinking the Master of the jinn would not care to be bothered with infants. They were mistaken. He said,—

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God."

And, on the other hand, it was very difficult for wealthy men to enter that Kingdom. When a young man, who had large estates, was told to sell all that he had, and give the sale-money to the poor, and follow the Pioneer, he was sorrowful, and withdrew; for he could not give up his treasure. Then said Jesus,—

"It is easier for a camel to wriggle through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into the Kingdom of God."

* * * *

Anybody can see that the man who wrote the Gospel of *Luke* had a very low opinion of riches and rich men;

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and you see that his way of dealing with the selfish rich was to send them to the flames of Hades Below.

It may be worth while to note the good-humoured and smiling way in which the ancient Greeks expressed their scorn of the selfish rich. Their parable ran thus:

An Old Man of the Woods, pug-nosed, with bristle-hair, and goat-ears, wandered into the rose-gardens of rich Midas, King of Phrygia in Asia Minor. Servants seized the comic creature, tied him with rose-garlands, and led him to the King, who treated him with courtesy for ten days, and then took him back to his master, the god Dionysos.

"Well done," said Dionysos. "This is good of you, Midas. Ask of me any favour you like."

After thinking a short while, the King said,—

"Let all I touch turn to gold."

Yet he had heaps of treasure already!

The boon was granted. How charming! He touched grass, it changed to golden blades; trees became gold; the very stones were turned to nuggets. But, alas! when a meal was set before royalty, the gift appeared a misery. Who could drink gold? Who could eat it? Who could live on it? Who would not long to lose the fatal favour? And Dionysos, in pity and in laughter, bade Midas bathe in the stream of Pactolus, and wash away the beautiful, but horrible, spell! We are not surprised to hear that it was the same thick-headed Midas who said he thought the tootle of Pan's mouth-organ was more musical than the glorious sound of Apollo's seven-stringed lyre; whereupon Apollo gave Midas the ears of an ass. For there are some unhappy people who neither know the use of ears, nor the use of wealth.

F. J. Gould.

Correspondence.

GOD AND THE WAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Your correspondent, Mr. A. Russell, claims that God has been absolutely neutral during the present War. It is really very difficult to come to any other conclusion. We have witnessed so-called Christian nations killing and mutilating one another with all the weapons that science has put into their hands. These same Christian nations have been long praying to God to give them the victory, because they each claim that they are fighting for a just cause.

So far, we have seen victory resting with the big battalions, rather than with the half-trained crowds. The question is, What are we fighting about? The answer undoubtedly is, That we are fighting for the food that is in the world. We may call it "Economic Pressure," but it is really for the food that we are fighting.

The teachings of Christ and the early Christian Church do not appear to give any countenance to warfare, and the Christian religion is, on that account, quite at variance with the old Jewish religion, which undoubtedly spelt "Militarism" and the destruction of one's enemies.

The law of "The Struggle for Existence and Survival of the Fittest" rules the world, and so long as that law holds good, so long must we go on fighting, and shall continue to turn this fair world into a hell more awful than anything dreamt of by Dante. All the religions of the world have proved themselves to be but empty cymbals.

Our salvation lies in studying Nature's laws and their effects. The Book of Nature lies open before us, her writing is easy to decipher, and we should make it our business to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the lessons she teaches us.

C. Russell (Major).

MEN, MONEY, AND THE WAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I protest at the tone and temper of an article entitled "The Blank Wall" in your current issue. To sneer at the War Loan and those who invest in it is to sneer at the cause of the Allies and humanity's effort to destroy Prussian militarism. The *Freethinker* desires to percolate the trenches; then let it be loyal to the men in the trenches, and not come between them and those who can shorten their torments by helping to defeat the enemy of civilization with the resources of civilization. The best thing that could be recorded to the credit of money would be a victory over the Prussian ideal; and failure to achieve that victory by applying our money to any meaner purpose will redound to our everlasting shame.

If men and money are not the only means to destroy for ever Prussian militarism, let us hear what others exist.

The "commercial force" which has lately found silver bullets to keep the flag of the *Freethinker* flying was not "low and corrupt." Does it become so when employed to keep the national flag flying?

That is a dangerous opinion, and can be called by a very hard and ugly name.

I venture to hope we may have an editorial pronouncement on the *Freethinker's* attitude to the War, for sentiments of this sort will make enemies of our friends.

Eden Phillpotts.

[The policy of the *Freethinker* is to provide a platform, so far as is possible, for all questions having a broad human interest. Each article is signed, and the writer is alone responsible for the opinions expressed. The editorial responsibility consists in seeing that the writer represents a point of view worthy of consideration. This has always been the policy of the *Freethinker*, and that policy is now more than ever necessary, when the ordinary press will, for the most part, publish only standardized opinions.

For the rest, we do not see that Mr. Thorn's note is at all disloyal to the men in the trenches, or that it is intended as a discouragement to any prospective investor in War Loan. No one admires more than ourselves the heroism of the men in the trenches, or appreciates more deeply all they are doing to bring this War to a desirable end. These things may be taken for granted between men of decency and intelligence. We take Mr. Thorn to be making a protest against the picture of preachers of a universal religion playing the part of recruiting agents—a protest which does not deny either the justice of the War or the necessity for the State receiving financial support in its prosecution. A second protest is against the over-emphasis of the power of money as a deciding factor in human affairs, and the exaltation of the "money-fetish." This protest against the exaltation of money over and above the more human and idealistic elements in the War, is, in our opinion, deserving of publicity, and in this, we think, Mr. Phillpotts himself will concur. And certainly the picture of a man growing wealthy by forcing up prices, and then salving his conscience by investing part of his war profits—at a high rate of interest—is anything but a desirable one. Finally, in order to avoid misunderstanding, it may be as well to say that we have no greater desire to "percolate the trenches," than we have to penetrate other sections of the community. We desire to be read by all.—Editor.]

Society News.

We have not anything of a very exciting nature to report concerning our season's open-air work. The meetings have been continued throughout the whole of the summer months, and the audiences have been large and attentive. This, in spite of the rowdy attentions of a certain Christian Evidence champion, who seems to be a survival of the worst type of Christian blackguardism of thirty years ago. He appears to take an insane enjoyment in exhibiting himself in the most ridiculous light, and as this in itself does not constitute a legal offence, he must be left with his hobby.

Our collections are always small, but that is not so discouraging as appears at first sight. An audience of Freethinkers would contribute more liberally, and the smallness of the collections argues that the vast majority of our listeners are not wholly sympathetic with us—which is exactly the class we are desirous of reaching.

May I be permitted a grumble? I have been often struck by the frequency with which those who have given up their Christianity, as a result of our propaganda, fail to do all they might to help others to attain the same liberation as themselves. This should not be, and I hope this complaint will have the desired effect.

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Still, we congratulate ourselves on having so successfully carried through the season in the midst of war, and in spite of very many difficulties. We are content that we have done our duty to the grand cause of humanity and freedom.—W. GREGORY, *Hon. Sec.*, Kingsland Branch, N. S. S.

On Sunday evening last Mr. T. F. Palmer delivered a very able lecture on "Christianity at the Bar of History" at the Trade Union Hall, 30, Brixton Road. The lecturer formulated an unanswerable indictment against Christianity as an obstacle to national and social progress throughout the centuries from its invention to the present time. He invited the attention of an appreciative audience (numbering about fifty) and elicited an interesting discussion. Mr. Victor Roger occupied the chair in the absence of their President at the commencement of the meeting.—W. OWEN, *Sec.*, South London Branch N.S.S.

A WITCH TRIAL.

In the Good Old (Christian) Times.

Towards the end of 1593 there was trouble in the family of the Earl of Orkney. His brother laid a plot to murder him, and was said to have sought the help of a "notorious witch" called Alison Balfour. When Alison Balfour's life was looked into, no evidence could be found connecting her either with the particular offence or with witchcraft in general; but it was enough in these matters to be accused. She swore she was innocent; but her guilt was only held to be aggravated by perjury. She was tortured again and again. Her legs were put in the caschilaws—an iron frame which was gradually heated till it burned into the flesh—but no confession could be wrung from her. The caschilaws failed utterly, and something else had to be tried. She had a husband, a son, and a daughter, a child seven years old. As her own sufferings did not work upon her, she might be touched, perhaps, by the sufferings of those who were dear to her. They were brought into court, and placed at her side; and the husband first was placed in the "lang irons"—some accursed instrument; I know not what. Still, the Devil did not yield. She bore this; and her son was next operated on. The boy's legs were set in "the boot,"—the iron boot you may have heard of. The wedges were driven in, which, when forced home, crushed the very bone and marrow. Fifty-seven mallet strokes were delivered upon the wedges. Yet this, too, failed. There was no confession yet. So, last of all, the little daughter was taken. There was a machine called the piniwinkies—a kind of thumb-screw, which brought blood from under the finger nails, with a pain successfully terrible. These things were applied to the poor child's hands, and the mother's constancy broke down, and she said she would admit anything they wished. She confessed her witchcraft—so tried, she would have confessed to the seven deadly sins—and then she was burned, recalling her confession, and with her last breath protesting her innocence.—*J. A. Froude*, "*Short Studies on Great Subjects.*"

Obituary.

Leicester friends will be sorry to hear of the death of Anna Maria Coltman (aged 56), daughter-in-law of Thomas Coltman, who was a colleague of Josiah Gimson, Michael Wright, W. H. Holyoak, and other prominent members of the Secular Society, before and after the opening of the Hall in 1881. Mrs. Coltman was active in the Society's work till she left Leicester in 1903; she aided the South London Ethical Society, and supported the Socialist Movement. The address at her cremation at Norwood was given by F. J. Gould, on Wednesday, November 14.

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, "The Transmission of Acquired Characteristics." Opened by Percy S. Wilde. Reply by T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Tube Station): 7, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Consolations of Religion and Freethought."

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GOLDTHORPE BRANCH N.S.S. (14 Beevor Street): 7, Members Meeting. Local Secularists invited.

NEW MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Bakers' Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. Monks, "The Problem of Divorce."

NUNEATON (The Palace, Queen's Road): Chapman Cohen, 2.45, "Do the Dead Live?" 6.30, "Is Christianity a Failure?"

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Dockers' Hall, "Elysium," High Street): Joseph McCabe, 3, "The Churches and Social Progress"; 7, "The Religion of H. G. Wells and G. B. Shaw."

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Views and Opinions.

The Clergy and Education.

Nothing shows the meanness of disposition generated by a professional advocacy of Christianity more than the attitude of the clergy in relation to Germany during the course of the War. No sooner had the War commenced, and the stories of German barbarities in Belgium been received in this country, than the "Black Army" saw its opportunity. German conduct was due to the growth of "Materialism" and of freethinking. Germany had, so it was said, "repudiated Christianity," and ignorant persons were led to conceive an assembly of German leaders formally rejecting Christianity and solemnly adopting Freethought. Before the War commenced, these same people had dwelt upon the natural piety of the German character as against France, which was painted as decadent, and growing in immorality in consequence of the complete disestablishment of Christianity in all departments of the State. Ignored was the fact that, with the exception of France, all the countries engaged in the War were officially and overwhelmingly Christian; as also was the more important consideration that the nations of Europe had centuries of Christian tradition behind them, and that if Christian education had really made for peace, war would by now have been impossible. The clergy played their old mean and dishonest game. Their policy is, "Whatever is bad or objectionable, label unchristian, or atheistic, or infidel." The sensible ones may smile, but the foolish ones will be deceived. And sensible people always represent a minority of the population.

* * *

The Secular Solution.

When the question of education began to force its way to the front—owing to the action of a handful of enthusiasts, for the British public cares very little about education at any time—the clergy saw their opportunity for a little more propaganda. For years the clergy have been watching with dread the approach of what is known as the Secular Solution of the education question. All this means in practice is that the State shall concern itself only with such subjects as are the common concern of all citizens. It does not oppose Christianity, neither does it help it. It leaves Christian parents and Christian parsons complete freedom to teach whatever religion they like to the children, while it confines its own efforts to such subjects as are defined in the Education Code as "secular." But this will not suit the clergy. If they cannot get the children, whom can they hope to get? Not the mature adult. He is quite beyond their reach. With them it is a case of the child or nothing. If they cannot capture the lamb, they can never hope to control the sheep. And the main purpose of breeding sheep is shearing. So the clergy know that, once the children escape their hands, the source of supply for church and chapel is cut off. Hence the resistance to what is so generally admitted amongst men of understanding with no ulterior purpose to serve, as the only logical and honest way out. If the child is not caught, the adult is lost. Religious belief is the one thing that cannot wait for acceptance until people are old enough to understand it.

* * *

A Timely Corrective.

So when the question of the reconstruction of our educational system arose for discussion, the clergy saw, or thought they saw, their chance. Warnings began to multiply as to the danger of our imitating Germany by not giving religion a very prominent place in the State schools. Thus, the Rev. Stanley Rogers, a leading dissenter, said:—

> Do we not need to keep in mind the Duke of Wellington's warning: "Educate children without religion, and you will make a race of clever devils?" German Kultur has achieved this result. Do we wish to imitate Germany in this?

And the Hon. Sec. of the Chichester Diocesan Committee of Religious Education declared:—

> Unless religion were to be the guiding principle of our system of education, the only effect of educational reforms might be that their children would be more efficiently trained to earn their livelihood than before. .....Who, with the repulsive example of Germany before us, would be satisfied with such a result?

Finally, Lord Pormoor assured the public that:—

> In the German schools and in German life the people were taught that the nation came first, and all that was moral and Christian came second.

Many similar statements are made, all equally dogmatic, and all equally false. Their falsity has been promptly noted and pilloried in an admirable four-page pamphlet issued by the Secular Education League, and from which we have taken the above expressions of opinion. We are, indeed, writing these notes chiefly with the object of calling the attention of *Freethinker* readers to its existence. It is a trenchant and serviceable piece of writing, and we would like Freethinkers everywhere to get to work and see that it is distributed broadcast. Particulars will be found on the back page of this issue, and its widespread circulation may serve to do something to check this latest clerical lie on behalf of a mischievous and unjust system.

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Germany and Christian Education.

German Crime and Secular Education is the title of the pamphlet, and the Committee meets the charge that German crime is due to the prevalence of Secular Education in a most effective way. It cites from the clergy themselves, and from educational authorities, to prove that German education is saturated with Christian instruction of the most pronounced form. Thus :—

> The children are religiously instructed in Germany, the religious teaching is as definite as heart could desire in Germany.—Canon Edward Rees, *Church Quarterly Review*, p. 324, January, 1908.
>
> The religious lesson is regarded as the most important, and a religious atmosphere is expected to pervade the school.—From the *Report of an International Inquiry into Moral Instruction*, vol. ii., p. 218, edited by Professor Sadler.
>
> It must not be imagined, however, that in the reforms suggested there is any thought of abandoning religious instruction in the schools. Such an idea would be entirely repugnant to the German mind.—Dr. Garber, *Annals of Educational Progress in 1910*, p. 311.
>
> In Germany the Luthern child carries in his knapsack three books—a Bible, a Hymn Book, and Luther's Catechism—in which he receives instruction every morning by teachers of his own faith and at the public cost.....the same right is extended to all religious bodies.....there are no timid half measures.—The Rev. G. Longridge, *National Education* (Mirfield Manuals, No. 45).
>
> The Prussian systems remains to-day both for Catholics and Protestants essentially denominational. All schools, whether elementary or secondary, are Evangelical, Catholic, Jewish, or mixed.....In all cases the teachers are appointed with reference to religious faith; religious instruction is given compulsorily in school hours, and is inspected by the clergy.—*Encycl. Britannica ;* 11th ed. s.v. "Education," 8, p. 965 d.
>
> Religious instruction is a compulsory subject in all German schools, and very great importance is attributed to it. Special teaching is provided for children of each different faith—for Evangelical, Roman Catholic, and Jewish. The aim of the instruction is clearly stated.—*Board of Education.*
>
> Special importance is attached to religious instruction.....History, whether sacred or profane, is always history in which the child may learn to see the hand of Providence at work, to admire what is noble and despise what is base.....When the children first come to school they are about six years old. They learn four things—Religion, German, Arithmetic, and Singing—so long as they remain in the *Unterstufe.*—Pp. 314, 315.
>
> In the two German countries (Prussia and Saxony) all the schools are denominational, and the State insists upon the religious instruction of every child of whatever creed.—*Special Reports on Educational Subjects*, vol. ix., p. 230, 352.
>
> The end of the Evangelical religious teaching is the initiation of the children into the understanding of the Holy Scriptures and into the beliefs of the Church, in order that the children may become capable of reading the Holy Scriptures for themselves, and take a living part in the religious services and in the life of the Church.—*Prussian Allgemeine Bestimmungen.*
>
> Four hours weekly are devoted to religious instruction in the Primary School, except in the middle and upper sections, which have one class only, where five hours are thus absorbed. In addition, religious instruction enters in other ways, more especially in the teaching of German and History.—*Moral Education in Eighteen Countries*, p. 233.
>
> The chief factor in the moral education given in our German schools is denominational religious instruction and teaching of the Catechism.—Rector G. Hoeft, Hamburg; Paper presented to the International Moral Education Congress, The Hague, 1912.
>
> In Germany the greatest care had apparently been taken of the religious education of the children.—Bishop of Southwell, *Nottingham Guardian*, March 3, 1917.

* * *

Driving Home the Moral.

It would be almost impossible to give a more crushing or more effective reply to the clerical calumny than is here given. It is not alone a calumny on Freethought; it is an insult to the noblest and the most sanely idealistic of our Allies—the French nation. For there Secular Education is an accomplished fact; and if the assumed neglect of religious education has led to demoralization in Germany, if the establishment of Secular Education will lead to demoralization in England, what are we to say of France? Are we to say the French are merely a race of "clever devils"; that the same "repulsive example" will ensue in France as in Germany, and as we are warned will occur here? Or are we to conclude that we have here one more example of the lack of truthfulness and responsibility that almost habitually accompany the utterances of our clergy? The pamphlet from which we have so lengthily, but we think so serviceably quoted, well says :—

> If the German crimes are falsely attributed to the Secular Solution, it may be legitimately pointed out that it is not the Germans, but the French, who have established complete Secular National Education. And if the Secular Solution *v.* Religious Teaching by the State were brought before the entire world for judgment, to be tested by their respective moral results in Germany and France, the world condemnation of that German brutality which marks the lowest degradation of humanity would put out of court a State System of Religious Teaching, which has been powerless to prevent that degradation, and award the palm to a Secular System of State Education such as obtains in France, whose standard of honour in the conduct of the War commands the homage of the civilized world.

This is finely put, and we hope that all friends of Secular Education will see to it that this pamphlet is widely circulated. It is an appeal to facts; and the facts, here as elsewhere, are fatal to the claims of orthodox and established Christianity.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Befogged Apologetics.

IT is a notorious characteristic of Christianity that from the beginning of its history until now it has been adapting itself to the ever-varying conditions of intellectual and moral life among its actual and potential converts. At bottom it has always been the sworn enemy of natural knowledge, and during the days of its supremacy succeeded in almost entirely suppressing it. To this day Spain has never recovered her intellectual independence which the brutal Inquisition so completely destroyed. In most other lands, however, the Ages of Faith, or Dark Ages, came to an end, and as an inevitable accompaniment of the Renaissance came the Protestant Reformation, with its religiously undermining principle of Private Judgment. No history has yet disclosed the true inwardness of the Revival of Learning; and all we feel justified in saying about the movement here is that it was totally non-Christian in its origin and essentially anti-Christian in its influence. It may be generally described as the revival of a learning which Christianity had doomed, by means of physical force, to a deplorably long period of suspended animation. We may say that ever since the conquest of Spain by the Arabs in the eighth century, the Renaissance had been in active operation, but only as a sort of underground movement, while in the twelfth century it came to the surface, and was enthusiastically welcomed by some Popes and other

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dignitaries of the Church, a few of whom came perilously near to renouncing Christianity in its favour. Later on a powerful reaction occurred which proved the salvation of the Catholic Church; but Protestantism, splitting up into numerous more or less hostile sects, became, in spite of itself, an ally of the Renaissance. At first, many of these sects vigorously opposed every scientific advance, dreading its triumph as a menace to its own existence, but ultimately relinquishing, as quietly as possible, some of its formerly most dearly cherished dogmas in order to adopt the new knowledge as a perfectly harmonious adjunct to itself. The divines explained that curious process by declaring that the discarded tenets had never been essential articles in the Christian Creed.

The foregoing observations were suggested by the leading article, entitled, "Religion which is not Religious," in the *Christian Commonwealth* for November 21, presumably from the pen of the editor, Mr. Dawson, who possesses a commendably hospitable mind. The leader opens thus:—

> The Christian religion has been greatly overweighted with things not essentially religious—that is, ethical and spiritual in their influence. It has not, like the Samaritan, fallen among thieves who have stripped it, but it has rather fallen among those who have encumbered it with things alien from its essential spirit, and which have proved impediments to its work and influence in the world.

Mr. Dawson is a man whom we, for several reasons, greatly admire; but we are bound to characterize his attitude to the divines of the past as the opposite to complimentary. He evidently forgets that the things which he regards as non-essential to Christianity were looked upon by Paul, Augustine, and Calvin as vital parts thereof, and that no idea of challenging them occurred to the generality of believers until science had made discoveries which discredited them. Mr. Dawson is not at all happy in his illustrations. He says:—

> For example, it has been deemed essential that its adherents should accept certain views as to the origin of the physical world, the time of man's appearance upon it, the mode of his development, and many other similar questions. These are not really religious questions: they belong to the realm of geology, physics, astronomy, anthropology. All that is vital to belief in these realms is faith in the Divine origin of the world and humanity.

This is the New Theology with a vengeance, and, as usual, it confuses the issues without a qualm. We do not know to what extent Mr. Dawson treats the Bible as Divinely inspired; but his being a Christian at all bears witness to the fact that he considers some part of it to be of Divine authority. The point is, however, that prior to the birth of modern science the Church taught, in the most dogmatic manner, that the origin of the physical universe and of man were pre-eminently religious questions. The first three chapters of Genesis were accepted as a purely historical record. Christianity is presented in the New Testament as a Divine provision to counteract and eradicate all the consequences of the fall sustained in Eden. Among those disastrous penalties was death, the death of the body no less than of the soul. Christ was the second Adam, whose mission was to give humanity a new start. Paul believed that "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin," and the Gospel he had to preach is summed up thus: "If by the trespass of one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many." Is Mr. Dawson prepared to say openly that Paul's evangel was fundamentally false? Mr. Campbell indulged in that admission in his heretical days, and was applauded by a Thursday noon congregation. It should be borne in mind that Paul claimed to have received his Gospel by a special revelation from heaven. If it be admitted that he was radically mistaken, are we not thereby entitled to doubt every other claim of a like nature? But, in that case, on what ground does Mr. Dawson believe in "the Divine origin of the world and humanity"? Science knows nothing of such an origin of either, evolution being the only process it has to deal with. Even Sir Oliver Lodge is scientifically orthodox on this point.

We are in substantial agreement with Mr. Dawson as to the non-religious character of the evolutionary process. Like him we prefer the testimony of the rocks to that of Genesis; but, then, we do not believe in the Divine origin either of the world or of man. We also endorse much of what he avers concerning the future of the world. We heartily concur in his condemnation of a manifesto signed by ten clergymen, entitled "The Significance of the Hour." We have not seen that manifesto; but among its details, our editor tells us, are the following:—

> That the present crisis points towards the close of the times of the Gentiles; that the revelation of our Lord may be expected at any moment, when he will be manifested as evidently to the disciples as on the evening of his resurrection; that the completed Church will be translated to be for ever with the Lord; that Israel will be restored to its own land in unbelief, and be afterwards converted by the appearance of Christ on its behalf; that all human schemes of reconstruction must be subsidiary to the coming of our Lord, because all nations will then be subject to his rule.

We beg to remind Mr. Dawson that the manifesto is not without Scriptural warrant, not only in the Books of Daniel and Revelation, but also in the Gospels and Pauline Epistles. We even venture to exonerate those ten clergymen from the charge of founding their manifesto upon an "unbalanced interpretation" of Holy Writ. We are convinced that all they advocate in the extract just given is a fair deduction from Biblical statements. We repudiate the manifesto only on the score that the Scripture warrant for it is as valueless as itself. It is true, no doubt, that "in a vast library like the Bible, by an unbalanced interpretation almost anything can be supported"; but it is equally true that the Gospel Jesus speaks of the expediency of his departure from his disciples, and of the certainty of his returning to them again; and the latter event is described with as much emphasis as the former. Just here Mr. Dawson is guilty of considerable quibbling. The Gospel Jesus is by no means consistent in his various references to his own future. He tells the disciples that it is expedient for him to go away, that the Holy Ghost may come and take his place, and yet in the same breath he assures them that he himself will be present with them to the end of time. The curious thing is that it does not occur to Mr. Dawson that the truth on this whole subject is expressed by Professor Gilbert Murray in his suggestive article in the *R. P. A. Annual* for 1918, when he declares that "neither the doctrines stated in the Creeds nor the supposed history contained in the Gospels will bear examination." If the Professor is right, as we think he is, then all appeals to the Gospels are absolutely in vain, whatever interpretation of the mere words may be adopted.

We are further convinced that all appeals to Christian history are fully as vain. Are not the supposed reign of Christ in the world, and his never-failing presence in the hearts of his people, guiding them in all their ways, the emptiest of dreams? Are the conditions of life in Europe at this moment a credit to the all-loving,

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all-powerful, and all-conquering Saviour of the world? We do not hesitate to assert that the Christian religion, judged by its history and present influence in the world, must be pronounced, not only a tragic failure, but also fundamentally and absolutely false.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Tradesman's Touch.

The art of the pen is to rouse the inward vision, instead of labouring with a drop-scene brush.—*George Meredith.*

Who is Mr. Hall Caine?—*Bernard Shaw.*

THAT modest writer, Mr. Hall Caine, is fortunate in having publishers who are unlike himself, for seldom are any books heralded with such blare of trumpets as his novels. These industrious and enterprising tradesmen announce a cheap edition of Mr. Caine's *The Woman Thou Gavest Me* as "a love-story for all the world and for all time," and add that 400,000 copies have already been sold. They also inform the reading public that hundreds of thousands of his previous novels have been sold, and that the latest story has been translated into sixteen languages, including Japanese and Yiddish.

The reasons for a popularity such as this are worth considering, for, if foreign sales come anywhere near the English purchases, it may be assumed that contemporary English fiction is represented in Europe by Mr. Caine, as French literary art is by Anatole France, Belgian by Maurice Maeterlinck, Italian by Gabriele D'Annunzio, Russian by Maxim Gorky, and German by Herman Suderman.

Yet some people, not wholly illiterate, have been known to admit that they could only regard Mr. Caine's tremendous popularity with wonder and amazement. The genius of Hardy and Meredith, as of Shelley and Keats before them, dawned slowly upon the general reader. But here is a writer of novels whose books run into new editions as fast as the printing presses and the bookbinders can supply them. Like Miss Marie Corelli and Mr. Charles Garvice, he has succeeded in winning the hearts of myriads of readers. What these stern moralists are to the worldly minded, Mr. Hall Caine is to the other worldly minded. In each, vulgar, but virtuous ordinary folk and grotesque villains win the appreciation of their readers. Mr. Caine represents this taste, with the addition of an affectation of realism, and the ethics of an invertebrate Christianity.

In his latest work, *The Woman Thou Gavest Me*, Mr. Caine breaks no fresh ground, but tells a commonplace love-story in strident tones, and with much elaboration of detail. Although occupying many pages of close print, the plot can be told in a few words. A woman is married by force to a profligate brute; gets disgusted with her husband; loves an Arctic explorer; gives birth to an illegitimate child; and dies of consumption. The characters in the novel are older than the everlasting hills. There is not a single portrait of an actual personality; but only personifications of bravery, self-sacrifice, profligacy, greed, and so forth.

The story, it will be seen, is frankly popular, and, incidentally, presents a considerable opportunity for introducing theatrical effects, and the author's fondness for the Roman Catholic Church. Indeed, Mr. Caine takes nothing for granted, and "wallows naked in the pathetic." Naturally, the explorer must be an Arctic one, and, when his mistress is suffering, by some theatrical telepathy, he hears her voice calling him over thousands of miles of space. Mary O'Neill, the heroine, is what our American cousins call "a Continental idiot." Forced into a loveless marriage with an almost unknown man, she has not sufficient sense to earn her own living after leaving her husband, and gets consumption through drying her baby's wet clothes on her own body. Although madly in love with an explorer, she does not read the newspapers to be informed of the expedition, and she starves herself in order that her child may be strong and healthy. Frankly, the book is altogether unreal and melodramatic, for, when the heroine is forced by poverty to solicit in Piccadilly, the only person she accosts is her long-lost explorer.

Mr. Caine tickles the long ears of the groundlings with Biblical phrases. The title strikes the key-note, and Mary's narrative begins with the following words:—

> Out of the depths, O Lord, out of the depths, begins the most beautiful of the services of our Church, and it is out of the depths of my life that I must bring the incidents of this story.

The ending has the same air of striking novelty:—

> Very soon the mist will rise, and the day will break, and the sun will come again and—there will be no more night.
>
> These were the last words penned by Mary before her gentle and tortured spirit took flight from earth.

It is enough to break a "gentle and tortured" critic's heart. However, Mr. Hall Caine is giving pleasure to hundreds of thousands of English, Yiddish, Japanese, and other readers; and no great harm is done, if, in reading his work, they cherish the pleasing delusion that they are reading really great English literature, fresh from the hand of a master of his art. Since, however, Mr. Caine plainly labours under the belief that he is a great writer, it is a pity that he cannot be enlightened. He has won an enormous body of readers precisely because he is not a genius. Why should he not be content? Why should he dream that he is a brother to Thomas Hardy and George Meredith, to Anatole France and Gabriele D'Annunzio? He is the universal provider of the circulating libraries, and is as little an artist as any other manufacturer.

MIMNERMUS.

The Bible and Immortality.

THE BOOK OF ENOCH THE PROPHET.

ABOUT a century before the commencement of the Christian Era, a new book of an apocalyptic nature came into circulation among the Jewish people; but for some unknown reason it failed to secure a place in the Hebrew canon or even in the so-called Apocrypha. This book was widely read, and after being handed down to apostolic and later times, was received by Christians as "the word of God." The work of fiction to which reference is here made was called "The Book of Enoch the Prophet," and it claimed in its pages to have been written by the Enoch who is said to have lived before the Deluge. Of this mythical individual it is recorded in Genesis v. 24:—

> And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

The latter statement is generally understood to mean that Enoch, like the prophet Elijah, was taken to heaven without dying—and such is implied in the book itself. This literary forgery is named in the New Testament by the apostle Jude, who quotes from it as a genuine and inspired prophetical writing. After speaking of the "ungodly men" of his own day, who denied "our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ," and railed at things they did not understand, Jude says:—

> And *of these* also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his holy ones, to execute Judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of

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ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, etc.—(Jude 14, 15).

The line of ante-diluvian patriarchs in Genesis v. reads: Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, *Enoch*, etc. The last-named patriarch was, in the opinion of Jude, the writer of the book from which he had quoted. The Christian "father," Tertullian, who was of the same opinion, tells us that when the great flood came upon the earth three generations later, Noah saved the book from destruction by taking it into the ark.

For many years the Book of Enoch, which was frequently quoted by the early Christians, was believed to have been lost; but, in 1773, Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, found an Ethiopian version in the Abyssinian Bible, and brought three copies to Europe, one of which was presented to the University of Oxford—where it remained untranslated until 1821. In the recovered "Enoch" Jude's quotation is found. Jude says again:—

> And angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, He hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.—(Jude 6).

This is not a quotation from "Enoch"; it is merely a statement of matter contained in the book. The "angels" mentioned by Jude were the "sons of God" who left heaven to take the "daughters of men" as wives (Gen. vi. 2, 4). Those angels figure in the Book of Enoch, where they are temporarily punished as Jude states; but their doom on the day of judgment, an angel informed Enoch, was already sealed; they are to be cast alive into a valley of liquid fire. It was from this book that the writer of the Book of Revelation took his "lake of fire" (Rev. xix. 20; xx. 10, 14, 15; xxi. 6). The term "sons of God" in Gen. vi. is rendered "angels" in the Alexandrian MS., and also by Josephus.

The Book of Enoch calls for a thorough re-arrangement; in many places it reads like a number of independent tracts, without beginning or end, that have become intermixed; statements are made again and again in nearly the same words, though the praise of the righteous and the condemnation of the ungodly pervade the whole book. The Hebrew deity is mostly spoken of as the "Lord of spirits" or the "Mighty One," though sometimes called "the Lord." Mention is made in several parts of the book of a "Son of man," also called "the Elect One," into whose hand is to be given the judgment of the nations upon the Great day—which personage is evidently the "Son of man" in the Gospels. The Book of Enoch is, in some respects, a key to the evolution of Christianity, much of its language and ideas being found in the New Testament.

Coming now to the question of immortality, there are many statements on the subject throughout the book, the examples selected here being those most clearly expressed:—

> Chap. 61.—Then shall the Lord of spirits hasten to expel the ungodly from his presence.....The angels shall take them to punishment, that vengeance may be inflicted on those who have oppressed his elect.....But the saints and the elect shall be safe in that day. The Lord of spirits shall remain over them: and with the Son of man shall they dwell, eat, lie down, and rise up, for ever and ever.
>
> Chap. 66.—Blessed are ye, O saints and elect, for glorious is your lot. The saints shall exist in the light of the sun, and the elect in the light of everlasting life, the days of whose life shall never terminate; nor shall the days of the saints be numbered, who seek for light and obtain righteousness with the Lord of spirits.
>
> Chap. 99.—In that day shall the Most High execute judgment upon all sinners, and commit the guardianship of all the righteous to the holy angels.....Woe to you, ye sinners; for with the words of your mouths, and with the works of your hands, have you acted impiously: in the flame of blazing fire shall you be burnt.

From the foregoing paragraphs it would seem that it was not merely the soul or spirit that should enjoy a peaceful life after death, but the whole man, with his earthly body. To eat, lie down to rest, and wake up refreshed, clearly point to the latter. Towards the end of the book, however, the spirit of man is mentioned—a fact which suggests a later writer and date. The book is considered by all competent critics to contain several strata, all pre-Christian. The following are examples:—

> Chap. 102.—Fear not, ye souls of the righteous; but wait with patient hope for the day of your death in righteousness. Grieve not because your souls descend in great trouble to the receptacle of the dead.....And when you die, sinners say concerning you, As we die, the righteous die. What profit have they in their works? Behold they are dead; and never will they again perceive the light.
>
> Chap. 103.—But now I swear to you, ye righteous..... that all goodness, joy, and glory has been prepared for you, and for the spirits of them who die righteous and good.....The spirits of you who die in righteousness shall exist and rejoice. Your spirits shall exult before the face of the Mighty One from generation to generation.
>
> Chap. 103.—Woe to you, ye sinners, when you die in your sins; and they who are like you say, Blessed are these sinners: they have lived out their whole life, and now they die in happiness and wealth.....But has it not been shown to them that, when to the receptacle of the dead their souls shall be made to descend, their evil deeds shall become their greatest torment? Into darkness, into the snare, and into the flame, which shall burn at the great judgment, shall their spirits enter; and the great judgment shall take effect for ever and ever.

In these later paragraphs the "receptacle of the dead" is, of course, the Underworld, which the veracious Enoch states had been shown to him by an angel. All the "spirits of the dead" were to lie in this dark and dreary place until the day of judgment. In the Old Testament times they remained there for ever, as in the following example:—

> Chap. 22.—A receptacle of this sort has been made for the souls of unrighteous men and of sinners..... Their souls shall not be annihilated in the day of judgment, neither shall they arise from this place.

The "receptacle" here spoken of had been shown to Enoch, and was, apparently, a huge tunnel under a mountain, with a smooth floor. It was deep and dark, and it contained no fire.

One useful purpose, from another point of view, is served by the book: in its pages we learn something of what was thought of the Universe and natural phenomena at the time it was written. This portion can best be described in the words of a certain American reviewer of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* as "a heap of clotted nonsense." The following are examples: Enoch tells us that an angel showed him "the receptacle of light and thunder," in which places he saw "bows and arrows of fire, a sword of fire, and every species of lightning." He also "surveyed the receptacles of all the winds" as well as the receptacles in which the Lord of spirits kept the hail, snow, and clouds before they were sent out upon the earth. He saw "the stone which supports one of the corners of the earth," and he "beheld the four winds which bear up the earth and the firmament of heaven," as well as "the winds which turn the sky, and cause the sun and stars to set." At the "extremities of the earth, where heaven ceased," he saw "the gates of heaven open and the celestial stars come forth." He "num-

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bered them as they proceeded out of the gates," and the angel Uriel told him their names. He says of the sun and moon "the dimensions of both are equal," and that each is carried through the air on a chariot, which "the wind blows." Light, he says, "is given to the moon by measure," and Uriel showed him how "the light is poured into the moon from the sun."

Thus, besides being an inspired guide to heaven, the Book of Enoch was a complete text-book of science, from which the early Christians, including Jude and the other apostles, took their ideas of the Universe.

ABRACADABRA.

The Bhagavad Gita.

IT is one of the chief delights of Freethought to be able to roam at will over the world's philosophy, to stand on hills breathing the pure air of truths that never caused a tear, to walk in valleys where bloom the fairest flowers of contentment, or to stand, like Plato, in the shadow of a wall. Therefore, without misgivings, we shall endeavour to examine the book with the above title—a labour of love to perform, and, we trust, with profit and delight to our readers.

At the outset, there is one quality in Freethought which is identical with Hindu philosophy, and that is meditation. No man or woman was ever convinced in a day of the truth of Freethought. Needless to say, a man may be an orthodox Christian, without thinking at all, and we believe that the last thing a priest would complain of would be the ignorance of his flock. If anyone, on the contrary, should take up a definite anti-Christian attitude, it cannot be maintained by any of the specious arguments gyrating round the Trinity. In brief, opposition to the fundamental beliefs of Christianity is not based on likes or dislikes, nor is it supported by dogmatism, nor can it be maintained by an easy-going indifference to truth.

Freethought demands from its followers that which priests desire to suppress. Whether it be compliment to Freethought from Hindu philosophy, or *vice-versa*, that they have meditation or thought in common must be left to each individual's choice—it is no great matter either way.

In the edition before us, Mrs. Annie Besant contributes a preface. With toleration we regard her remarks in reference to some one personified as "Him," and we find ourselves in agreement with the emphasis on the discharge of duty. However, we differ from her when she implies that this function must be discharged without seeking the result. To the mildly passive East this may be acceptable; but, as Freethinkers, we trust we shall always retain our true vision of cause and effect. If the Hindu sows regardless of the harvest, we can say that this attitude is noble and disinterested and worthy of admiration. Freethought has a definite function to perform, and its results can be judged by what organized religion has been forced to relinquish. If our propaganda had any material gain then we should have no case; but, as it is, our progress is slow and sure. It is safe to say that a thousand "leading" articles in such papers as the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror* against Freethought could not injure the movement. As "A.E.R.," in the *New Age*, has wittily said, the former daily paper was founded by Lord Northcliffe for those who could not think, and the latter for those who could not read; what the press has not made it cannot destroy; for the strength of Freethought does not lie in its popular appeal. If we discharge our duties as citizens of the world, it is with a definite object in view; and, therefore, we sow with a definite purpose. In this respect Freethought differs from the teachings of the East. We are informed in the preface that "the spiritual man need not be a recluse, that union with the divine life may be achieved and maintained in the midst of worldly affairs, that the obstacles to that union lie not outside us but within us—such is the central lesson of the Bhagavad-Gita." The passivity of this doctrine is alluring, and in marked contrast to Christianity with its low water mark of brass bands as used by the Salvation Army; in fact, we are able to see that there is a difference between a religion and a philosophy. Philosophy starts on its journey from the East, and, during transit through Jerusalem and Rome, it becomes distorted by the time it reaches England. Trumpets and cymbals organs and incense—by these brutal and subtle methods shall mankind's sense be inclined into the necessary attitude towards one of the biggest shams ever erected on a foundation of ignorance. Beautiful truths that would lead man to the heaven of contentment—truths with laughter in them, these have been twisted by our modern bogeymen, called priests, who present them as a religion. Philosophy demands thought, religion whines for faith, and thought and faith are as fire and water.

In our copy we have made many underlinings. The first passage captivated us by its supreme nobility. Arjuna, the warrior-prince, is about to engage in conflict. To Krishna he says: "For I desire not victory, O Krishna, nor kingdom, nor pleasures; what is kingdom to us, O Govindu, what enjoyment, or even life?" We shall find it difficult to match this passage for detachment and disinterestedness. Again, this attitude, a purely philosophical one, differs from the modern religious view—a view, one might say, intensely materialistic, and, by temporal possessions ruling it out of the court where men do not wear spiritual blinkers.

Speaking of emotions and the senses, Krishna says: "The man whom these torment not, O chief of men, balanced in pain and pleasure, steadfast, he is fitted for immortality." These words will fall strangely on Western ears; yet, are they not the essentials of philosophy? Can Christians hunt with the hound of gold and ride with the hare of renunciation? They can, and do so; and we are apparently the only people who persist in pointing out the commercialism of this Western hotch-potch called Christianity. With this inconsistency of Materialism, false ethics flourish like the green bay-tree.

We should like to quote again and again from this little book; for us, it is ripe with ethical wisdom, and the reader will find that his study of the world's literature will assist him in understanding the teaching embodied in this volume. It is true to say that the ethics of Freethought are identical with those expounded in its pages. We part company, however, with this philosophy when it stresses the supernatural element and designates it as "Him" or the "Eternal."

"It is said that the senses are great; greater than the senses is the mind: greater than the mind is the Reason; but what is greater than the Reason, is He." If we had any proof of the existence of the being in the climax in this extract, we might abandon reason. Is not all this talk about "Him" but another aspect of the God idea? It is easy to conceive matter as being indestructible; we cannot take the evidence or suggestion of evidence as positive and final on the existence of the Eternal with its Hindu connotation. In the future, at some happier period, philosophy may have time to expand. Philosophy may even occupy then the prominent position now given to horse-racing. Until then, we must be content to work for the good of mankind in our own particular way. Looking back through the pages of history, we behold the God of the Old Testament, whose voice

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is the thunder. In the New Testament he has changed, and we find him as a spirit. Later on, God is Love. Then the dissatisfied ones would say Love is God. Matthew Arnold revalued the God-idea when he wrote that "God is the eternal spirit making for righteousness"—which, of course, was only stating the matter in the same terms as the Hebrews, who valued righteousness chiefly as a social virtue. The art of God-making is quite easy to learn. Through looking steadfastly at the sun, we can imagine that we are a part of it; for the sake of convenience, we may call this the metaphysical side of the question. On the other hand, it is quite safe to say that we *are* a part of it, since we cannot exist without the sun. The warmth in our bodies is derived from it; through our eyes flow light, and our physical demands cannot be satisfied without the sun. Therefore, the sun is God to anyone who is content to accept this kind of reasoning. In the same way, we think the idea of "Him" or the "Eternal" came to life in the "Bhagavad Gita."

We feel sure that our readers will be well repaid by reading this little book, which is issued by the Theosophical Publishing House, at the modest price of sixpence. Whilst many will not subscribe to the idea we have remarked upon, all will enjoy the fruits of divine philosophy to be found in its pages. Pater made a broad sweep of a broad subject when he wrote:—

> For the essence of humanism is that belief of which he seems never to have doubted, that nothing which has ever interested living men and women can wholly lose its vitality—no language they have spoken, nor oracle beside which they have hushed their voices, no dream which has once been entertained by actual human minds, nothing about which they have ever been passionate, or expended time and zeal.

This was the belief of Pica Della Mirandola. In this spirit we offer these few remarks on the "Bhagavad Gita," and conclude with a note of interrogation. Arjuna, the central figure in the story, receives inspiration to act regardless of consequences. The Arjuna type of person is one who neither desires anything nor fears anything. What are we to call this attitude to life? It has the appearance of dynamic passivity. How many Freethinkers would care to call themselves Arjunas?

WILLIAM REPTON.

Acid Drops.

We are glad to see that the American military authorities than our own are more alive to the freedom of the Army. The Commanding Officer at Fort Hamilton issued an order for all men to attend divine service. On this Mr. G. E. Macdonald, editor of the *Truthseeker*, wrote to the War Department asking what had become of the constitutional right to religious freedom? The reply of the Department was prompt and satisfactory, it contained the following passage:—

> The Department Commander does not approve of the action of the Coast Defence Commander in requiring compulsory attendance at divine service of persons under his command. Necessary action will be taken accordingly.

This is quite to the point, and we wonder how long it will be before the British soldier will possess the same freedom. France can manage the War without official "divine service" of any kind. America can manage with "divine service" only for those who care to have it. Great Britain continues the policy of driving the men to Church whether they wish to go or not.

Apropos of the above, we were pleased to see a trenchant letter in a recent issue of the *Southampton Times*, from Mr. J. W. Wood, asking, as we have just done, "How long it will take Britain to level up to the American standard of liberty." Letters in such places do a considerable amount of good. And the protest against "compulsory Christianity" is sadly needed. Men join the Army to do their duty as soldiers. To make them compulsory helpers at a ridiculous ceremony is an outrage on their manhood.

The Catholic magazine, the *Month*, contains an article, entitled "A Shakespeare Discovery—his Schoolmaster afterwards a Jesuit." This will hardly set the Thames afire. Shakespeare himself did not often trouble the pewopeners.

"Catholic Game. Day to Heaven" is the title of an advertisement in the *Universe*.

A memorial, signed by a number of leading Churchmen and Nonconformists, is being presented to the Prime Minister protesting against the proposed reform of the divine laws on the ground that it runs "counter to the consistent teaching of the Church of Christ from the beginning. But what has the Church of Christ to do with it? Any amendment of the marriage laws ought to rest upon the common sense and common needs of the community. To bother what the Church of Christ—with a celibate figurehead, and one half that Church with a celibate clergy—has to say about it is sheer absurdity. Of course the "Church of Christ" is against the charge. Its game is to keep the control of marriage in its own hands. If it controls marriage, it controls the mother, and through her the child. That is the bed-rock fact in the anxiety of the clergy.

One of our readers, at present "Somewhere in the Holy Land," sends us the following:—

> A soldier was riding a mule up through a portion of the desert, and, being in a hurry, he was using a stick frequently. A padre stopped him and remonstrated with him. Said he: "Don't you know that our Lord rode up this very way and did not labour his mule. "That may be so," replied the soldier, "but he was not in such a hell of a hurry as I am. Gee-up."

The Duke of Argyll has been writing in the *Glasgow Herald*, and pointing out that Scotch Protestants do not appear to be in a hurry to celebrate the Reformation and "Dr. and Mrs. Martin Luther." The sneer at Luther is an unworthy one, for celibacy, as Horace Smith said wittily, is "a vow a man takes that he will enjoy none but other men's wives."

This is not the only example of the Duke of Argyll's humour, for he calls Luther and his wife "a couple of arch aliens." This is a hard saying, for all the Bible heroes and heroines were aliens.

The action of the House of Commons with regard to Conscientious Objectors is a fresh proof of how dangerous it is to do things with a total disregard of logic or common sense. When the question was first raised, we pointed out what we considered the common sense of the situation. If the State had a right to force any of the community into the Army, it had a right to force all. And when the principle of compulsion was adopted, it should have been adopted for all. This would have left the man with a conscientious objection free to make his protest in his own way and on his own responsibility. It would also have prevented any abuse of the principle. The man who objected to military service would have done so, as has been done in France and elsewhere. He would have counted the cost and paid the price, and would have deserved the respect due to such conduct. But when the State made the plea of conscientious objection a legal one, it acted illogically, and when it punished men for claiming a right which the State itself conferred, it added injustice to folly.

Now the House of Commons has decided to go further, and invent a new punishment—the disfranchisement of the Conscientious Objector—for an old offence. And that is a principle absolutely foreign to English law and, to what used to be, British ideas of freedom. At law, offenders can only be punished according to the law as it exists at the time the

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offence is committed. To invent a new punishment, unknown to the offender at the time, and only introduced a long time after, is quite indefensible. It is not often we find ourselves in agreement with Lord Hugh Cecil, but we are in accord with the fine protest made by him in the House of Commons. And the reply of Mr. Bonar Law made the matter worse. To say, as he did, that the State must consider itself first, makes one open one's eyes. As Lord Hugh Cecil pointed out, this is the very charge we bring against Germany—that it believes the State has the right to override all ethical and other considerations in considering its own welfare. It is absurd and dangerous to argue that these few thousand Conscientious Objectors are a danger to the State. It was exactly upon that ground that freethinking opinions were for so long harried and Freethinkers oppressed. It is a dangerous principle to admit, and one never knows where its application will end. It is the objector to military service to-day; it may well be someone else to-morrow. Given a strong religious party in power, they could apply it to any heretical opinion it wished to punish.

The *Church Times* defends the disfranchising of the Conscientious Objector on the ground that "It is a sound principle that the claim to the rights of citizenship must be supported by the exercise of the duties of citizenship." An excellent principle; but it has nothing whatever do do with this issue. For here the State legalized the position of the genuine Conscientious Objector. It gave him the right to withdraw from military service. And having given him a right, on what ground can anyone justify punishing him for its exercise? And both the *Church Times* and the Government overlook the fact that if the Conscientious Objector is not allowed to vote, he cannot be prevented influencing the votes of others. That is, unless he is shot out of hand. But perhaps that is to come.

Dr. Fort Newton is undergoing an interesting process of evolution. He is becoming more and more the victim of a vague, unintelligent, and well-nigh unintelligible mysticism. While ostentatiously opposed to dogmas and dogmatism, he yet displays the dogmatic spirit, and, like all his brethren, lays down dogmas of his own, which are as irrational as any found in the most orthodox system of theologians. For example, in a recent sermon, speaking of Jesus, he says: "Into that world where we are free from the tyranny of time he seeks to lead us, adding a new dimension to our lives." Whether time be a tyrant or not, there is no possibility of getting free from it, except by ceasing to live. Even Dr. Newton himself is by no means independent of it.

The Rev. Dr. Jowett, minister-elect of Westminster Chapel, paints a beautifully alluring picture of the Church in the *Christian World* for November 22. She is the repairer of breaches and restorer of broken roads. She is placed in a disjointed world to set it right. Ideally, she is the most glorious institution known to history. Practically, however, the Church is the biggest swindle conceivable—the author of breaches and the breaker-up of roads. Instead of uniting people in the bond of peace and love, she divides them into a thousand hostile factions. And yet Dr. Jowett disdainfully ignores the reality and hugs the seductive but empty dream, in which he has visions of the day when, as a result of the Church's work of repair and restoration, "all strife shall be over, when there shall be no more breaches in human fellowship, when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and when they shall not learn war any more." Meantime, Holy Church is ardently worshipping and faithfully serving the God of War, and is beating all available material into weapons of destruction.

Sir Arthur Yapp, speaking at Glasgow, said that a Y.M.C.A. hut had been started at Gaza, and another would be shortly erected at Jerusalem. It looks as if the Y.M.C.A. intended to introduce religion to the Holy Land.

A man asked the other day, "What would Jesus do if he lived to-day?" Then he gave a list of reactionary deeds which he was sure Jesus would perform were he with us now. For example, he would abolish the liquor traffic, close all places of amusement, restore the Sabbath to its holy uses, and so on. That is, Jesus would be a bigot, and do what this man would do if he had the power. Probably Jesus never lived at all; but as an imaginary character he can conveniently be held responsible for all the follies and absurdities that ever enter the heart of man.

The slump in Christianity is, as we have often pointed out, world wide. A correspondent sends us a cutting from the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* of October 10, which reports a discussion at one of the Church Synods on the reason "why so many male members seldom attend Church service," and why so many children of Church members are finally "lost." There was a lengthy discussion, and the Rev. W. H. Lillie brought forward a number of reasons, but hit the nail on the head in the first: "The advance of education so that the parson has not the same authority." We congratulate Mr. Lillie on having had the courage to say what all the clergy must know. And the only real remedy is for the clergy to stop this advance or to control it.

The clergy are continually asserting that the world-war is helping the cause of religion, but there is little proof of this. The Rev. C. Sharp, of Byfleet, Surrey, declares that "more money is spent on golf balls than is collected in the churches for foreign missions."

"Many people are too much inclined to take a gloomy view of things," says the Bishop of Willesden. It is hardly surprising that worshippers of the Man of Sorrows should be gloomy.

"People who talk of the failure of the Church do not know what they are talking about," declares the Bishop of London. Unfortunately, these poor folk do not get £10,000 yearly from the Church.

With the sanction of the Austrian Government, the Jewish rabbis pronounced the rabbinical curse against food usury. In this country the clergy leave ordinary people to do the cursing.

The anxiety of pious folk to provide huts for the use of soldiers is not entirely humanitarian. The Church Army is appealing for devotional huts and small chapels in connection with the huts.

We hope we shall not be accused of trenching on a political issue if we call attention to the action of the Government in censoring all pamphlets dealing with peace and war. The question of freedom of publication cannot be a political issue, even though it be raised in connection with a political question. We have nothing to say against compelling the names of publishers of all pamphlets to be printed; that strikes us as a sensible regulation. Nor do we say anything against anyone being prosecuted who publishes a treasonable pamphlet. If a man breaks a law, he must be prepared for the consequences. But a regulation which demands that all publications dealing with so vital a question as war or peace shall be submitted to a censor, who cannot be legally called to account for his action, is a practice altogether foreign to British traditions. And the *Freethinker* would be false to its traditions if it did not raise a protest against this. We believe the freedom of publication to be the most important thing we possess, and one can faintly imagine what men like Carlile or Bradlaugh, both of whom fought Government after Government in defence of the freedom of publication, would have said to this proposed regulation. It means, in practice, that only an opinion which commends itself to the authorities will be allowed. And Freethinkers, above all, have most cause to be alarmed about legislation of this character. We are glad to see that an attempt is to be made in the House of Commons to rescind the resolution. If an opinion is punishable it should at least be punished in open court after open trial.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 2, South Shields; December 9, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

J. & E. PUGH.—We feel quite sure from your letter that you will not let slip any opportunity of helping the *Freethinker*, and we appreciate very much the tone of your letter.

P. A.—Glad to learn that you found our advice so helpful, and the course of action recommended successful.

W. MAURICE.—Certainly, the existence of suffering as a result of earthquakes, etc., can be attributed to neither malignity nor folly—unless it be the malignity or folly of the "Divine Ruler." And we think it would puzzle anyone to find much educationa value in an earthquake.

S. OWEN.—We have a rod in pickle for that particular piece of folly which will be applied in due time.

SEEKER AFTER TRUTH.—Thanks. Mr. Humphries may reply, but we doubt it.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—J Blackhall, (2nd sub.), 2s. 6d.; J. & E. Pugh,, 5s ; D. Seddon, 10s.; T. Fisher, 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. T. Love, 10s.; Vivian Phelips, £1 1s.; James T. Watkins, Jun., 2s. 6d.

S. AVES.—(1) A most exhaustive treatise on the subject is *Criminality and Economic Conditions*, by W. A. Bonger (Heinemann, 21s.). You will find therein the views of most leading writers on the topic. (2) Macniven's *Community, a Sociological Study* (Macmillan, 12s. net) will give you what you need on the other topics. It is a sound piece of writing.

F. BETTS.—Thanks for good wishes. Shall appear.

C. M. HOLDEN.—Certainly you might start a Branch of the N. S. S. at Kingston-on-Thames. Shall be pleased to give any help possible.

T. W. HAUGHTON.—See Mr. Phillpott's letter in another column. We do not claim to write without bias; we hardly think such a thing is possible. The main point seems to us whether one's bias is justifiable or not. And there are surely certain broad social issues on which comments in a paper such as the *Freethinker* are advisable and useful. And when these comments are made, we expect disagreement with some. The basis of genuine Freethought is not so much agreement as toleration of disagreement.

WE regret that, by an error of transcription, the name of Mr. Cairney, the mover of the resolution at Mr. Lloyd's Glasgow meeting, reported in "Sugar Plums" a fortnight ago, should have been printed "Pairney."

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.

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.

On Tyneside, South Shields is keeping the Freethought flag flying, and to-day (Sunday, December 2) in the Victoria Hall, Fowlers Street (near the Municipal Buildings—Ogle Terrace tram stop). Mr. Cohen is announced to lecture at 3—"The Cradle, the Altar, and the Grave"; and at 6.30 (music at 6) "Christianity Before and After the War." Everything possible locally is being done to make the meetings a thorough success, and it is fully anticipated that the innovation of an afternoon gathering will afford outsiders in the district a better opportunity of hearing Mr. Cohen while he is on the North-Eastern circuit.

The campaign at Nuneaton opened well on Sunday last with two lectures from Mr. Cohen. Both meetings were well attended, the audience behaved in a most admirable manner, and a number of membership forms were signed in order to form a Branch of the N. S. S. in the town. Mr. Wilks in the afternoon, and Mrs. King in the evening, presided over the meetings with tact and good humour, and a little music and a couple of solos kept the audience interested until the lecture commenced. Visitors were present from Rugby, Coventry, and other places. This was the first time Freethought meetings had been held in Nuneaton, and we wish the new Branch every success.

From the New York *Truthseeker*:—

> Headed by Robert Underwood Johnson, the poets of America have been organized to furnish an ambulance service for Italy, each ambulance to be given in honour and memory of an American poet. Mr. F. F. Ayer, a New York Agnostic, makes Ingersoll his choice, and writes the following letter:
>
> "DEAR MR. JOHNSON: Your kind letter which invites me to describe my Ambulance in Italy to the memory of some American Poet who is past and gone, is very welcome. I shall be only too glad to do so, if you will allow me to inscribe it
>
> To the Memory of
> ROBERT G. INGERSOLL,
>
> one of our imperial poets, our poet of freedom. No other tongue or pen so mightily and songfully poured the strains of that very Liberty and Democracy for which we are spilling souls and sovereigns. In the presence of such a monarch of the lyre, such an adjutant of humanity, my choice and conscience will not allow me to volunteer any second nomination. Sincerely yours.—F. F. AYER."
>
> There can, of course, be no doubt that this offer will be gladly accepted by the poets' organization, and that Mr. Ayer's ambulance, inscribed to the memory of Robert G. Ingersoll, will be among the one hundred sent to Italy. The donation that pays for the ambulance is $2,000.

The ambulance may relieve the sufferings of the soldiers; it will certainly add to those of the chaplains.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner lectures this evening (December 2) in the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, on "Belief, Makebelief, and Unbelief." We hope there will be a good rally of Birmingham Freethinkers and others.

Miss Kough lectures this evening for the Kingston Humanitarian Society, Fife Hall, Fife Road, Kingston-on-Thames, at 3 o'clock. Her subject is "Freethought, Woman, and War." Local Freethinkers will please note.

We are near the season when Freethinkers, along with other people, will be looking round for suitable gift-books for their young friends. *Not Only Men*, by Mr. George Bedborough (Garden City Press, Letchworth, 3s. 6d.), seems well designed for this purpose. The work is made up of eighteen stories, chiefly written round the War, dealing with the faithfulness of the dog, the horse, and all inculcating the lesson of kindness to the animal world. The spirit of the book is well set out in the following from the preface:—

> We do not need to go far for our lessons of humanity..... To those of military age you may find it necessary to explain, with a breaking heart and through tears, that their duty is to enter the fray and fight in wars which never ought to be. But what will you say to the very young, to those who have to live with their neighbours after the War is ended? The War cannot last for ever. We are right to face the problems it brings, but the young who cannot help in the fight might at this time learn some truths which will make wars less frequent when they are men and women. The seed sown now, watere indeed with many tears, may yet save mankind when the harvest of ideas ripen.

This seems to us to strike a note that is sadly wanting in much of the writing of to-day.

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A Vision of God.

I KNOW not how, but I was borne in an instant of time through the infinite space of "chaos and old night" up to the battlements of Heaven. They loomed above me higher than a dozen Alps piled one above the other, almost beyond the bounds of visibility, black, and gloomy, and forbidding. Over the lofty crenelated top of the walls poured streams of black vapour, lighted occasionally by lurid beams of blood-red fire and flashes of lightning. Niagara Falls, rain-clouds from the Atlantic borne by western gales, "war-clouds rolling dun," masses of mist rolling up mountain-valleys, all these are feeble comparisons with the oceans of vaporous matter that came spume-like from the inside of the Celestial City.

Almost unknowingly I found myself on the inner side of the great walls, within the sacred precincts of Heaven itself. I looked about apprehensively, but nothing was yet to be seen. Behind me loomed the immense walls, and in every other direction my gaze was closed by the vapours I had seen issuing over the battlements. Gray and black, heavy and slow-moving, impenetrable to the sight, oppressive so as to be felt as a tangible weight, the surging fog heaved round like ocean stirred to its depths by a hurricane. The beams of blood-red light glared intermittently, and lightnings flashed fitfully. I heard noises—thunders and rumblings, deep calling unto deep, the tumult of many waters upon rocky shores, fearful sounds comparable to nothing on earth. The lights and noises seemed at once far off and near, as if proceeding from immeasurable distances, and yet so tremendous that I stood within the confines of their birthplace.

Nervously expectant and trembling I stood and gazed with straining eyes. The red light diminished, the lightnings played but faintly, the uproar lessened, and the density of the circumambient vapour reduced. I became aware that before me a great dark object was emerging from its wrappings of black and gray. I could distinguish something pyramid-shaped revealing itself through the haze. All sounds ended, and deathly silence followed. The scarlet light ceased to gleam, and the lightnings flashed no longer. The dark towering shape took form as the masses of opaque atmosphere thinned and cleared. The last lingering wisps of gray lifted, and everything was revealed to my astonished sight.

All distances seemed alike. Near and far were equally distinct. Before me stretched a boundless plain, occupied by one feature. Between it and I lay an immense space, yet every detail of it was visible, cameo cut in its exactness. A huge platform of stone, black, but resembling granite, rose in seven step-like tiers. Centreing the top level stood a great throne of burnished brass.

I had little time for wondering at the massiveness and craftsmanship of platform and throne, for the figure seated thereon held me spellbound. It had the form of a man, yet of such colossal size and strength that no man or earth has ever been his equal, nor the giants of myth and legend. His legs, knotted with cable-like muscles, rivalled oak trunks in their gnarled massiveness. His feet were planted firmly on heaps of parti-coloured objects faintly resembling human bodies. Looking again I saw that they were the souls of those who had been great potentates on earth. His body was hideous in its gigantesque muscularity, fold upon fold of thews and sinews clothing him like a garment. His arms, vibrant with coarse energy like the legs of a war-horse, lay along the brazen arm-rests of the throne. His hands, huge out of all proportion, terminated in fingers and nails curved like the claws of a carnivorous bird. Most awful of all was the head. Carried on a neck strong as a tower, dew-lapped like a bull, this Deity's head typified all his assembled qualities of strength, ferocity, cruelty, and lust. The skull was bald. Two ridges ran down to the low forehead nearly reaching the eyes. The eyes protruded, and shone dimly like suppressed furnaces, or as if a volcano heaved and struggled to burst through their sockets. The short upturned nose had wide nostrils which drew in all scents and savours, good or ill. Big pointed ears reached to the top of the head, the jaws were square and wider than the forehead, and the thin red lips set like a vice. The colour of this ultra-man was gray, with scarlet under the hands and feet. Leaning against the right hand side of the throne stood a great two-edged sword glittering like burnished silver, and by it a large bowl half-full of blood.

The plain seemed to move, and I wrenched my shuddering gaze from the horrible form, and became aware that the boundless expanse was completely covered with human shapes, all in the attitude of abject adoration, foreheads bowed to the ground. The prostrate myriads raised themselves together, leaned towards their seated monarch, and lifting their naked skeleton arms chanted hoarsely (and their voices were as the rushing of mighty winds)—"Great is our God, for He is God of War!" Their God raised his hand, and there was silence in Heaven. Faintly, as having come through immensity of space, were heard the sounds of earth. Priests chanted praises of Him who fought for right; preachers called upon him to strike for his chosen people; princes and subjects, great and small, wise and simple of every nation, and tongue and kindred could be heard praying and beseeching the Lord of Hosts to reveal himself; orators and poets proclaimed the infinite mercy and wisdom of Him who was on the side of truth and justice. The seated Deity stirred slightly, and his face assumed a look of triumphant but hideous glee; an evil distortion of the already loathsome ugliness. Then the noises of earth were wavering and confused, mingled cries of anger and agony, remorse and anguish, battle-shouts, yells of revenge, and wails of despair, groans of dying men, and the roar of millions in deadly combat. Through it all God's face took on an expression of sardonic and contemptuous satisfaction. Again the myriads of souls raised themselves and cried with one voice: "Great is our God, for He is a God of War!" And God nodded.

Then silence reigned again in heaven, and the sounds of the world were heard once more. Sorrowing of widows and orphans, desperation of beleaguered cities, distressed mariners on sinking ships, hunger-vibrant plaints of starving famine-stricken multitudes, death rattles of thousands, to these God sat and listened as a man would to sublimest music, whilst his nostrils dilated at the smell of blood, and his eyes glowed, like fire in deep caverns, at the scenes of slaughter and destruction. Here the adorant millions raised their pæan of praise: "God is our God, for He is God of War!" at which he nodded with grim and frightful graciousness.

Now the sounds of earth were confused and fainter. The praise and appeals for victory ceased. Instead were shrieks of doubt and uncertainty, oaths and cursings, men reviling God and themselves, despairing appeals, timid challengings and rejections of faith. Occasionally through this babel of discords were audible prayers for peace and entreaties for mercy. God's eye blazed like furnaces stirred for the melting of hardest steel, his hitherto set lips parted, and he ground together teeth resembling the whited sepulchres of man,

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with a noise akin to the grinding of pebbles on the beach. Under his gray blood-spattered skin the muscles worked like the rolling of ocean billows, and he reached a claw-like hand for his sword. With one accord his worshippers chanted louder and longer, and many times repeated: "Great is our God, for He is God of War!" The indignant Deity sank back on his throne, his stiffened limbs relaxed, and the malicious anger faded from his features. Again the sickening odour of human blood floated up, and he drank it in as it were incense. The cavernous jaws opened in a prodigious yawn which shook his whole frame, and made the kneeling millions tremble. He slowly raised one great claw-like hand to support his heavy head, stared dully round upon his sycophants with fast-closing eyes, the lips fell into a hideous grin, and God slept as his servile wretches murmured softly: "Great is our God, for He is God of War!" whilst the terrestial globe weltered and agonized in battle and bloodshed. Then the mountains of vapour rolled over all again, and I saw no more.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

The Everlasting Hills.

III.

(*Continued from p. 741.*)

As our planet's integument cooled and solidified various portions hardened sooner than others. These areas formed buttresses destined to sustain the pressure brought against them by later movements of the earth's less stable parts. Professor Suess has termed these more stable regions "Horsts," a designation which has been adopted by British scientists as we possess no English equivalent. There are numerous reasons for thinking that during untold ages our globe has undergone a process of gradual contraction. Some parts have subsided, become folded, and been subjected to greater stress, strain, and fracture than others. Those regions which first assumed the solid state were least influenced by outside pressure; they sank comparatively little, and formed the great plains or "horsts" of the earth's exterior.

When the spectator surveys the immense mountain ranges, he is quite naturally inclined to the view that these vast accumulations of rocks represent those aspects of the planet's surface which have most persistently resisted the atmospheric and fluviatile forces which have transported their softer materials along the rivers to the sea. Composed as they are of adamantine rock, they have shown themselves more successful in withstanding assault. Therefore it might plausibly be contended that our elevated areas are the remnants of even mightier mountains which towered when the world was young. In this opinion there is more than an element of truth, for many of our mountains have been greatly reduced by the wear and tear of time. But the established truth remains that the loftier hills rise in solemn grandeur high above the surrounding country, not only because they are built of harder material, but because during immense geological periods they have been gradually upheaved many thousands of feet above the ocean's level. All our chalk formations, thousands of feet thick, were slowly laid down at the bottom of ancient seas. Fossils of marine organisms are common in those deposits which occasionally form part of huge mountain ranges. For instance, the fossilized remains of sea animals have been discovered in the Alps at an altitude of 10,000 feet. They have been found at a greater elevation in the Rocky Mountains, while similar fossils have been unearthed in the Himalayas at the immense height of 16,500 feet.

Geologists are agreed that all the enormous layers of stratified rocks distributed throughout the earth were gently deposited on the bed of some large lake or sea. These aqueous deposits or sediments are invariably disposed in layers termed "strata" which are usually arranged in the form of horizontal layers. It is noteworthy that strata are frequently encountered, particularly in the mountains, which clearly indicate that they have been pushed out of their original position. In the hills, the once horizontal strata slope or dip slightly or deeply, and may even stand upright, thus compelling the conclusion that they have been driven upwards, or twisted and squeezed into their present position by agencies which have operated since the strata were first laid down. Lord Avebury has well expressed the wonder with which even the scientist notes these phenomena. "These wonderful contortions and fractures," he remarks,—

> give in the first place the impression of sudden and catastrophic changes; and in the second place it is difficult to believe our own eyes, as it seems almost impossible that solid rocks could be bent without breaking. No doubt, however, the process was very slow. If we take a stick of sealing-wax and bend it quickly it will at once snap, but if the pressure is applied very slowly it may be bent almost to a circle. Again, it must be remembered that the strata which were folded were covered by others, and in many cases were at a great depth. The bending may also have been facilitated by heat and moisture.—(*Scenery of England*, pp. 224, 225).

Not only have elevations and depressions formed a constant feature of the earth's past history but such changes are still in progress. As Lyell pointed out in his immortal *Principles of Geology*, the land environing the Gulf of Bothnia is steadily rising. About a century and a half since, the attention of Celsius, the astronomer, was drawn to this fact, and as a result of his inquiries he arrived at the erroneous conclusion that the waters of the Baltic were changing their level. It is now demonstrable that the ocean level is fairly uniform all over the earth, and the discovery that towns once situated on the coast are now far inland finds its true explanation in the circumstance that the land is rising at the rate of over three feet each century. Later researches prove that nearly all parts of Scandinavia are ascending above the sea. Nor is this emergence uniform, for while the northern region of the Gulf of Bothnia is moving upward at the rate of more than five feet per century, the area adjoining the Aland Isles rises in the same period at the rate of three-and-a-quarter feet only. Southwards the movement is still less, while some parts of the peninsula are stationary. But more surprising still is the discovery that the most southern areas of Scandinavia are subsiding. Proof of this is furnished by the forests which have become submerged, as well as by the encroachments of the waves which now cover the sites of old coast-towns and village streets.

The ascent of the chief part of the peninsula has been in operation for a prolonged period, even if we assume that the rate of its upheaval has been more rapid in the past, because layers of sea-shells of living species are met with at heights of 650 feet above sea level. Again:—

> Great dead branches of a certain pink coral, found in the sea at a depth of over 150 to 300 fathoms, are now seen in water only 10 or 15 fathoms deep. It must have been killed as it was brought up into the upper and warmer layers of water.

Further striking testimony is afforded by the pine forests on the hill slopes, for these are slowly being uplifted towards the snow-line, and are dying by degrees in their colder habitat. Moreover, extensive woodland

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fringes consist entirely of dead pines, many of which have been defunct for centuries. The Baltic was once in wide and direct communication with the salt waters of the North Sea, and the great lakes of Southern Sweden were at that time the deepest depressions of this channel. It is practically certain that the numerous wide sheets of water which occupy the granite basins of Finland are the shrunken remains of a stretch of sea which once joined the waters of the Baltic with those of the Arctic Ocean. Here, also, the land has been raised far above the sea, while much beyond the reach of contemporary tides, ancient sea-beaches along the Scottish, Scandinavian, and other coasts, stand as unimpeachable witnesses of the recession of the ocean.

Between the reaches of high and low tide, the waves are busily engaged in the production of shingle and sand; depositing them on the beach; interspersing them with the shells and skeletons of marine animals, and remains of plants; now massing them in heaps, and now washing them away. A beach is in this manner transformed into a terrace. When the shore rises fast enough to lift these beach fragments beyond the reach of the waves, they form a flat terrace, or what is termed a "raised beach." The earlier high-water mark is no longer invaded by the sea; moisture-loving vegetation appears in the caverns, and the old beach provides an excellent site for hamlets, villages, and arable and pasture lands. Then the retreating waves sculpture a new beach seawards.

On the shores of Scotland, several of these terraced beaches may be seen rising in succession at heights ranging from twenty to seventy-five feet above the present high-water limit. Each of these abandoned beaches represents an earlier lower level at which the beach was swept by the sea, and the intervening spaces signify the successive elevations of the shore. Each terrace was constructed during a resting interval in the ascent, for in the stationary periods the waves were able to form terraces, whereas, during the constant upward movements, they were interrupted from their work. We thus realize that the elevation of the land was here suspended by periods of rest.

Innumerable evidences of the rise of the Scottish coast-line exist. The ancient Roman port of Alaterva—Cramond—now lies at a considerable distance from the sea. The celebrated wall of Antoninus, which in Roman times bridged the land from shore to shore, now terminates some twenty-six feet beyond the high-tide mark. Once more, the tides rose several feet above their present high level 2,000 years ago in the estuary of the Clyde. Kindred phenomena occur in England, notably on our south-western coasts, while on the slopes of the hilly fiords of Norway raised beaches around. Some of these terraces stand more than 600 feet above the level of the sea, while at a distance of fifty miles inland, even more elevated beaches, once fashioned by the waves of the sea, arrest the attention. Nova Zembla, Northern Greenland, Spitzbergen, and a range of coast extending for 600 miles in Siberia, have all participated in this upward movement. The Andes of the Pacific Coast in South America have risen very appreciably during recent times. Raised beaches are found near the Chilian Andes at a height of 1,000 feet, while in the vicinity of Valparaiso they are encountered at a height of 1,300 feet above the sea.

It is more than surmised that, while the western region of South America is being raised up, important parts of its eastern coasts are sinking. This see-saw movement is also in action in North America; for while portions of the eastern coast are subsiding slowly, some regions in Labrador are rising. It is estimated that New Jersey is being depressed at the rate of a couple of feet each century.

Upward, and occasionally downward, movements of the earth are apt to be associated with earthquakes. For instance, after the devastating earthquake in Chili in 1835, the country near the Bay of Conceptcion was raised four or five feet. The most cursory examination of the rocks furnishes unmistakable evidence of their subjection to tremendous stress and strain. Rock fractures range from a few inches up to thousands of feet, and the comparatively sudden shocks known as earthquakes are similar in character to those which cause the gradual and almost imperceptible upheaval of a mountain mass. Our globe is a cooling body which shrinks as it cools, and the crushing and folding of its strata necessarily follow. Composed of substances of unequal strength, certain parts of the planet's crust yield more easily than others, and as the rocks readjust themselves, their pressure inevitably urges the earth's surface into a series of wrinkles like those on the skin of a dried fruit. In other words, the globe's internal energies have slowly fashioned those irregularities of its surface which appear to us as the giant mountain ranges of the world.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

A Rich New World.

THE most striking characteristics of the world to-day are its poverty of thought, its shabby religion, and its lack of material enjoyment. Mankind is about as developed as a ten day old puppy. A puppy gets its eyes open in nine days, so that on the tenth day it must be just beginning to have a faint notion of the place in which it finds itself. Just in the same way, we now have a faint notion of what it means really to live. Until one hundred years ago men were practically asleep. Up to then no great progress had been made in labour-saving machinery, and telegraphy and aeronautics were absolutely undreamt of. The poets and prophets of the past had a dim notion of a glorious future, but it was very dim, because nothing was then known, or even suspected, of what could be done with machinery. How could they who lived under the tyranny of religious and economic superstition dream of the possibilities of the liberated mind, as we can who live in a land where thought and speech are beginning to be free? We are now slowly coming to understand that mankind is to be made happy by having things and not by doing without them; that righteousness is to come by general wealth and not by the superabundant wealth of a few idlers among millions of poverty-stricken workers condemned to hopeless drudgery.

That human desires are not only righteous, but almost endless, and that, through co-operation, human power to gratify those desires is almost boundless. It is, indeed, hard to conceive any limit to the production of wealth when we once grasp the idea that the right way to live is to spend and not to save. All the silly talk about thrift being the greatest of virtues is based on the fallacy that interest on money lent is the fair reward of the saver for his abstinence, whereas it is really due to the monopoly of banking, and the superstition that gold is the only reliable basis for a paper currency. Besides, it is impossible to save wealth, because the moment any form of wealth is produced it must be consumed. Man may consume it if he will, but if not Nature will do it for him—this economic law holds good from a loaf of bread to a Tower Bridge.

You can save money (claims to wealth), but you cannot save wealth, and any general attempt to do so would lead to general stagnation of trade and widespread misery.

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There is practically no limit to our co-operative power to make the things we ought all to have, if we can get rid of the political and social bars which our ignorant ancestors set up, and we stupidly perpetuate, to prevent us from supplying our wants.

Just imagine how wealth would be increased if all the vacant land were thrown freely open for the workers to use. Cannot one see what a tremendous bar to general wealth is the unjust privilege now given to idle landlords to keep the workers in constant subjection, and take from them a large part of their just wages? The land must be nationalized, and all rents would then go into the public treasury, and be used for the benefit of the workers.

But this is by no means all that is necessary. The workers must also be relieved of all restrictions on the exchange of their wealth after they have produced it. And as money is the tool of exchange, and consists to-day of cheques and currency notes (silver and bronze coins are merely tokens used in trifling exchanges), the manufacture and sale of these tools must be taken out of the hands of the present ring of private banks which now control the currency and levy an enormous tribute from the workers in the form of interest.

The size of this tribute is well shown by the present War Loan now amounting to £4,000 millions, involving an annual payment by the workers of £200 millions, the great bulk of which goes in satisfaction of the preposterous claims of a few thousands of over-rich investors, who, as such, have done nothing and contributed nothing towards carrying on the War. And this fictitious War Debt is steadily increasing so that if the War lasts another two years, it will probably amount to £8,000 millions, bearing interest at the rate of £400 milliions annually, every penny of which must be produced by the workers before they can claim anything of their just wages. Now, the whole mechanism of exchange consists of nothing but bookkeeping, and the printing of the cheques and currency notes, by means of which credit is passed from hand to hand, so that the actual labour cost of thus financing the War should not have exceeded five million pounds annually, and ceased altogether when the War was over. Yet it has been made to swallow up the cost of all the battleships, and guns, and æroplanes, and munitions, and food, and clothing several times over, and will continue to hang like a millstone round the necks of the workers for many years to come!

Thus you see that nationalizing the land will be of little use unless we also have a State Bank, owned and controlled by the workers for the benefit of the workers, and supplying them with a cheap and abundant paper currency based on their own productive power, as all money, which is merely a claim to wealth, manifestly should be. No gold whatever has been used in making our home exchanges since the Currency Notes were forced into use by the failure of the gold-based banks at the first breath of war, and is, therefore, plainly unnecessary.

That all the poverty which disgraces us is due to our own artificial arrangements of society is manifest when we see that not a single wild animal, if left alone by man, cannot make a comfortable living and have plenty of time besides for play and love-making and rest. Yet we men have now learned to harness the forces of Nature—steam and electricity—and make them do our bidding, and should, therefore, be able to have more enjoyment and rest than any wild animal. There is really no reason why each worker in a co-operative commonwealth should not have an income of £1,000 a year at pre-war prices. Think of the power that is running to waste all the time in our rivers, tides, and waterfalls, all of which might, and should be, utilized for producing electricity to drive our trains, cook our food, and warm our houses. Think again of the great advance in aeronautics forced on by the War, so that we may soon expect to have a regular postal service carried on through the air at three times the speed of our present service. None of these great inventions have hitherto been of any benefit to the vast majority of the workers, simply because their low wages have not allowed them to derive any advantage from them, while the idle rich have so much unearned wealth that they are quite unable to spend it, and are driven into every kind of pernicious excitement to help them to get some spice into their useless lives.

Yes, the coming co-operative commonwealth will make us all truly rich beyond the dreams of the dreamers. And when we all have a feeling of perfect security about the future because we know that no man can shut off our plentiful livelihood, then there will be no intellectual cowards. Just think what a rich world of thought that will be in which the professors will say to their pupils: "Young men and women, it is your first duty to doubt everything that comes from someone else's authority. Your first duty is to examine everything for yourselves, and to use your own reason in coming to any conclusion. Your highest honour should be to have found a new line of thought, and worked it out for the benefit of both yourself and your co-workers, whose interests are interdependent. On the subject before us this is what I think, but I wish you to try to prove that I am mistaken, and shall be far more pleased if you can show that I am wrong than right." What a lovely world that would be! What a philosophy we should then get, and what a religion!

How can we in this poverty-stricken world, full of constant anxiety about the provision of a bare livelihood, find out anything worthy of reverence? Just think of the wretched stuff that is taught in our Churches to-day—where they have dolls and candles, and where the clergy dress themselves up in fancy costumes to make people believe that they are different from ordinary human beings—stuff that makes righteousness to consist in tamely submitting to any vile conditions of life as the will of God, and in believing a lot of impossible things in order to escape being eternally burned alive.

But when we are all rich we shall have time to think and explore, and thus gain an adequate conception of the great universe of which we are a part. Just as there is no limit to what we can produce in material things, so also, when our minds are liberated from the drudgery of to-day, shall we penetrate into regions of mentality of which our greatest thinkers now give us but dim and suggestive hints.

Now, this great War has broken down many old prejudices and false beliefs, among which none are more powerful for evil than the superstition that gold is a necessary factor in the mechanics of exchange. The workers, in striking against their organizers and superintendents, have been "barking up the wrong tree."

Let them now unite in demanding a State Bank, as described by Mr. Arthur Kitson in his books, *Trade Fallacies* and *A Fraudulent Standard*, just published by Messrs. King & Son, and the Nationalization of the Land, because these two things are the keys to economi freedom, finding its true expression in a voluntary Co-operative Commonwealth.

Ring out the false, ring in the true;
Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife.
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

G. O. WARREN.

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Correspondence.

MEN, MONEY, AND THE WAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It was only because Mr. Thorn did appear to deny the justice of the necessity of the State to receive financial support in the prosecution of a just War, that I pointed out the error of so doing. I rejoice to know that he did not mean any such thing, but cannot admit his words did not imply it. For the rest, of course, we are all with him to a man.

EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

The Blank Wall.

III.

THE conception that the history of man is the record of a continuous Progress, and that each year added to the official almanac is a year's improvement upon the one that has passed, is a fallacy that continues to obsess the average brain.

But does not the realization that the trend of evolution is unmistakably upon a downward line prove the inability of the modern brain to perceive a reality as insistent as the fact of scientific war, or the increasing struggle for existence?

That the great majority of people should conceive this process of insidious corruption as "Progress" is sufficiently indicative of the real position. The People of Civilization are "progressing" downwards, believing it to be the opposite direction! Life is like the famous pyramid—inverted—and tottering upon its point! The brain of humanity has inverted itself without being conscious of what has happened!

At the present time it is almost impossible to print ordinary common sense. Vicious newspapers, whose sole object is to increase capital through the War, are praised to the utmost by every dissolute and degenerate mind, while those who attempt to disseminate sanity and idealism, are regarded as being guilty of the most intolerable kind of reactionary stupidity and maliciousness! Great ideals, however, are being expressed through the medium of obscure and neglected individuals, as, indeed, they have always been expressed. Great men and women are in this hour crying in the wilderness which adds acres to its boundaries as the centuries pass. They cry, it seems, in vain. We can offer humanity Ideals and Truth, but it seems that we are unable to bestow the requisite mental power of understanding these precious things.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Society News.

THE debate last Sunday on "The Transmission of Acquired Characteristics," as expected, proved extremely interesting. The subject, being one upon which Freethinkers differ, was keenly followed by those present, and many questions were asked of Mr. Wilde and Mr. Palmer, showing how stimulating the debate had been. It was gratifying to notice some new faces in the audience, and it is hoped that those who read this column will send a postcard, giving name and address, to the undersigned, or to the Head Office, for a syllabus of these debates, which we hope to continue to the end of March. Friends desiring to speak publicly on behalf of the Freethought cause, will find in these debates a good opportunity of trying their 'prentice hand before a sympathetic audience. No topical subject is barred. Next Sunday evening, Dr. Binnie Dunlop, the Secretary of the Malthusian League, will open on "Freethought and Neo-Malthusianism." This subject should be of special interest to our women friends, at the present time, and we hope Dr. Dunlop will find a large audience of women to greet him.—H. V. Lane, Hon. Sec., N. London Branch, 29, Burton Street, King's Cross, W.C., 1

The *Daily Mirror* says "the Prince of Wales is expected by some to be the King of Jerusalem." We imagined that Jesus Christ had that honour.

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.

KINGSTON HUMANITARIAN SOCIETY (Fife Hall, Fife Road, Kingston-on-Thames): 3, Miss K. B. Kough, "Freethought, Woman, and War."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Dr. Binnie Dunlop, M.B. (Secretary Malthusian League), "Freethought and Neo-Malthusianism." Open debate.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Tube Station): 7, P. S. Wilde, "Gods Beginnings."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Shaller, Dale, Kells, and Swasey.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, "Belief, Make-Belief, and Unbelief."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): 7, R. Heughan, "Secularism and Political Action."

NEW MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Bakers' Hall, 56 Stevenson Street): 6.30, A. C. Rosetti, "Jottings from Astronomy."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall, Fowler Street): Chapman Cohen, 3, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Grave"; 6.30, "Christianity Before and After the War." 6, Music.

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Views and Opinions.

Viscount Morley's Recollections.[1]

Viscount Morley's life covers one of the most interesting periods of English intellectual history. When he was born, 1838, the old order still presented an apparently unbroken front to the world. Not till nineteen years later did Darwin publish his *Origin of Species*, one of the most revolutionary books ever issued. Spencer had at the date of Lord Morley's birth written nothing, and Lyell's epoch-marking *Principles of Geology* had appeared five or six years earlier. In his own lifetime, therefore, Lord Morley saw the inception and witnessed the conquering career of a reasoned philosophy of evolution. He was a contemporary—in many cases an acquaintance—of Mill, George Eliot, Lewes, Swinburne, Meredith, Huxley, Hardy, and numerous others who made the latter half of the nineteenth century what it was. He saw the rise to popularity, if not to power, of the Socialist movement. He was a witness of the whole career of Charles Bradlaugh—a career which has left a larger impress on English history than is generally recognized. And in the latter part of his life his immersion in politics made him acquainted with all, or nearly all, of the leading figures in our political history. Added to this, he was himself a writer of eminence, and a thinker, even when through some constitutional flaw lacking the courage to carry his thinking into action. Consequently, the life of such a man is one that thousands will turn to as a work that cannot be missed without loss. And yet one lays down the work feeling not only that more *might* have been said, but that more *ought* to have been said. On the appearance of Mr. Holyoake's *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, a *Chronicle* reviewer said that the author remembered everything that had occurred, and many things that hadn't. One might say of the present work that Viscount Morley recollects much, but, apparently forgets a great deal. And what is omitted would interest many of his readers more than much that is included.

* * *

The Test of the Future.

Three-fourths of Lord Morley's work is taken up with political reminiscences. The remainder is concerned with writers of various sorts, and one would have wished the proportions reversed. It is true the politician looms larger at the moment than the poet, the scientist, or the philosopher; but time, which, as Carlyle says, has "a strange contracting influence on many a wide-spread fame," often buries the politician with the circumstances that gave him reputation. Palmerstone, Chamberlain, Gladstone, and a score of others fill the stage for awhile, and then pass into a comparative oblivion. The writer lives on in virtue of the ideas of which he was the mouthpiece. Theirs is often the hardest lot, but they are destined to a more lasting fame. We may even be excused the regret that John Morley, the writer, the author of that fine series of works on the French Encyclopedists, ever allowed himself to become immersed in politics. For politicians are plenty, and thinkers are few; nor can one combine with equal benefit to both the functions of teacher and legislator. One is essentially a game of compromise, and in the realm of ideas compromise should have no place.

* * *

Some Striking Omissions.

We have mentioned some curious omissions in Lord Morley's *Recollections*. We are not the only ones that have drawn attention to this feature of the work, as we see the Rev. Alexander Whyte says, in the *British Weekly*, that he put down the volumes "with a great chill in my heart," because he had not found therein a single mention of Jesus Christ. To that the reply might be made that the work is called *Recollections*, and in not remembering Jesus, Lord Morley was repeating the omission of other writers who lived about the date of the alleged founder of Christianity. The omissions we wish to note are more curious. Viscount Morley gives us a noble gallery of brilliant Freethinkers. There is Arthur Morison, the author of *The Service of Man* (we fail to see what is meant by calling it a "miscarriage," both of thought and composition), and who, he says, exerted an influence at Oxford beyond that of "any tutor or professor." George Meredith, George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Lewes, Carlyle, Ruskin, Swinburne, Bagehot, Leslie Stephen, and other well-known names; and full homage is paid to some—Mill, Meredith, and Spencer, for example. But their heresy is never thrust on the reader. Stranger still, the names of two such publicists as Holyoake and Bradlaugh are never once mentioned. This would not have been remarkable had he never have come into contact with either. But he knew both by correspondence, if not personally, and, we believe, attended Charles Bradlaugh's funeral. To Holyoake he once wrote how much he "valued his good opinion," and it was to Morley himself that Meredith wrote after hearing Bradlaugh :—

Did I tell you that Fred and I went to sit under

[1] *Recollections*. By John Viscount Morley. (Macmillan). 2 vols. 25s. net.

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> Bradlaugh one evening? The man is neither to be laughed nor sneered down nor trampled. He will be a powerful speaker. I did my best to make Greenwood understand that. It was really pleasant to hear those things spoken which the parsonry provoke.

Meredith evidently knew a man when he saw one, and his admiration for the *Freethinker* and its late Editor is well known to all readers of this paper.

* * *

An Appreciation.

Now, we do not say that Viscount Morley was bound to mention either Bradlaugh or Holyoake, or even Bradlaugh's constitutional struggle, which must have appealed to a mind of his calibre. The former certainly played an important part in the life of the century, and Bradlaugh's fight for a free press and his constitutional struggle were of even greater importance. We note these omissions because they seem to have a bearing upon our impression of the writer's mental make-up. His is a good, clear, logical intellect; but some trick of temperament seems to keep him this side of great mental courage. He is no leader of forlorn hopes, and one can scarcely picture him going into a fight knowing and feeling that all one can count on is the pleasure of the contest, and enjoying the strength that comes from a knowledge of impregnable truth. And one has a suspicion that much of the strength he displayed was, so to speak, environmental. Association with men like Mill, of whom he speaks with a tone of genuine reverence; of Meredith, of whom he speaks with great affection; of Lewes, and of Spencer, must have had a fine tonic effect upon a character which we fancy was always healthily impressionable. But the mental chivalry which led Mill to pay a public compliment to Bradlaugh in his harassed days seems lacking. Otherwise, because Freethought is tabooed by the general run of writers, and great Freethinkers so systematically ignored, that their work is unknown to succeeding generations, there would have been adequate ground for even straining a point to see that full justice was done them. A marked feature of Mr. Edward Clodd's *Memories*—a feature which upset some of his reviewers—was that he made the freethinking of famous men and women very apparent. Viscount Morley's work will not incur the same blame.

* * *

Weighing the Past.

And having had our grumble—a well-merited one, we believe—let us say that *Recollections* is an intensely interesting work. It could hardly have been otherwise. It is not a life of the author, neither is it packed with "revelations" that will agitate the prurient nostrils of journalistic busybodies. It is, indeed, in its way, a veiled confession of faith. The man-of-letters, the philosophic thinker, cannot be suppressed even when dealing with politics. And in the midst of his political reminiscences there is inserted a chapter on Lucretius which comes like a breath of flower-laden evening after a sultry day. And to his credit, it should be said, that his only criticism of Mill, "My chief master," and whose appearance is drawn with a singularly loving touch, is in connection with an essay on Theism which he justifiably condemns as weak in logic and defective in its historical perspective. And, in another passage, replying to the charge that his criticism of Christianity was "sub-silently" sapping faith without reconstruction, he quotes from one of his own books in defence:—

> We will not attack you as Voltaire did; we shall not exterminate you; we shall explain you. History will place your dogmas in its class, above or below a hundred competing dogmas, exactly as the naturalist classifies his species. From being a guide to millions of lives, it will become a chapter in a book. The mental climate will gradually deprive your symbols of their nourishment, and men will turn away from your system, not because they have confuted it, but because like witchcraft or astrology it has ceased to affect or hold them.

That is finely said, and it depicts a true developmental process. One would have liked more of that sort of diet and less of politics. Not, as we have said, that the philosopher is buried, even there. Sixty years ago George Henry Lewes wrote a little book on physiology, which, although naturally now out of date, is, because of the philosophic quality which distinguished all Lewes wrote, better worth reading than many a work written by a mere cataloguer of scientific facts. And Morley the philosopher is always hard at the heels of Morley the politician. It is, indeed, upon the philosophic note that the work ends. At the end of the *Recollections*, and of a long and busy life, he says:—

> A painful interrogatory, I must confess, emerges Has not your school—the Darwins, Spencers, Renans, and the rest—held the civilized world, both old and new alike, European and transatlantic, in the hollow of their hands, for two long generations past? Is it quite clear that their influence has been so much more potent than the gospel of the various churches? *Circumspice.* Is not diplomacy, unkindly called by Voltaire the field of lies, as able as it ever was to dupe governments and governed by grand abstract catchwords veiling obscure and inexplicable purposes, and turning the whole world over with blood and tears to a strange Witches' Sabbath? These were queries of pith and moment indeed, but for something better weighed and more deliberative than an autumn reverie.

A natural query. And yet the Darwins, and Spencers, and others, have an apt reply. They might answer:—

> True, we have exerted a great influence over the world for two generations. But behind these two lies the thousands of generations, during which the world has been bound in ignorance, and held in subjection to tyranny and superstition. We have the whole weight of the past against us, and the marvel is not that we have done so little, but that we have done so much. Give us but a tithe of the time during which the world has been so ruled, and but a fraction of the power, and the result will be worth the having. We have already excited the desire for a better human society, we are building up the knowledge that will give that desire force and direction. And though the dawn breaks slowly, still the darkness is less dense than it was.

Recollections is a book to be read, and we have been able to do it but scant justice in the space at our disposal. But we hope to return to other aspects of the work on another occasion.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Palpable Fallacies.

THE well-known writer, Mr. Arthur Machen, has favoured the readers of the *Evening News* with a series of articles entitled "God and the War." On most subjects Mr. Machen writes exceedingly well; but it must be confessed that we have read the articles on "God and the War" with great disappointment. This is specially true of numbers iv. and v., in the issues for November 23 and 26. In the former he irrelevantly tells us that "the chief aim of prayer is to raise us to the condition and state of the beasts," his silly contention being "that it was we, not the beasts, who were driven out of paradise." This revelation came to him seven years ago, and he has been assiduously pondering it ever since, regarding it as the most profound and precious truth which man has had the good fortune to receive. As a matter of fact, neither we nor the beasts were

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driven out of paradise. If the beasts could but speak, they would inform us that they too have their sufferings and sorrows as well as we. When Mr. Machen proceeds to affirm that we are distracted and miserable "because we do not realize, because we cannot keep on realizing, that we have only one business: and that is God; God immanent and transcendent, in all and above all," he is guilty of darkening counsel by words without knowledge. Neither God nor his eternal will is a perceptible object, Nature alone being discernible by us. The saying that "our true order and true life is the Divine will" is a mere religious cant to which no intelligible meaning can be attached. Of course, Mr. Machen is fully aware that millions of people do not believe in an immanent and transcendent Deity whose will is the rule of life; but their inability to share his beliefs is put down to a constitutional defect for which they are not to blame. Allusion is made to people who are tone-deaf, colour-blind, unable to distinguish one flavour from another, and to people "who are born without the sense of literature, who are utterly incapable of relishing the exquisite savours of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, or of that great chapter which is intituled 'How they Chirruped over their Cups'"; and then comes the following caustic comment:—

> Very well; it is a great pity, and we are sorry for them. We know that they miss a great deal of the pleasures of life—which are none too many. We will not, perhaps, go all the way with Shakespeare and declare them fit for murders, treasons, stratagems, and spoils, though, by the way, Shakespeare usually knew what he was talking about. But we, not having the title to use the high wrath of Shakespeare, are sorry for those poor people who say they "see nothing" in this masterpiece, and can't understand "why people make such a fuss" over that, and are "bored to tears" by the other. We are sorry for them; but if they called their state of mind Freethought, I believe we should feel somewhat cross with them.

That is a hoary fallacy, and as obvious as it is ancient; and one is amazed to find a man of Mr. Machen's intelligence condescending to utilize it. He who so cleverly created and afterwards so completely annihilated the angels of Mons ought not to have allowed himself to be led astray by an argument so fundamentally false as the one just quoted. And yet, assuming an air of superiority, this is how he reasons:—

> The Freethought I have in view is the Freethought of the tone-deaf man who insists on becoming a musical critic, so that he may prove to the world that there is no such thing as music, and that the people who say they enjoy music are fools or knaves or both. We could pity him for his lack of one of the most exquisite—and irrational—of pleasures, if he would but hold his tongue. But the Freethinker will not hold his tongue. He is not content to keep silence and shrug his shoulders, wondering internally "what on earth these people see in it all." He is not even content to say out loud, "Well, I see nothing in it all, and that's an end of it." He will invent reasons, which are not real reasons, to justify his own incapacity. He is not able to relish a good dinner; so he finds out all kinds of "reasons" to prove that dinner is nonsense, and poisonous nonsense at that.

Such is Mr. Machen's argument against Freethought, and a more fallacious argument was never elaborated against any cause. The first thing to be borne in mind is that tone-deafness and colour-blindness are not *acquired* defects. A great musician never loses his faith in music as the result of a long and exhaustive examination of the subject, and then systematically attacks the art as a thoroughly unreal one. Tone-deafness is a fault of Nature, for which the victim is not in the least responsible But in the overwhelming majority of cases Freethought is the outcome of a critical investigation of the religious question in all its aspects. In many cases, an exceptionally ardent believer becomes a thoroughgoing unbeliever, and advocates Freethought from a deep sense of duty. By a severe process of reasoning, the capacity to believe in the supernatural is converted into a necessity to disbelieve in it. We know a man who, for upwards of twenty-five years, not only fervently cherished the belief in God, but enthusiastically preached him as the loving Father and Saviour of mankind. Twenty years ago, as a consequence of facing the facts of life, he lost his faith and became an Atheist. And the worst of it is, according to Mr. Machen, that he will not hold his tongue, but insists upon his right and duty to express and defend his present views. Simply because he has the courage of his convictions, Mr. Machen feels somewhat cross with him. But most assuredly his Freethought is by no means the Freethought of the tone-deaf man who condemns music merely because he lacks the faculty to appreciate music.

Mr. Machen deals in word-jugglery without a qualm. For example, he states that music is at once, "one of the most exquisite and irrational of pleasures," and then he adds:—

> If you come to think of it, you will find that all the exquisite things of life, even the exquisite things of material life, are irrational.

We have no hesitation whatever in giving that assertion an emphatic denial. Indeed, most of the truly exquisite things of life are in a high degree rational, though some of them may not be directly enjoined by the reason. There is absolutely nothing against reason in music, or even in dancing. Music means harmonic sounds, scientifically combined, which please and inspire the mind; and to dance is to trip or leap rhythmically, or to move with measured steps, or to a musical accompaniment, which is conducive at once to pleasure and health; but there is no irrational element in either music or dancing. Having thus trifled with the terms "rational" and "irrational," Mr. Machen says:—

> Very good; but the most frequent of the sham arguments of the Freethinker is that the Faith is irrational. Of course, it is irrational; like all the things of life which are worth anything or worth talking about.

By "irrational" we understand contrary to reason; does Mr. Machen intend to convey the impression that the Faith is irrational in that sense? When we declare that the belief in the Supernatural is irrational, all we mean is that it contradicts all the facts of life as we know them. It is quite true that our knowledge of Nature is, as yet, woefully inadequate; but we have not a single scrap of knowledge of the Supernatural, nor any means of acquiring it. Mr. Machen admits this, and seems to be proud of it. His idea is that if the Faith were either proved or provable it would no longer be faith. We are entirely ignorant of the distinguished journalist's religious associations, if he has any; but there is much in his language which reminds us of the teaching of the Catholic Church, according to which faith, to be meritorious, must be blind. Many of our readers remember the famous Papal Encyclical on "Modernism," which committed the Church definitely and explicitly to the absolute rejection of all modern modes of thought, and of the results of scientific and historical research, and in which belief on the sole authority of the Papacy was solemnly insisted upon. Mr. Machen asks: "Is it reasonable to spend time reading about Mr. Pickwick, who never existed?" and we answer in the affirmative, on the score that time so spent contributes to the enjoyments of life. The truth is that readers of the history of Mr. Pickwick are in no danger of falling into the habit of regarding him as a real person, whereas Christians who read about God and Christ in the Bible do regard

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and treat them as objective realities, to whom they pray, and have been praying for upwards of three years, for a speedy victory for their side in the War. Mr. Machen admits that their existence is unprovable; and, surely, he must also admit that the fact of their hearing and answering prayer is equally unprovable. What, then, can be the use of believing in and praying to them?

In attempting to discredit Freethought, Mr. Machen has only succeeded in making the Christian Faith look uncommonly ridiculous. He might have lived in the Dark Ages, in utter ignorance of modern science, for he entirely ignores natural knowledge in all its forms. The articles under consideration will not render the slightest service to religion, nor do the least injury to Freethought.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Pious Profiteer.

> What gasconading rascals those saints must have been, if they first boasted these exploits or invented these miracles! These legends, however, were no more than monkish extravagances, over which one laughed inwardly:
>
> —*Charlotte Bronte.*

PROTESTANTS are supposed to be averse to saints. But, like so many other things connected with Protestantism, this is far more accurate in theory than in fact. For there is one saint—Saint George—who is treated with great respect in this Protestant country. The saint's portrait is on the gold coinage and on some of the banknotes. Or, rather, there is a design of a man on horseback, apparently killing a militant cockroach with a carving-knife. This is meant to portray Saint George and the Dragon, and the man is supposed to be the patron saint of our "tight little island."

The inclusion, during recent years, of the harmless, necessary Union Jack among the symbols of the most holy religion of the Prince of Peace has led to a renewed interest in the personality of Saint George. It was, indeed, fondly hoped that, by the help of the Almighty and Lord Northcliffe, many otherwise decent citizens might be persuaded to observe Saint George's Day by wearing roses. The suggestion, unhappily, fell flat; but it may prove of interest to many to be informed who Saint George was, his connection with English history, and his association with the national flower.

It is with regret that we find the saint's biography is unpleasant reading, and quite unsuited for the perusal of young persons, and he still more youthful "buds" of the Primrose League. Historians agree in disclosing a pitiable story of a misspent life. From the highest to the lowest, from the great Edward Gibbon to the popular Professor William Smith, they describe the saint as an unadulterated scoundrel. Even Emerson can find no redeeming traits in the saintly sinner's character. Hear what the cultured American critic has to say:—

> George, of Cappodocia, born at Epephania, in Cilicia, was a low parasite, who got a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon.

This is a bad start; but for the moment we refrain from levelling the guns of our criticism at the pious profiteer.

> A rogue and informer, he got rich, and was forced to run from justice.

This seems to suggest that Saint George sold pigs which had died natural deaths, was a swindler, and had learned to efface himself at the psychological moment.

> He saved his money, embraced Arianism, collected a library, and got promoted by a faction to the episcopal throne of Alexandria.

Like the Army contractors who did business in the South African and other wars, Saint George had his saintly head screwed on the right way. As for his collecting a library, his previous commercial reputation was sufficiently bad to prevent the booksellers allowing the saint credit. We may be equally certain that his ordination as a right reverend father-in-God was also against public interest.

> When Julian came, A.D. 361, George was dragged to prison. The prison was burst open by the mob, and George was lynched as he deserved.

There is something very distressing in the idea of a dear bishop being "jerked to Jesus." If the saint had died of *delirium tremens* we might still have remembered, prayerfully, that even ecclesiastics are but human beings. This lynching, however, is a dreadful business, and we read through a mist of tears Emerson's peroration:—

> And this precious knave became in good time Saint George, of England, patron of chivalry, emblem of victory and civility, and the pride of the best blood of the modern world.

A lemon-hearted cynic might liken the history of the patron saint of England to a purple page from the earlier books of the Bible, or the Newgate Calendar. Some modern historians, realizing the ethical drawbacks of the saint's career, have made desperate attempts to whitewash the life of the holy man. They have succeeded, after silent meditation among the tombs, in deceiving themselves that George was not George, but another man of the same name. Criticism, sharp as Shylock's knife, cuts their nonsense to pieces. The tutelary saint of England, like so many Biblical heroes, was a blackguard, and there is an end of it.

Saint George is not an English saint, and he never did anything for England. The chief exploit that we connect him with, the slaying of the dragon, is the one incident that is confessed, even by his warmest supporters, to be a mere solar myth—just another version of Apollo and the Python, Bellerophon and the Chimera, Perseus and the Sea-monster. Even the alternative and more respectable George, who is said to have suffered martyrdom under Diocetian, was a ludicrous personage. This Saint George was, we are told, killed three times, coming to life again on two of the occasions. Among the trifling things that happened to him were that he was roasted, beaten with iron rods, decapitated, and then exposed to wild animals. Coming to life again, he was set on a wooden horse, and a fire kindled under him. Sixty nails were driven into his head, and he was sawn in four pieces. These were thrown into boiling pitch. Again he came to life, and he was finally despatched on a wheel spiked with swords.

All this, of course, is very edifying, but of what value is this imaginative nonsense to-day? So far from recommending any citizen to honour such a saint, we suggest that it would be a kindness to strew the poppy of oblivion over the grave of such a saintly sinner. Saint George is a disappointment, and one of the most pathetic shams from which ever a great nation sought to extract exalting sentiment. So far as the saint is concerned, there is nothing to celebrate.

MIMNERMUS.

The Bible and Immortality.

NEW TESTAMENT TIMES.

WE come now to the period in the first century at which the Christian religion took its rise. This period is placed by the Gospels at A.D. 28-30; but there are good reasons for believing that it was several decades later. In any case there were no written Gospels until after the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). Soon after the latter date we have the following statements by Josephus

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respecting the three sects among the Jews in his day—the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes:—

> Wars ii. viii. 14, 11, 13.—The Pharisees say that all souls are incorruptible; but that the souls of good men are only removed into other bodies, but that the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment.....The Sadducees do not believe in the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades. .....The doctrine of the Essenes is this: that the souls are immortal, and continue for ever.....but that when they are set free from the bonds of the flesh, they then rejoice and mount upward.....that good souls have habitations beyond the ocean, in a region neither oppressive with severe cold nor intense heat; while they allot to bad souls a dark and tempestuous den full of never-ceasing punishments. And indeed the Greeks seem to have followed the same notion, when they allot the islands of the blessed to their brave men whom they call heroes and demigods.....and to the souls of the wicked, the region of the ungodly in Hades, where certain wicked persons are punished.....There is another order of Essenes, who agree with the rest.....but differ from them in the point of marriage.

Some years later Josephus wrote his *Antiquities*, in which he says of the Pharisees and Sadducees:—

> Antiq. xviii. i. 3, 4.—The Pharisees believe that souls have an immortal vigour in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and that the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again. But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: that souls die with the bodies.

In the latter paragraph, it should be noticed, there is no torment for the wicked in Hades, only eternal imprisonment, as in the Old Testament Sheol. The Greeks, however, imagined a place of punishment in a part of Hades which they called Tartaros: the latter place is named in 2 Peter ii. 4, where it is translated "hell."

The first Christians were Jews who belonged to the second order of Essenes mentioned by Josephus. These called themselves Nazarenes, a name mentioned as a sect only once in the New Testament (Acts xxiv. 5); but we find it again in the title given to Jesus in the Gospels and the Acts—"Jesus the Nazarene"—which is everywhere mistranslated "Jesus of Nazareth." This Jesus was not the founder of the sect, but merely a prominent member belonging to it, who was regarded by the other members as a prophet: it was Paul and his Gentile converts who exalted him to the position of a god and worshipped him. In the second century the Nazarenes were ranked as heretics because they still maintained that Jesus was only a man. The Nazarenes existed as a Christian sect until the fourth century, and then we hear of them no more. We will now look at some passages in the New Testament in which Hades is mentioned.

> Matt. xi. 23.—And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto Heaven? thou shalt go down into Hades.
>
> Matt. xvi. 18.—Thou art Peter (*Petros*), and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
>
> Luke xvi. 23.—And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment.
>
> Acts ii., 27, 31.—Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption.....He foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.
>
> Rev. i. 18.—Christ says: I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

In the second passage there is a play upon the name Petros, which means a stone or rock. In the quotation from Luke, the rich man in Hades was "in torments," and "in anguish in this flame." This appears to have been a mistake on the part of the writer, unless he meant Tartaros; for Hades was not the Christian place of punishment. In the passage in the Acts, verse 27 is a quotation from Psalm xvi. 10, which the writer represents as a prediction referring to Jesus Christ—which, of course, it is not.

In the following passages Hades or Sheol is plainly referred to, though not expressly named:—

> 1 Peter iii. 18-20.—Because Christ also suffered for sins .....being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.
>
> 1 Peter iv. 6.—For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

The two foregoing passages are the only Scripture foundation for the following italicized words in the Apostle's Creed—"He *descended into hell*, the third day he rose again from the dead." The word "hell" here refers to Sheol or Hades, "the abode of the spirits of the dead"—not to a place of punishment. We are to understand that during the time the body of Christ lay in the tomb, his spirit left the body and descended to the underworld to preach the gospel to the spirits there imprisoned. Amongst the New Testament apocryphal writings, now extant, is one entitled the "Gospel of Nicodemus" or the "Acts of Pilate." This work, as it has come down to us, is in two parts—the *Acts of Pilate*, properly so called, and the *Descent of Christ into Hades*. The first part narrates the trial, condemnation, and crucifixion of Christ in a different manner to that of the Four Gospels. The second part gives a somewhat confused account of Jesus going down into Hades, where he finds Adam, David, Jeremiah, and a host of other Bible characters. His first act is to bind Satan and plunge him into an abyss, there to await his second coming. This done, he preaches to the spirits assembled there, and invites them to believe his gospel and gain admission into heaven. "For behold," he says, "I again raise you up through the power of the cross." It was from this fraudulent Gospel that the author of the "First Epistle of Peter" drew his information respecting the visit of Jesus to Hades—a fact which proves the great credulity of the early Christians, and the pious frauds perpetrated by some of the most zealous among them.

We come next to the place of eternal punishment—the so-called "Gehenna of fire." The name "Gehenna" is derived from the "Valley of Hinnom" (Ge-hinnom), a vale south of Jerusalem, where, in the later Old Testament times, sacrifices were offered to the local gods of Canaan, and where also young children were burnt alive; or, as it was styled, were made "to pass through the fire" to Molech, or some other local deity. Speaking in the name of the Lord God, Jeremiah says:—

> Jer. xxxii. 35.—They built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind that they should do this abomination (also Jer. vii. 31).

In this valley Ahaz, king of Judah, "burnt his children in the fire," as did also Manasseh king of Judah (2 Chron. xxviii. 3; xxxiii. 6). At a subsequent period, when only the god Yahweh was worshipped, all kinds of insanitary matter and refuse were carried from Jerusalem into this vale to be burnt, and there fires were kept constantly burning. These never-dying fires

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suggested to Esdras and others a name for the place of torment—which name was borrowed by the early Christians from 2 Esdras. We will now see what the Gospels have to say on this subject:—

> Matt. v. 22.—And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the Gehenna of fire.
>
> Matt. xviii. 9.—It is good for thee to enter into [eternal] life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire (also Matt. v. 29).
>
> Matt. x. 28.—And be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.
>
> Matt. xxiii. 33.—Ye serpents, ye off-spring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of Gehenna?
>
> Matt. xxv. 41.—Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.
>
> Matt. xiii. 41, 42.—The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.—(See also Matt. xiii. 49, 50).

In the foregoing passages we find "the *Gehenna* of fire" and "the *furnace* of fire." Both were taken from 2 Esdras, whose writer says: "And the pit of torment shall appear, and over against it shall be the place of rest: and the *furnace* of *Gehenna* shall be shewed, and over against it the paradise of delight." In the parable of the "Rich man and Lazarus" (Luke xvi. 19-31) the furnace of Gehenna and the paradise of delight are described as "over against" each other, so that the rich man in one place could see Lazarus in the other. In "Enoch" (chap. xxii.) it is stated that the two places are separated "by a chasm, by water, and by light above it." In the parable in Luke (xvi. 26) it is said that between the two places "there is a great gulf fixed.....that none may cross over." This is how the writer of the parable understood "Enoch."

ABRACADABRA.

In the Shades.

IT was night in Hell, or Hades, or the Shades—the temperature, etc., of the place not being a mathematical conception; but it is, nevertheless, an august region, and a delectable one, for no one who goes there is ever troubled with a wish to return. Some say it is always night in Hell; but no, it has its sun-kissed Olympian heights, and its valleys flooded with the strange, still, wistful moonlight of memory. Far and near have no meaning, here or there. What is now the one is now the other. There the long perspective lies in the shadow of the hills. The middle distance is often dim and obscure, with only mellow-radiant patches here and there. Now the apex is the base, the past the present; the ancient mingles with the modern. As on our mundane and mathematical sphere objects on the terrestrial horizon fade and disappear, but the sun and moon keep pace with us, and all the starry host, and are there before us—and after us. It was night in Hell—beautiful, blissful, brooding, meditative night.

Socrates was sitting by a rude bench, but one shaped to artistry by the touch of time and the atmosphere of antique association. He was scantily but picturesquely clad, and rubbed his bare shins as though the irons had just been removed from them, and kept sipping happily and harmlessly from certain urn-like cups with the word *hemlock* curiously scrawled upon them. He was also talking to his disciples in that strain of very human, imperturbable, and absolute philosophy.

Shakespeare was playing with Ariel—the spirit and the poet now twin spirits. Sing, sir, sing! commanded the Master, and all Hell smiled to hear:—

> Full fathom five thy father lies,
> Of his bones are coral made,
> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea change
> Into something rich and strange;
> Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell;
> Hark! now I hear them,
> Ding, dong, bell.

The voice died away, and innumerable melodious liquid bells took up the strain, clamouring from roof to floor, near and clear, and faint and far, and gradually dropping to slow and solemn single beats, with now and then a quick reviving cadence clang of solitary startling and intense but exquisite sound, passing at length in a dying fall, when all was still again.

A deaf, disappointed-looking man in black, named Charles Haddon Spurgeon, was preoccupied with the bellows of an extinct hearth, poking the dead ashes and stoking it with the faggots of fanaticism that would no longer burn. If the fire was quenched, the fireman's faith in it was unquenchable, and so he was happy and hopeful in a way, and the great spirits about him were fain to tolerate his now harmless hobby.

Burns and Milton—the two poets who had done so much on earth to rehabilitate the Devil—were holding converse with that once potent Personage. Milton still addressed him royally and respectfully, as thus: Oh, Prince, oh, Chief, of many throned powers! Burns was still sceptical and satirical, reminding him—in the past tense,—

> Ah, Nick, ah, Nick, it wasna fair
> To show us first the temptin' ware,
> Bright wines and bonnie lassies rare,
> To put us daft,
> Syne weave unseen your spider's snare,
> O' Hell's damned waft.

The Devil, in Doric, answered and said: Man, Burns, ye havna fared sae ill after a'; and, lo, as he spoke, Tam o' Shanter came galloping through Hell with a troup of hizzies after him in scantiest attire, some leaping, some running, some flying, one perched acroup behind him clasping his waist, scattering the embers and raising the stoure of Spurgeon's smithy fire, and disappearing all in one whisk of the grey mare's tail. Upon my soul, said Rabbie, a heavenly sight to be seen in Hell, whereat he roared in contagious explosions of laughter.

The grotesque had passed as a cloud obscures the moon, and the Shades were classic again. Voltaire and Paine were seated on a bank in silent telepathic communion. Ingersoll and Henry Ward Beecher were walking together. Byron and Shelley were boating in a mountain lake, and the moonbeams steeped the oars in liquid gold. Keats, "that Greek who knew no Greek," was sitting astern with a book. All these, with their peers, an innumerable company, appear in those Shades again, in their habit as they lived.

The figure of a Freethinker, familiar to latter day "Saints," was seen half-sitting, half-reclining, on a grassy bank, by a grey wall, reflected in an amber stream. His index-finger was inserted between the leaves of an otherwise closed book. He looked beyond it into the bosom of the stream, and into the clear deeps of his inner thought. The marble Wilberforce in Westminster Abbey, but living, breathing force and feeling, reason, justice, humanity, with flitting gleams of scorn, amusement, satire, and contempt, and intervals of deep recreative repose; and resting on the sward beside him, Joseph Mazzini Wheeler, closely regarding his friend and chief, G. W. Foote, and reading his thoughts. The

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latter lays down his book, and leans upon the old, grey wall, and over his profile, in this relief, steals a seeming deeper, more indifferent, monchalant abstraction, but the permanent lines of mutable expression remain, the "channels," as it were, of emotion, character, and resolution; the firm set mouth in particular conveying and preserving the record of many a battle fought and won, betraying always rather than disguising the ever alert and active mind; grim a little, wistful and trustful, but always strong; the flags of battle furled; the lines of care erased; a benevolent, genial, incipient smile, like sunshine in the cloud.

Walt Whitman was disporting in the stream, waving his hand to the Pioneers of all time and eternity; anon wading ashore, dripping diamond drops, to climb a tree, and rock himself in the azure, as the touch of Mother Nature thrilled his every fibre. It was night, but it was also noon.

Two Titans had met in the grove, and the forms of Bradlaugh and James Thomson, B.V., were seen amongst the trees.

It was dawn in Hell, a silvery, golden glow was illumining the crests of the sun-smitten mountains of memory. Francisco Ferrer was seen wending his way in the morning dews from his prison, now his castle, of Montjuich. A breeze stirred the Shades. A terrestrial wind. A door had opened. Someone had been admitted. Thousands came every day, but mostly in at the more popular gate. A blood-stained, khaki-clad figure approached. G. W. Foote saluted. The soldier spirit had just come from the hell of the battlefield to this Eden of rest, so long misnamed and misunderstood. The soldier stood at attention, and said:

"I have a message for you, Mr. Foote."

"Ah! From the battlefield?"

"No. From London, from the Law Courts, from the House of Lords."

"Ah!"

"The Bowman Bequest Case....."

"What of it?"

"Is settled in our (your) favour."

"Then indeed is my life's work complete; and these valleys of eternal rest will be more restful still. We have both been soldiers; you a soldier of the King, I a soldier of progress. Come with me!" The sages were gathering round. There was great rejoicing in the quiet Shades. But at this moment the sun in splendour appeared above the hills, the valleys were flooded with light, the vision faded, to reappear again and again in the moonlight of memory.

A. MILLAR.

Acid Drops.

The latest Christian apologist is the well-known writer, Mr. Arthur Machen, and he is also the most unique. In Article VI. on "God and the War," which appeared in the *Evening News* for November 30, he informs us that "The plain man in the street, the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle type of man, demands of religion, in the first place, that it shall be entirely incredible." Will Christianity successfully and completely supply that demand? This has always been the contention of Freethinkers, to which believers, generally, vigorously give the lie direct. Indeed, the divines boldly assert that Christianity is entirely credible.

Curiously enough, Mr. Machen declares that the office of religion is to "remove the veils of enigmas which are about these Holy Mysteries that they may become gloriously manifest"; but how on earth can a religion which is "utterly irrational" and "entirely incredible" unravel any mystery whatsoever? Surely the distinguished *literatus* cannot be in earnest, but is skilfully pulling the legs of the pious readers of the *Evening News*.

Once upon a time Mr. Machen used to try to argue with bishops, endeavouring to convince them that "religion was not primarily concerned with attendance at four-ale bars, or with the state of Piccadilly Circus between eleven and twelve-thirty p.m."; but he has discontinued that task as wholly hopeless, and now devotes himself to the pleasanter and easier labour of showing that religion is "entirely incredibe."

The Archbishop of York has reminded Convocation that the only source of supply for future candidates for the ministry is the Army. He says a "considerable number" of Nonconformist ministers have applied for ordination, but the colleges are empty. We do not say that many young men coming from the Army will not enter the Church, but we are quite sure—knowing what we do of the feeling in the Army, and the shock the War has given to religious beliefs—that the mental calibre of those who take "Holy Orders" will be lower than ever. After the War, "the fool of the family for the pulpit" will be truer than ever.

Billy Sunday says: "If I were God, I would keep the gravediggers busy for a month." Don't be in a hurry, Sunday; God is doing his best in that direction.

The Yellow Press is advocating no votes for the Conscientious Objector. One journal declares: "All he wants to do is to go on living in comparative comfort, thanks to the fact that other men are fighting and toiling and dying for him. He also demands a voice in the affairs of the country. This is too much for most of us." This description applies equally well to the 50,000 parsons who are exempted from military service.

The following delightful paragraph appeared recently in the newspapers: "In Jaffa the Church Army is hoping to establish a centre in the house supposed to be that of Simon the Tanner." It looks like an attempt to find "tanners" in England.

The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury, declares that "the Bible is being displaced by the Yellow Press." It is not surprising to find that readers of the Bible are supporters of the sensational papers.

Our readers will remember that some months ago the Rev. F. E. Powell, then Vicar of Bromyard, but now of Ladbrooke, contributed to this journal several exceedingly able articles, in which he evinced a progressiveness of thought not usually displayed by a clergyman. Preaching recently at the Priory Church, Leominster, he is reported, in the *Leominster News* for November 16, to have given expression to eminently broad views, which are too seldom heard from the pulpit. He enlarged upon the methods of Nature and the necessity of paying even greater heed to science in all departments of life, especially in education. Towards the end of the discourse he boldly said:—

> After the War there would be insistence upon intellectual sincerity. They would not be afraid of the truth. They would no longer bolster up things that were obsolete. The dead past must bury its dead. He asked them to beware of leaving that reconstruction and reformation to ecclesiastical bodies.

On the evening of the same day there was a Patriotic Demonstration in the Corn Exchange Hall, at which several addresses were delivered, one of which was by Mr. Powell. The reverend gentleman's speech was exceptionally courageous, hitting the nail on the head each time. One of the points was that, while he was a patriot, "he was a humanitarian first." He condemned, in scathing terms, the spirit of hatred and revenge so common in this country at the present time, and eloquently advocated the fostering of the forgiving, brotherly disposition. He was cheered to the echo when he declared that "for the life of him he could not understand why there should not be, while the fighting was going on, a meeting of the representatives of the belligerents in order to

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see what terms of peace might be arrived at." We heartily congratulate the reverend gentleman upon his wise, timely, and heroic utterances.

A "Food Economy" service was held at St. Paul's, the Bishop of London preaching the sermon. Of course, economy is necessary and advisable. But we recall an incident when thousands of people were fed on a handful of fishes and a few loaves. Why cannot a similar miracle be worked nowadays? Why can't God do something in the War? We wonder whether it would be considered "blasphemy" if a poster were exhibited depicting a crowd of starved and murdered men, women, and children standing before God Almighty, and asking him, "What did you do in the great War?" We are quite sure many are thinking that question now.

Says the Bishop of Oxford:—

> The Christian religion is totally without obscurantism, and loves light for its own sake, coming from whatsoever quarter. You can hardly exaggerate the disaster it has been to the education of children that they have been taught to associate with religion things about the Creation, the Flood, and the beginnings of our race which it was infallibly certain when they grew up to read the literature of their time, they would find false and would reject as alien to the whole trend of the philosophy, science, and history of their time. If we are to maintain the great tradition of the Word of God, we must purge it from everything that gives the germinating intellect of man the excuse for saying, "This is a ridiculous and old wives' fable."

But the Bishop knows as well as we do that all the things he denounces as "old wives' fables" are really part of the Christian religion. The story of Jesus Christ is based on the garden of Eden, and there is no reason whatever in rejecting the former and accepting the latter. Besides, is the story of the resurrection less ridiculous than that of the creation of man? Or the belief in heaven and hell less absurd than that of the garden of Eden? All it comes to is this. The Bishop will reject all generally admitted falsities and absurdities as not part of Christianity, and will keep all those not generally rejected. And to that sensible people reply: "Thank you, for nothing."

We note that among the sums disbursed for advertising "National Service" the *Times* received £1,050, *Daily Mail*, £2,680, *Daily News*, £1,434, *Daily Chronicle*, £1,082, *Daily Telegraph*, £1,007, *Morning Post*, £737, *Yorkshire Post*, £655, etc. The *Freethinker* is in the habit of giving its advertising space to a movement with which it sympathizes. But, then, we are only poor benighted Freethinkers, and cannot pretend to exhibit the lofty unselfishness possessed by these Christian-owned journals.

Referring to the living of St. James's, Piccadilly, London, the *Daily Sketch* says: "the most attractive part of the job of rectoring at St. James's is the rectory. I have often cast covetous eyes at this large, square, comfortable-looking house in the very heart of fashionable London. What the site must be worth, and the rent it could command, the imagination boggles at."

The suggestion that no one may write a leaflet on war or peace without leave of the Press Bureau has aroused the ire of the *Daily News*, which remarks tartly: "The next step will be to submit the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer to the censorship." There is something in the objection, for the Bible contains the passage, "Blessed are the peacemakers," and the Prayer Book has the aspiration, "Give peace in our time, O Lord."

Mr. Bottomley returns to the question of his miracle of the leaning Virgin, and says:—

> The *Freethinker* still protests that we have not told the truth about that figure of the Madonna and Child hanging from the tower of Albert Cathedral, and gives us "an opportunity of stating the facts." That is just what we have done. We are not easily fooled in such matters.

We protest once more. We did not say that Mr. Bottomley was fooled in this matter. Quite the contrary. We protested against Mr. Bottomley presenting the position of the statue as being due to an interposition of Providence. And we suggested that if Mr. Bottomley had been to Albert, he must know the facts, and must know that the explanation of the position of the statue is a simple and a prosaic one. It was these facts on which we invited the truth. And if, by some strange chance, Mr. Bottomley does not know the facts, we suggest that he inquires of the Royal Engineers. They might cast light on the matter.

God having failed to bring peace back to the world in response to one section of his followers, Cardinal Logue advises prayers to Mary, so as to "enlist the powerful aid of this Queen of Peace in moving Almighty God to mercifully grant our petition." Well, it wouldn't be the first time affairs of State have been brought to a head through feminine influence.

A daily paper objects to Grimm, the German writer, as an author of "sanguinary fairy tales." The Bible also contains "sanguinary fairy tales."

How these Christians love one another! A Catholic War-shrine erected at Ramsgate has been wrecked by rival religionists.

A case was before the Probate Court the other day in which a son asked that his father's will should be set aside on the ground of religious insanity. The deceased had left his son £20, and to the Hull City Mission £700 a year. Many people will agree that the son made out a strong *prima facie* case.

The *East Anglian Daily Times* reports the case of a young woman charged with stealing jewellery from a visitor staying at Frinton-on-Sea. The defendant said she had been tempted by the "evil one," and a police sergeant told the magistrate that the girl had hitherto borne a good character, but she had "met some bad companions at the Young Women's Christian Association." Now, if she had met them at a Secularist meeting-place, no one would have been surprised —at least, no Christian would.

Rev. Dr. R. J. Fletcher asks in the *Church Family Newspaper* "Is Prayer of Use?" To that we reply, certainly. It is of considerable use to every parson in existence. The question is like asking "Is an unfastened window of use to a burglar?" Mr. Fletcher thinks he can prove prayer is useful to anyone but the "dogmatic Agnostic." But these are the very people who need the proof most. All that Mr. Fletcher means, apparently, is that he can prove prayer is useful to anyone who already believes in it. In that case proof is unnecessary. Those who want proof can't get it, and those who don't need it can have it in bushels. And yet man is called a rational being!

"Spook Shows Pay" was a headline in a Sunday paper. Don't the Spiritualists know that?

Nonconformists are very stolid and serious people. A writer in the *Daily News* recently quoted Voltaire's famous jest that the prophet Habakkuk was "capable of anything." A number of readers immediately reproached the writer for defaming the prophet.

One of the activities of the late Mr. Jesse Collins, M.P., was in connection with the Sunday opening of museums and art galleries. Indeed, in this matter, Birmingham was one of the pioneer towns.

At a meeting of the United Free Church Presbytery it was proposed to mark the Luther Centenary, but the Presbytery decided not to celebrate the occasion. Poor old Martin Luther! It was his misfortune not to have been born a Scotsman.

Lord Sydenham has upset the clergy over his marriage law reforms, and the two archbishops and many of the bishops are up in arms. Sir William Robertson is one of the clerical supporters, but it is an old story that generals are very orthodox.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 9, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—Colonel Stuart Graham, £1 1s.; Miss M. Rogerson, 10s.; W. Hopper, £1 1s.

H. J. BAYLE.—Thanks for cutting. Sorry we cannot find space at present.

R. PECKOVER.—We note you write from hospital, and hope your wound is not serious. Pleased you found your *Freethinker* so acceptable on your return. We are not surprised your fellow-patients—who had been in the Arras district—were amused at Mr. Bottomley's "miracle." Naturally your friends were able to tell you how the statue is retained in its present position.

J. O. HARDING.—Pleased to have your appreciation of "Abracadabra's" articles. We note your observation of A. G. G., in the *Daily News*, having referred to Paine as one of the great men America produced. It is good to see Paine getting the recognition he richly deserved; but it is hardly correct to put it in that way. Paine was an Englishman—much as the official and "respectable" England of the day showed itself unworthy of such a man.

V. H. SMITH.—Obliged for reference. May be useful.

F. C. HOLDEN forwards us some specimens of clerical wisdom from the United States, and claims that the American clergy can compete with the Bishop of London and other English divines in imbecility. We admit, on the evidence produced, that a good case is made out.

J. E. C.—The copyright edition of Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* is published by Macmillans in a number of forms. Perhaps the handiest is the "Golden Treasury" edition, which is cheap, and handy in size

G. I. writes: "With reference to 'Abracadabra's' article on the Book of Enoch, some of your readers might care to consult the work of G. Schiaparelli, *Astronomy in the Old Testament* (Oxford; 1905). On page 38, this author shows a most interesting diagram of the world as it was conceived, including the solid arch of the firmament, the roof, which we call the sky, that was supported at the horizon, and which contained the stores of water and hail and snow, as well as the caves where the winds were kept."

J. B. MIDDLETON.—Very gratifying indeed, as we said. All our contributors will rejoice in the many warm friends they make through their writings. That is one of the compensations given to fighters in a good cause.

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.

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. Cohen pays a visit to-day to Glasgow, and will ecture twice in the City Hall (Saloon) at 12 noon on "Do the Dead Live"; 6.30, "Why Men Believe in God." We have no doubt there will be good attendances, and he will be pleased to once more face a keen and critical Scotch audience. He will then cease lecturing until January 6, and with so much travelling, and so many other things demanding attention, he will be heartily glad for a couple of Sundays in his own home.

We publish this week a new pamphlet by our late leader, G. W. Foote. It was left all but finished, and is now issued for the first time, with a preface by Mr. Cohen. We feel sure that every *Freethinker* reader will wish to have a copy, and we have printed a large edition, bearing this in mind. There is no need to say anything about the quality of the pamphlet; to say it is by G. W. Foote is enough. The title of the pamphlet is *The Mother of God*, and it deals with one of the most fundamental of Christian superstitions. The pamphlet is in a neat cover, and published at the low price of twopence. Postage one halfpenny.

Early in the new year we intend—if our paper supply doesn't break down—publishing a number of pamphlets, some of which, we feel sure, will arouse considerable attention among all sections of Freethinkers. Reprints of pamphlets that have long been out of print will also follow. The present is, in our opinion, a good time for pushing home the Freethought attack, and we intend to either break a big hole in the Christian defences or to break ourselves in the attempt.

Mr. Cohen had two very successful meetings in the Victoria Hall, South Shields, on Sunday last. Many of the old and familiar faces were absent, death having been only too busy in their ranks during the past few years, and one missed the presence of Mr. S. M. Peacock, without whom no meeting seemed complete. But the pain of separation is the price one has to pay for friendship, and one must be always prepared to settle the reckoning. Mr. Chapman, the local N. S. S. Secretary, was as active and as enthusiastic as ever, and the success of the day has encouraged the Branch to invite a visit from Mr. Lloyd early in the new year.

Visitors were present from, among other places, Newcastle; and as there seems some probability of overcoming the difficulty about a hall, Mr. Cohen hopes to pay that city a visit early in February. This should mean the recommencement of active work there once more.

The *Christian World*, in a notice of the Secular Education League's pamphlet *German Crime and Secular Education*, says:—

> Propagandists of denominational education, far too eager to seize any argument to support their cause, have been loudly—but very rashly—pointing to German character and conduct as exemplified in the war as an awful instance of the results of educating children without giving a "definite" religious teaching a prominent place. Leading Anglicans, clerical and lay, have loudly and publicly enunciated this view Unfortunately most people have not the knowledge to correct their errors, and the Secular Education League has done really good service in publishing a leaflet to show how absolutely false these statements are. Anglican publications—even a "Catholic" Mirfield handbook; Professor Sadler and prominent educationists and educational journals; the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and other unimpeachable authorities, are all quoted, chapter and verse, to show that not only has religious teaching a deliberately prominent place in the German scheme of education and in the training of teachers, but that also this teaching is always and everywhere denominational. Therefore if any party in the religious education controversy is entitled to draw a moral from the facts, it is those who are opposed to denominational and dogmatic teaching. All Germans, high and low, have passed through a rigorous course of such teaching"

We welcome praise of the pamphlet from this quarter, and hope that our readers will act on the advice we gave last week. We are sure they will be doing a useful piece of work by giving this tract a wide circulation.

It should be said that the pamphlet is being sold at cost price. No one was paid anything for writing it, and no one is getting any profit by selling it. The *Freethinker* is giving its advertising space free, and is selling it without any profit on the sale, or any charge for labour, etc, in sending out the pamphlet. Not being a wealthy concern, we can afford—and are even pleased—to give all we can to such a cause as that of Secular Education.

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The difficulty of obtaining halls—so many are being used by the military—is the chief obstacle at present to increased propaganda. Wherever they can be obtained, the work goes on. We take this opportunity of inviting the co-operation in this matter of groups of Freethinkers all over the country—whether there is a Branch of the N. S. S. in their locality or not. If a hall is obtainable, and they are willing to look after local arrangements, let them write to the General Secretary at once, and the work will be proceeded with.

Another Victory:

With a Special Appeal to Londoners.

A FEW months ago I was able to record a great Freethought victory with the House of Lords' decision in the Bowman Case. It is now possible to announce another striking triumph in connection with the attempt of the London County Council to suppress the sale of literature in the public parks. This does not, of course, rank in importance with the decision in the Bowman litigation, but it is important to all who value freedom of thought, speech, and propaganda.

The battle opened with my article in the *Freethinker* for June 11, 1916. It was there made public that the L.C.C. intended suppressing altogether the sale of literature at public meetings. And it was quite plain that this was only the first step towards a suppression of the meetings themselves. The sale of literature is as much a part of these meetings as the delivery of lectures, and there is no reason why if the one be prohibited the other should be allowed. Sooner or later we should have to fight, and it is always best to resist first encroachments.

The next step was the formation of a committee of London organizations. This was done with great success, and about forty organizations were banded together to resist a quite unwarranted attack on one of the oldest and most valuable privileges in connection with public propaganda.

A deliberate campaign was at once organized. Literature *was* sold, in defiance of the Council's regulation.

The Council, after some delay, issued a number of summonses. The Committee replied by taking the matter into the High Court, with the result that the regulation prohibiting the sale of literature was set aside. After some delay the Council, on November 27, surrendered by formally rescinding the resolution it ought never to have passed.

The work of the Protest Committee has thus ended in a victory, and, but for one circumstance, it might now meet and formerly declare itself at an end. But the fight, although carried on without a continuous flourish of trumpets, has involved constant watchfulness and considerable expense. All the Police Court cases had to be defended, and when it is said that counsel and solicitor made two appearances before the High Court, and that there were numerous consultations besides, no one will be surprised to learn that the cost of the fight has been over £200. But for the extreme moderation of the Committee's legal representatives the sum would have been larger. Over half the expense has been already met. There remains nearly £100 to be raised. And, at the request of the Committee, I am inviting subscriptions from *Freethinker* readers to wipe off this liability.

I am making this appeal primarily to Londoners, because the issue is one which concerns Londoners first of all. Of course sympathetic contributions from the Provinces are not barred, but I feel there should be enough people in London itself interested to provide the sum needed. A hundred might easily do it between them. It has been a great fight, and it has ended in a complete win so far.

On p. 781 of this issue will be found a full statement of the case in an appeal issued by the Committee. I have written the above merely to enforce that appeal—which was written, it should be said, before the last meeting of the L.C.C.

I am loth to close this appeal without saying how much the Committee is indebted to the Rev. Stewart Headlam, who so manfully and so ably upheld our cause on the Council itself. And also to Mr. F. Verinder, who has acted as Chairman and Treasurer to the Committee. He has spared neither time nor energy in the matter, and more is owing to him than I can now say. As a Freethinker I feel bound and pleased to place on record my personal appreciation of the work of these two Churchmen, in which their sole motive was their devotion to principle.

At its last meeting the Executive of the N.S.S., which had already voted £5 to the Committee, voted a second and similar amount. I am adding my own mite in order to be "in it."

I feel apologetic having to again ask readers of this paper to contribute, but it is unavoidable. And I feel sure they will be with me in thinking the fight worthy of the expenditure.

Subscriptions had better be sent direct to me at 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., 4, and the total will be handed over to the Treasurer when the list is closed, which should be this side of Christmas.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

National Secular Society, £5; C. Cohen, £1 1s; P. N., 5s. W. Hopper, 10s.

The Everlasting Hills.

IV.

(Continued from p. 764.)

THE giant forces of Nature are not only endlessly engaged in elevating the earth's mighty battlements, but are also occupied in their unwearying labour of reducing them to ruin. The furious storms of wind and rain that rage, the burning sun, the merciless frosts, and the roaring torrents all co-operate in the ceaseless work of destruction. Peak, glen, and valley have all been sculptured out of an originally dreary and monotonous rocky mass.

Although our native scenery is so splendid, Great Britain possesses no great mountain ranges. But what our hills lack in height they make up in age. That eminent geologist, the late Dr. Geikie, the famous brother of the illustrious Archibald Geikie, championed the opinion that the Scottish Highlands have "remained more or less continuously in the condition of land" ever since the beginning of Old Red Sandstone times. It is an established truth that the Highlands, the Welsh mountains, and the Lake eminences, are immensely ancient. In comparison with these the Alps and Himalayas are quite modern. It is highly probable that the British hills were the sites of majestic mountains millions of years before the chalk beds were deposited on the ocean floor. Yet, although the Alps are so youthful when compared with the immemorial mountains of Britain, they were in the prime of their mountainhood nearly twice their present height:—

The delta of the Rhone, the plain of Lombardy, Belgium, Holland, and the Dobrudscha are all built

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> up in part of materials from the tops of the Alps, which, if no fresh elevation take place, will be gradually lowered until nothing but the stumps remain."

Now, owing to their far greater antiquity, the amount of denudation in the Welsh, and Westmoreland, and Cumberland mountains have been far greater, and our island's elevations are insignificant because their age is so extreme. A careful study of the deposits around Snowdon reveals the fact that from 15,000 to 20,000 feet of solid rocks have been swept away, while in the Lake District the denudation suffered by that beauty spot totals 26,000 feet.

The highest mountain in South Britain is Snowdon, 3,571 feet in height, while our lowest hill of any importance, Crowborough Beacon, reaches a mere 803 feet. Among the most ancient of English hills are the Malverns, Charnwood Forest, the Wrekin, the granites of Cornwall and Devon, and the mountains of the Lake Country and Wales. In Shropshire there is a group of hills called the Wrekin, some twenty-nine miles in length, or if the uplands west of Kington in Herefordshire and Radnorshire are included, they extend for fifty miles. Dr. Callaway regards the Wrekin as the remains of an island surrounded in remote ages by a deep sea. In any case, this region is one of the oldest in our Isles. A well preserved worm-burrow from these rocks is, perhaps, the earliest British fossil so far discovered.

The magnificent Malvern Hills rising to a height of 1,400 feet when viewed from the Severn Valley, form one of the grandest examples of English scenery. To Raggedstone Hill in the Malverns superstition has attached itself. According to local tradition, this hill's shadow casts the curse of ruin on those upon whom it falls. Cardinal Wolsey's downfall was long attributed to the circumstance that as a youthful chaplain at Morton Court he once slumbered in the garden, and the baleful shadow rested over him.

Caer Caradoc, near Wenlock, was named, it is said, after Caractacus, and is alleged to have been the scene of the British chief's final struggle with the conquering Romans. Charnwood Forest is an English upland which is quite unlike the adjacent country, and bears a distinct resemblance to Welsh scenery. It is, indeed, an outlier of Welsh strata which has been thrust through environing rocks of later origin. Avebury describes it as "a tract of high ground enthroned in the midst of plains, a solitude in the midst of a thickly peopled district, a wilderness in the middle of mines and manufactures." The rocks which compose it date back to the period when the earliest fossils lived. In truth the western areas of Britain form the most venerable parts of the island, while the eastern and south-eastern regions are, geologically speaking, modern.

Snowdon, the monarch of English mountains, with its encircling summits, forms the loftiest and wildest part of Northern Wales. As their fossils show, the mountain rocks are of Silurian age. During the Silurian Period vast rivers of lava flowed from the volcanoes which then occupied what is now the Lake District, and North and South Wales. When these volcanoes were active, enormous quantities of volcanic ash were discharged into the sea, thus depositing strata in the ocean in which the extinct marine organisms whose shells are found in the rocks were buried. Snowdon and other mountains are extensively composed of such ancient volcanic substances. From beds of fine volcanic ash at their summits fossil shell-fish may be gathered.

There are in the world to-day about 350 active volcanoes, while if the mountains that were once eruptive are included about 1,000 are known. Many British hills were formerly living volcanoes, such as Arthur's Seat, the famous eminence near Edinburgh, the Bass Rock, and others. Volcanoes were long regarded as "burning mountains," and legion are the superstitions which have clustered round them. Etna, as Virgil informs us, was to the pagan Romans the spot where the incensed divinites buried Enceladus, one of the turbulent giants. Another eruptive mountain in the Lipa Islands—Volcano—was viewed as the forge of Vulcan or Volcan, the god of fire. Hence the name volcano arises from the ancient title of a celebrated smoking mountain in the Mediterranean Sea.

Volcanoes consist of alternating layers of ashes and lava, which all descend from the centre. In the volcano's centre itself is a chimney, which expands towards the top, so as to look like a funnel or cup. This is the crater. The form and inclination of a volcano depend upon the nature of the substances ejected. Every known volcano has been erected on a foundation of stratified rocks, and invariably *after* these rocks, which were originally laid down under the ocean, had been elevated high above sea level. Volcanoes are built usually through successive eruptions, and during several centuries. The earth shocks which herald the first eruption probably dislocate and fracture the sedimentary strata, thus opening a passage for the ascending lava.

Volcanoes, therefore, are quite unlike the more stable mountains previously described, inasmuch as they are never evolved by upheaval. As Hutchinson intimates, volcanic masses have not been fashioned by the upheaval of strata,—

> but have been gradually piled up, something like rubbish heaps that accumulate in the Thames barges as the dustmen empty their carts into them, only in the case of volcanoes the "rubbish" comes from below. It is not necessary to suppose that the reservoir down below from which the molten rock is supplied exists at any very great depth below the original land surface on which the volcano grows up.

The hypothesis which assumed that volcanoes were developed by upheaval has been abandoned. The current theory was necessitated by careful investigation, and is strongly supported by observation. For instance, Monte Nuovo (the New Mountain), a small volcano near Vesuvius, about 430 feet high, arose during a single night in the year 1538. Two eye-witnesses have left on record their observations of the eruption to which Monte Nuovo owes its existence. These sixteenth century narratives have been amply corroborated by more recent inquiries. Various other volcanoes, such as Jorulla, the huge Mexican fire-mountain, present unmistakable evidences that they were formed in similar fashion.

A volcanic eruption is preceded by earth movements which shake the mountain and the surrounding country. Subterranean explosions set up vibrations which affect the environing area, while the volcano is convulsed by the pent-up energies of the steam and liquid rocks which are struggling to secure an outlet. Wells and springs disappear in the rock fractures occasioned by the internal turmoil. At last these imprisoned energies find a vent, and then the eruption commences, as a rule, with one titanic outburst which makes the entire mountain quiver from its apex to its very base. After this overture, explosions rapidly succeed one another with constantly increasing violence. Usually, the crater forms the centre of these disturbances, but at times the whole mountain appears to participate in these convulsions.

In the stupendous eruption which occurred at Krakatoa, in the Sunda Straits, which separate Java and Sumatra, in 1883, the sounds of the explosions were heard two thousand miles distant. Layers of volcanic dust descended within a radius of 1,000 miles; the more microscopic dust and vapour were urged to a height of from fifteen to twenty miles, and were carried by the air

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currents all round the globe, while the particles suspended in the atmosphere caused most magnificent sunsets in many countries, including our own. It was even said that the English sunsets were beginning to imitate the paintings of Turner.

A hillside view of an air-raid on a clear, calm, moonlit night is completely eclipsed by the spectacle presented by a volcano in furious eruption. Volumes of liquid or semi-liquid lava may be hurled into the atmosphere. These volumes assume a spherical form, and are called "bombs." Viewed at a distance, they seem to be sheets of flame. So mighty are the forces of the imprisoned gases that, in their efforts to escape, they sometimes fling the volcano into space, and thus entire mountains have been shattered. The enormous discharges of steam issuing from the volcano expand, and ascend into the upper and colder regions of the air. There the steam condenses, and the rain descends in torrents. Immense masses of volcanic dust are transformed by the rain into mud, which tears down the declivities of the mountain. These mud rivers flow with enormous rapidity, and such streams of lava-water, as they are termed, were largely responsible for the calamity which destroyed the celebrated cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum at the time of the terrible eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Lava streams are sometimes small, but the effects of a giant stream may be gathered from what occurred in Iceland in 1783. Streams spread on all sides from the volcano Skaptar Jokull. They swept over the country, filled river courses 600 feet deep, and for nearly fifty miles the lava currents extended far and wide. A vivid impression of what this implies will be gained when we realize that if this eruption had occurred "in the south of England, all the country from the neighbourhood of London to that of Gloucester might have been covered by a flood of basalt of considerable thickness."

(To be concluded.) T. F. PALMER.

Booth to Scotland's Rescue!

EDINBURGH, in the estimation of several of her representative men, is apparently in a bad way. In an Edinburgh newspaper we see that "General" Booth has been visiting Edinburgh, where he received a welcome from various municipal dignitaries and a live M.P. The last-mentioned gentleman went the length of describing the Salvation Army's work as "a miracle." The "General" himself had been so impressed by the importance of the Army's work in Scotland "that he had decided to make Scotland a unit of the Army life and to appoint Commissioner and Mrs. Hoggard to the command of the territory." What this exactly means is best known to the "General," but his audience applauded the announcement, so perhaps they had been let into the secret. All the same, considering the length of time the Salvation Army has been in existence, the step seems a rather belated one. Its not having been taken earlier may imply a subtle compliment to Scotch piety; but its having to be taken at all suggests what we remarked at the outset, namely, that Edinburgh—nay, Scotland itself—has been falling from grace, and the only power that can restore the land to its pristine godliness is that whose emblems are the scarlet jersey and the tambourine.

There was one significant feature in the report of the "General's" meeting, and that was *the absence of the names of any of the Edinburgh clergy*. Was it not said long ago that the "Army" and the Churches were pulling happily together? *All* the "meenisters" are not away abroad in connection with the real War. Yet not one cassock—not one dog-collar—was to be seen in any part of good Booth's Councillor-bestudded platform. Has there been a rift in the lute? Are there fewer converts being passed on by the Army into the Churches as potential members? In any view, the "General" himself lent colour to the suggestion that the reason for the absence of the reverends was a certain coolness, because in the course of his address, he said that in the work of the Army they had eschewed fine dress, tobacco, and strong drink—*and in that respect he wished the Churches would follow the Army*. That is certainly a nippy one. And it is two-edged. Not only are Church people greedy for luxuries, but also, they ignore the shining example of the musical band whose motto is "Blood and Fire." Alas! it is to be feared that the Scots parsons and the Army are not what they used to be to each other.

And by implication, at any rate, the "General" passed another slight upon God's chosen ambassadors in black. He went on to say that he believed the secret of the Army's "success" was that they had been able to use the people of every class for the saving of others of their class. This, one sees, cuts off at least half of the existing functions of the clergy. Can it be that the designing Booth sees fissures in the walls of the Temple of Clericalism? Does he make a bid for the laity who make not obeisance to the lordly priest? Drat us, what times we live in! Meantime, Scotsmen have the satisfaction of knowing that some one has flown to the succour of their land in her dire hour of need, and has made her a unit of the Salvation Army's life!

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

MEN, MONEY, AND THE WAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The following extracts from an article called "War-Bondage, 1920," in the *Nation* of November 17, are so true to the actual facts, that they will go far to clear up any doubts about the question raised by Mr. Eden Phillpotts in your issue of November 25:—

> Capitalism has been steadily working towards the final form of a free financial dynasty. This, the War brings about by substituting for the countless forms of stocks and shares and mortgages in many hands a single financial form, anchored in the safes of a few great Banks, Finance Houses, and Insurance Companies. These little groups of financiers already hold the mortgage deeds of Britain. Its lands and houses, mines and factories, ships and shops, belong to them. Such has been the secret achievement of the accumulating War Loans.....

It is true that many thousands of ordinary men and women hold small parcels of War Loan, in name at least.

> But since all the later loans have been financed, partly by pledging earlier War Scrip and all sorts of other securities with the banks, partly by bolder fabrication of bank credit; when the War ends it will transpire that the War Financiers are the owners of all the property. For by that time the War Debt will have mounted up to a mortgage covering the whole estimated value of the national assets, and so the holders will virtually possess the country. Not only its capital, but its labour. For the labour of Britain will have to give up all the wealth it makes, beyond its necessary subsistence, to pay the interest.

Thus, when the men in the trenches and aboard ship return from their terrible ordeals, they will be forced to spend the rest of their lives in grinding out profits for the handful of cosmopolitan financial millionaires who will hold the great bulk of the huge War Debt. Any revolt by the workers is highly improbable because—

> they will not know what has really happened, for the legend of financial ruin, universally believed, will continue to deceive them. The wail of the small investors over their depreciated securities will help to furnish a curtain of fiction, behind which our real capitalist smiles, contented and secure.

All this is equally true of every other country engaged in the War, because the cosmopolitan financiers will hold over

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one-half of their War Loans, and each country's share of the War might have been financed, without any borrowing, through the agency of a State Bank, thus defeating the designs of these great financiers for the conquest of the world.

G. O. WARREN (Major).

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON NOV. 29.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Braddock, Eager, Gorniot, Leat, Lazarnick, Neary, Owen, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Thurlow, and Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members (46 in all) were received from Birmingham, Goldthorpe, Liverpool, Manchester, Southampton, Swansea, South London, and the Parent Society.

Permission was granted for the formation of a new Branch at Southampton.

Out of the report of the business transacted at the Interim Conference, a discussion arose upon the best methods of carrying out the South London Branch's resolution. After a statement by the President, expressing his view on the situation, it was resolved that the matter be adjourned until the next Executive meeting.

The President and Secretary gave a report as to the result of the application of the Protest Committee against the L.C.C. in the High Courts, and it was gathered from more recent happenings in connection with the meetings of the Parks Committee that the matter was nearing a satisfactory conclusion. The Protest Committee's appeal for funds was received, and a further donation of £5 voted.

The new regulations under D.O.R.A. affecting pamphlets were discussed, and the following resolution—

> This Executive of the National Secular Society strongly protests against the proposed regulation under the Defence of the Realm Act ordering that all pamphlets dealing with war and peace shall be submitted to a Government censor before publication; it regards such a regulation as a direct attack upon the freedom of publication, and as foreign to British traditions of freedom of speech and writing. This Executive is of opinion that a decision as to the legality or illegality of any publication should be decided by a court of law, and not by a political censorship; and hopes that all lovers of freedom will unite in demanding the withdrawal of a regulation which must be regarded as mischievous in the highest degree—

was carried unanimously.

It was further reported that a series of Sunday afternoon lectures were arranged for January, to be held at 31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, and that a grant of £15 had been made by Mr. Cohen from his Propagandist Fund.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

Society News.

THE Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. opened its Autumn Lecture Session on September 23 with two lectures in the Town Hall by Mr. C. Cohen, President of the N. S. S. The lectures were well attended, and it was very gratifying to old and new members and friends to note the large audiences and the marked manner in which the lectures were followed. Questions and answers at the close were interesting and enjoyed. On September 30 (Bradlaugh Sunday) a Social Gathering was held at the Cafe Oriental, Hill Street. Speeches suitable to the occasion were made by Messrs. F. E. Willis and E. C. Williams. The difficulty of obtaining a suitable hall for lectures was overcome when the Branch found itself able to book the Repertory Theatre, Station Street, and Mr. Lloyd delivered the first lecture there on October 7. He was followed by Mr. E. Clifford Williams, Mr. F. E. Willis, Mr. Cohen, and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner. The venture has been in every respect satisfactory. The audiences have been large, and the sale of literature excellent. Many people, strangers to our movement, have attended, expressed pleasure at the lectures, and purchased liberally at the bookstall. In the New Year the committee hope to fill dates in larger number than fortnightly as at present, and asks the support of all local friends in making the meetings widely known and getting strangers to attend.—J. PARTRIDGE.

Dr. Binnie Dunlop, Hon. Sec. to the Malthusian League, addressed a good audience—a very fair proportion being composed of ladies—on Sunday night last. Dr. Dunlop gave a particularly clear and lucid exposition of the rise and fall of the birth-rate, and stressed the connection between the Secular and Neo-Malthusian Movements. Many questions were asked and much interest shown. To-night Mr. J. K. Harris will open on "Freethought and Judaism." North Londoners, please note.—H. V. LANE, Hon. Sec. North London Branch.

On Sunday Mr. P. S. Wilde delivered a carefully prepared lecture on "God's Beginnings," which elicited some thoughtful discussion, including some very courteous opposition from a Christian Evidence lecturer. A pleasing feature was that a considerable proportion of the audience were total strangers to our meetings. Mr. Somerville occupied the chair.—V. ROGER, South London Branch.

Joint Committee of Protest Against Prohibition of Sale of Literature in London County Council Parks and Open Spaces.

THE legal victory gained over the London County Council on October 23rd has brought this Committee a long step nearer the achievement of its end; but this only serves to emphasize the critical importance of the present position.

Nearly 18 months ago, the "Joint Committee of Protest" was formed to resist a quite uncalled-for attack by the L.C.C. on the freedom of propaganda. The right to hold meetings in Parks and Open Spaces, where suitable accommodation exists, has never been questioned by any public body. When the L.C.C. assumed control of the London Parks it found this right in existence, and this right has been recognized in more than one of the Acts dealing with the powers and duties of the Council. Along with the right to hold meetings went the right to sell literature at the meetings—always subject in either case to such regulation as might be necessary in the general public interest—such sale being, indeed, an integral part of the educational work carried on at the meetings. An attack on the one right could not but be an attack on the other.

There has been no complaint from the public as to the nature of the literature sold, all of which had passed the censorship of the Council. No one has complained of annoyance: the literature is only offered to those who attend the meetings on the sites set apart for that purpose. There has been no complaint from the Council's Officials, who, on the contrary, reported that the arrangements had worked smoothly and without friction. It is confessed that there has been no complaint from the military authority.

When, therefore, the L.C.C. passed a resolution that the sale of literature should, after September 30, 1916, be prohibited, a number of Societies—including, among many others, such representative bodies as the London Trades Council, the English League for the Taxation of Land Values, the National Secular Society, etc.—rightly regarded this as an attack on the Right of Public Meeting, and this Committee was called into existence to resist by every means in its power the arbitrary action of the Council.

The Committee tried by every possible means, by deputation, correspondence, resolutions, etc., to induce the Council to alter its decision. Every attempt failed; and the Committee felt that the only way to bring the ques-

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tion to an issue was to continue the exercise of a right which had existed before the Council came into being. Meetings were held and literature sold at them. After considerable delay, a summons was issued, and the magistrate fined the defendant. Several other prosecutions followed, defended in every case by the solicitor and counsel of the Committee.

The next step was taken in the High Court. Counsel was instructed to apply for a Rule calling upon the L.C.C. to show whether it had rightly exercised the powers granted to it in passing the Resolution of which this Committee complains. The application was at once granted; and, a few weeks later, a Divisional Court, consisting of Justices Darling, Avory, and Sankey, made the Rule nisi for a Mandamus absolute, the first-named Judge remarking that "he was unable to see how they could give judgment in any other way without disregarding the rules and construction of the law." This decision was in the nature of a severe rebuff to the Council, and Sir Ernest Pollock, K.C., on its behalf, said that it would consider the question of an appeal. The Committee awaits its decision with the utmost confidence.

It is well within the knowledge of this Committee that this action of the Council is regarded in some quarters as only the prelude to a more daring attack on the Right of Public Meeting. To allow the Council—whose life is prolonged beyond its natural term by the accident of war—to take advantage of the distraction caused by the war to destroy this cherished and well-established public right is to offer the strongest encouragement to the reactionaries of the L.C.C. Resistance in the end would become inevitable. It is far better to fight the enemy on the frontier than to wait till he is in the flush of a successful invasion.

The matter is of first-rate importance, and *the need for funds is urgent*. The fight is being conducted with the utmost economy, but it nevertheless involves considerable expenditure. The indebtedness of the Committee for legal expenses amounts at present to over £100; and, if the L.C.C. is so ill advised as to carry the matter further, more money will be needed. It would indeed be regrettable if the Committee were compelled to suspend its operations owing to lack of funds.

The Committee does not think that more need be said to impress upon all lovers of freedom the need for an immediate and generous response to this appeal. The issue is one which affects all interested in the education of public opinion. If the L.C.C. were to succeed in this endeavour, every attempt to appeal to public opinion by the sale of literature at Park Meetings would be stopped. The next step would almost certainly be to prohibit free distribution, and then to stop the meetings altogether.

The Committee has refrained from issuing this appeal until the latest possible moment. They are fighting for a public right, and they confidently rely upon public support.

FREDK. VERINDER, *Chairman and Hon. Treasurer*,
376 and 377, Strand, London, W.C., 2.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Hon. Secretary*,
62, Farringdon Street, London, E.C., 4.

The whirligig of time brings in its revenges. Once Thomas Paine's name was execrated by all Christians. To-day his name is held in honour, and even the Nonconformist *Daily News* writes of him with respect, and includes him among "a succession of great men" who were "inspired by the single idea of saving the New World from the tragedy of the Old."

Obituary.

I regret to have to mention that Bradford Freethinkers have sustained a loss in the death of an old sympathiser in the person of John Seymour, of 7, Burrow Street. He had been ill for some time, and resided with a married daughter at above address. I feel pleased to say that when he was occasionally visited and a copy of this paper left him he derived much pleasure in reading the same.—J. G.

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, "Freethought and Judaism." Introduced by J. K. Harris.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Tube Station): 7, F. A. Davies, "Essential Christianity."

WEST CENTRAL HALL (London Society, 31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.): 3.30, M. Puttemans, "Art from the Social Point of View." (Lecture in French.)

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (City Hall, Saloon): C. Cohen, 12 noon, "Do the Dead Live?" 6.30, "Why Men Believe in God."

GOLDTHORPE BRANCH N.S.S. (14 Beevor Street): 3, Discussion, "Secularism." All welcome.

NEW MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Bakers' Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, T. F. Greenall, "Shelley's 'Prometheus.'"

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Secretary:

MISS E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

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

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

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

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

Membership.

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

> I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.
>
> Name.....
>
> Address.....
>
> Occupation .....
>
> Dated this.....day of.....19.....

This declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or the Freethought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organizations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalization of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labour.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement, by all just and wise means, of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommodious dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labour to organize itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

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Views and Opinions.

The Art of Dying.

We see that a book is announced for publication under the title of *The Book of the Craft of Dying*. It is a collection of mediæval tracts, edited by a lady, with a preface by a clergyman. The work can hardly fail to be interesting, and to those acquainted with the output of a mediæval mind the title is reminiscent. It carries one back to a time when dying might well be called a "craft." For it was studied with all the care which many normally give to mastering an ordinary occupation. Nowadays, when so much attention is given, and rightly given, to the craft of living, it seems strange to think of a society in which the leaders of thought placed chief emphasis on the art of dying. Life was then valuable only as it prepared one for death and for what lay beyond. Nor was this frame of mind wholly mediæval. It was prominent less than a hundred years ago. "Prepare to meet thy God" was the burden of a deal of the theology then preached, and religious literature generally was well calculated to produce chronic melancholy in a Mark Tapley. Whatever claim Christianity may have to be called the religion of eternal life, it was certainly the religion of terrestrial death. So far as it could, it made death supreme in the human mind, and if its supremacy was never more than transient, and was finally broken, this was due to the fact that the conditions of human existence are that natural solution works on the side of the supremacy of the "will to live." The closing sorrow of the grave must give place to the dawning joy of the cradle.

* * *

Living on Death.

The *Artes bene Moriendi* was a well-known mediæval treatise, and its scope is well described by Mr. Lionel Cust in his *History of Engraving during the Fifteenth Century*:—

> At this date the keys of knowledge, as of salvation, were entirely in the hands of the Church, and the lay public, both high and low, were, generally speaking, ignorant and illiterate. One of the secrets of the great power exercised by the Church lay in its ability to represent the life of man as environed from the outset by legions of horrible and insidious demons, who beset his path throughout life at every stage up to his very last breath, and are eminently active and often triumphant when man's fortitude is undermined by sickness, suffering, and the prospect of dissolution. From such attacks and pitfalls only the continuous presence and protection of the Church could protect the hopeless pilgrim.

Men turned to the Church for protection against the terror of death which the Church itself taught. The poisoner did a lucrative trade in selling a doubtful remedy for his own toxic preparation. More than anything else the fear of death and hell laid the foundation of the wealth and power of the Churches. Even to-day these Churches exert the most power that keep to the older line of teaching. The two truths engraved on the face of European history is that the power of the Christian Church was rooted in death, and that it flourished in dishonour.

* * *

Pagan and Christian.

And let it be noted that the intense fear of death is a product of Christian teaching. The fear of death played but a small part in the life of Greece and Rome, and none at all in the life of its best representatives. Of the Greek sculpture concerning death, Professor Mahaffy says: "They are simple pictures of the grief of parting, of the recollection of pleasant days of love and friendship, of the gloom of the unknown future. But there is no exaggeration in the picture." And throughout Roman art and letters there runs the conception of death as the necessary converse of birth. Pliny clearly puts this in the following: "Unto all the state of being often the last day is the same as it was before the first day of life; neither is there any more variation of it in either body or soul after death than there was before death." Among the uneducated people some fear of the after world did exist, and it was upon that fear Christianity rested itself in its successful appeal to ignorance as against knowledge, to blind fear against enlightenment. And Freethinkers at least can sympathize with Lucretius, who saw the great danger and sought to guard men by pointing out the unreality of this death-bed terror.

> So shalt thou feed on Death who feeds on men,
> And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

* * *

A Mediæval Nightmare.

It was Christianity, and Christianity alone, which made death so fearsome a thing to the European mind. And society once Christianized, the uneducated could find no corrective from the more educated. The baser elements existing in the non-Christian world were seized by Christian teachers and amplified and developed. Plato had speculated in a hell of a thousand years' duration. Christianity stretched it to eternity. Plutarch and others had discredited the popular notions of a future life. Christianity reaffirmed them with all the extravagant embellishments of a diseased imagination. The Pagan teachers held death to be as normal and as natural as birth; with Christian teachers it was a penal infliction.

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The Pagan *Art of Life* gave place to the Christian *Art of Death*. "How to die" took the place of "How to live," and Christian teachers lacked the perception that one could only answer the first by discovering the second. Human ingenuity exhausted itself in describing the nature of hell and the torments of the damned, and when one remembers the powers of the Church and the murderous suppression of all opposing opinion, there is small wonder that, under Christian rule, the fear of death gained a strength it had never possessed before or since.

* * *

Christianity and Science.

Two causes are chiefly responsible for the changed attitude towards—perhaps one ought to say for the return of the modern mind to the Pagan point of view. The first is scientific, the second is social. In the state of universal ignorance amid which Christianity flourished, it was easy enough to believe in a literal heaven and hell, and the fear-creating stories of the Church. While the sky was a solid dome of scanty extent, the earth was the small central body of a small universe, and man himself the centre of creation, surrounded by legions of angels and devils, there was nothing essentially incongruous between them and the accepted cosmology. The growth of science broke down the harmony of centuries, and people found themselves confronted by a universe utterly at variance with Christian teaching, and in the re-establishment of an equilibrium Christianity lost heavily. Beliefs that appeared reasonable in the old world of science were glaringly absurd in the new. A new and critical spirit of investigation were evolved, and this, when applied to religious beliefs, began to make it plain that an after life was a subject upon which all were at liberty to guess, but upon which none were in a position to pronounce with certainty.

* * *

The Saner View.

The development of a saner view of social life also operated powerfully to the same end. The fear of death had gained its chief strength from the conviction that happiness hereafter was dependent upon right belief here. The value of this life was expressed in terms of a life hereafter. The grave was the entrance hall to a chamber from which issued decrees that determined man's eternal welfare, and death was the summons to attend. But when the point of view was reversed, this life became more and more an end in itself; death and after death ceased to be the determining factors of conduct, and the belief in a future life gradually assumed its true character as a pure speculation grafted upon the psychology of primitive man. Sociology is the enemy of theology; science is the true solvent of superstition. The world is rapidly reaching the conclusion that this life can be made adequate as an end if we will only make it so. Life is part of Nature, and Nature is neither good nor bad. It is to each what his organization and education fits him for. To the Christian the fear of death may well be strong and ever present. To the liberated mind death brings no fear. If life has been smooth and pleasant, death is but the close of an agreeable interlude. If it has been otherwise, it can still be said:—

> After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
> Treason has done his worst; nor steel, nor poison,
> Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
> Can touch him further.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The advocate of what is false has every reason to make his advances stealthily and to curry favour with the world The man who feels that he has truth on his side must step firmly. Truth is not to be dallied with.—*Goethe.*

"The New Thinking."

SUCH is the title of a Thursday noon sermon recently delivered in the City Temple by Dr. Fort Newton, and reported in the *Christian Commonwealth* for November 28. Seeing such a novel title one naturally expected to find the discourse bristling with startlingly fresh and original ideas. The text, too, "What think ye of Christ?" lent zest to the hope that, now at last, an old subject was about to receive a perfectly unique treatment. Of course, there was no escape from the suspicion that the title must be misleading, and there is no text upon which more sermons have been founded. But one was comforted by the fact that Dr. Newton is a new man who is generally believed to have come all the way from America because he has a new message to deliver to the British public. It is but fair to admit that the address opens well with the statement that "to-day men are thinking faster, further, and more searchingly than they have thought for many a day." One distinct blessing of the War is that "out of the suffering and the breaking of hearts new thought patterns are being woven, which, by inevitable logic, will become action-patterns, and that means a new way of living in times to be." But the examples cited are scarcely convincing. No doubt the trenches are exerting a powerful influence upon the soldiers, many of whom are, doubtless, genuine heroes; but there is no evidence whatever that, when they come back to the days of peace, they will be altogether new men, animated by new ideas, nobler motives, and higher aims. Whatever Coningsby Dawson and Dr. Newton may say to the contrary, we do not believe that war has ever been, or ever will be, a regenerator of character. It is true that it often brings out the best there is in a man, but it cannot be denied that it also tends to develop the very worst qualities. We are fully aware that, speaking generally, mankind is slowly evolving from lower to higher levels of life, and that, as an inevitable consequence, a new social order will ultimately be established. By the operation of a purely natural law, we are by degrees, in spite of numerous backsets, learning the art of living by actually living.

At this point Dr. Newton declares that the same process is going on in the religious world. He says:—

> Inevitably, the new thinking is finding its way into religion, and that is why things are upside down. From statistics taken not so very long ago, it was found that, in London, only about fifteen or twenty per cent. of the people attend Church or Chapel. It is much the same in America, as witness a very striking story by Kibb Turner, entitled "The Last Christian," in which we are shown the situation as it is. It portrays the slow decadence and final death of the typical "big white church" in a New England village. The last Christian, in the story, is the faithful, devoted, scholarly pastor of the church, who kept true to his creed and his vows through thirty years of ministry. But, in spite of his loyalty, he saw the church disintegrating under his hand. Young men went to college and never again returned to the fellowship. Women, whose hearts were breaking from the sorrows of life, found no comfort in the creed of the pastor, and turned to some cult for help. The pastor lived long enough to see the old church sold to a secret fraternity, and the remnant of his flock united with a neighbouring church whose minister had a proclivity to quote Browning.

That is a highly interesting and profoundly true tale, and it conclusively proves the truth of the Freethought tenet that natural knowledge of necessity undermines supernatural belief. This Dr. Newton fails to realize. The facts are as stated by the novelist, and to dispute them would be the quintessence of folly; but instead

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of taking them as they are, the reverend gentleman insists upon *interpreting* them. Being *interpreted*, then, the facts do not show that "the men of to-day are indifferent to religion, as we are so often told. No, no; they are thinking about it as they have never done for years, thinking deeply, seriously, and very much to the point." Evidently Dr. Newton speaks for thousands upon thousands of people in this country, of whom he clearly knows absolutely nothing, and his statement is in consequence utterly false. Moreover, he deliberately misrepresents non-religious people by taking for granted that they are sodden masses, "dead to all high appeals." To the claims of supernatural religion, as such, they are completely indifferent; but the bulk of them display wonderful humanity, benevolence, and mildness of disposition. Dr. Newton is guilty of bearing false witness against them through ignorance and prejudice; but as a public man he has no right to speak *ex cathedra* on matters concerning which he is ignorant and biased.

His main point, however, is that "men are thinking differently about religion from what they did in days gone by." In a sense that is quite true, but not in the sense intended by the preacher. Belief in God is impossible to an ever-growing multitude of thoughtful people, with the result that religion as Divine fellowship has no meaning for them. The new thinking, in their case, is natural, scientific thinking, the thinking that confines itself to the present world and life; and for them life at its highest and best signifies life devoted to fellowship with, and service of, their fellow-beings. For Dr Newton, however, the new thinking "is the simple but mighty Gospel of Jesus, enriched by science, illustrated by democracy, and applied by the educational method." According to the New Testament, the message of the Gospel of Jesus is that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." Surely, such a Gospel cannot possibly be enriched by science, illustrated by democracy, or applied by any educational methods. To derive all the benefits in its gift, all we have to do is to believe it, or put our trust in him whose Gospel it is. On the preacher's own showing, the Gospel of Jesus, on its ethical side, is as old as the hills, containing not a single new idea. The Golden Rule, which it is said to make central, was in existence at least five hundred years before Jesus was ever heard of. The path of righteousness, to which it points, is simply the eightfold path of the Buddha. But, after all, where does the Christ come in, and what does the minister of the City Temple really think of him? We have read his sermon most carefully more than once; but we have totally failed to discover what Christ is to him. The terms he employs in speaking of him are so vague and ambiguous that it is impossible to determine whether he is a Trinitarian or a Unitarian, or in what respect Christ is the Saviour of the world. The only thing of which we are positively certain is that here we are not brought into touch with any new thinking whatsoever. Take the following:—

> And Christ! Are men thinking of him in these strange and tangled days? Indeed, yes, they are thinking of him lovingly and wistfully, wondering if, after all, he is not the wisest and most practical of all the teachers of men. For most men of to-day the Christ of dogma has vanished, or is vanishing. They are not interested in the ancient debates which agitated their fathers:
>
> Draw if thou canst the mystic line
> Severing rightly his from thine,
> Which is human, which Divine?
>
> With these speculative mysteries they have not to do, because their problems are of another kind. What they want is to know God as he is disclosed and interpreted in terms of our common life, and this they find in Jesus—in his growth, his manhood, his mingled joys and sorrows, his fellowship with humanity, his sufferings, his death, his victory.

The chief characteristic of that extract is its vagueness. It is true that the Christs of dogma are vanishing, but there are no others. Christ is an interpretation, and that is why there are so many different Christs. Even the Gospel Jesus is an interpretation, and that is why there are so many contradictions in the Gospels. Historical facts are conspicuous only by their absence. Dr. Newton is fully as dogmatic as Dean Wace, only in a different way; and the one dogmatism is no better founded than the other. We are never at a loss to know what the Dean means, but are never wholly certain what significations Dr. Newton attaches to his terms.

Now, the conclusion to which we are forced by an examination of the sermon under consideration is that it registers no new thinking whatever, and that religion is a theme upon which literally nothing new can be said. Usually there is in Dr. Newton's discourses a considerable amount of Humanism, but it is so interwoven with supernatural threads that its beauty is greatly marred and its ethical elements lose their value.

J. T. LLOYD.

Through Christian Spectacles.

> The miraculous has become absurd, the impossible. Gods and phantoms have been driven from the earth and sky. We are living in a natural world.—*Ingersoll.*

THE small but fierce tribe of Christian Evidence exponents have a new ally in Mr. Arthur Machen, the well-known journalist, who has published a column article in the *Evening News* dealing with Freethinkers and their attitude to religion. But Mr. Machen wears his rue with a difference. Like that placid dachshund which Mark Twain saw in the possession of a sportsman who was taking it out to hunt elephants, he lacks bitterness. He also lacks other things—the ability to murder the King's English, and the power of talking very loudly in the open air.

Nevertheless, I find myself in a rebellious humour. For there is an irritating air of dilettantism in Mr. Machen's propaganda, and a note of patronage. There is also an echo of the Oxford University manner, which has been jocosely described as the attitude of the Almighty addressing a bug. It will probably be grateful to the sentimentalists who still cling to the name of Christian; but I imagine it will irritate rather than satisfy other readers of more virile intelligence.

Mr. Machen suggests that the fault of Freethinkers, or rather their misfortune, for they are born that way, is that they lack the religious sense. The Freethinker, he tells us, resembles the unhappy folk who are "tone-deaf," and "colour-blind," and who cannot enjoy the delights of literature. "He is not able to relish a good dinner; so he finds out all kinds of reasons to prove that dinner is nonsense, and poisonous nonsense at that." Mr. Machen is "sorry" for the poor, demented Freethinker, and in the heat of his argument, "somewhat cross." "Freethought," he points out politely, "is found to some extent in all minds save in the two extremes of saints and simpletons." And, since journalists are not saints, it is terrible to reflect to which group Mr. Machen himself belongs.

Mr. Machen's simile of the dinner is beautiful and ineffectual nonsense. Freethinkers are as able to relish a good dinner as the most credulous clergyman "with good capon lined"; but they are not so simple as to mistake a menu for a banquet. The Christian menu has no correspondence with the meal that follows, and

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the price charged is too high. A bird in the hand is worth any number in the bush. A slender chance of profit in the next life does not compensate for mental slavery in this life. An honest man, with a sense of human dignity, would hesitate to play fast and loose with his intellect, and accept a creed because it appeals to his selfish hopes and fears. Living by faith is an easy profession, as the clergy well know. Living on faith, however, is a precarious business. Elijah is said to have subsisted on food brought him by inspired ravens, and 50,000 parsons to-day in this country subsist on the offerings of the pious. The starving people of Europe ask God to give them their daily bread, and the answer is that they die. If there were no other indictment of Christianity, the awful sufferings of helpless women and children would condemn it everlastingly.

According to Mr. Machen, the religious sense is but a common faculty, and Christians have little reason to plume themselves as members of God's own aristocracy. The senses of beauty and wonder, and, indeed, the love of æsthetics, are not necessarily religious, but are perfectly natural. How, then, can there be anything "spiritual" in their combinations? Is it reasonable to gibe at the Freethinker as like a man "utterly incapable" of relishing the exquisite savours of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, and as one who prefer novelettes before Shakespeare when one remembers that Shakespeare and Keats were both Freethinkers. Mr. Machen is obsessed with a gross illusion. Christians have no monopoly of the finer feelings. It is very doubtful if the average hymn of to-day has any more claim to be considered as real literature than the usual music-hall song. And the glaring lithographs of Sacred subjects framed in so many Christian homes suggests that colour-blindness is not confined to the heterodox.

As a defender of the faith, Mr. Machen is not a great success. One of his ruses has been to misrepresent and slander heretics. The way he does this is as follows:—

> But the man who is convinced that the early martyrs were designing and crafty rogues is, often for some obscure reason, anxious to proclaim his conviction to the world, whereby he becomes a burden and a bore.

This is as absurd as the story of Noah's Ark or of the adventures of Jonah and the whale. Mr. Machen, being an instructed citizen of an educated nation, should know better than that. There is always something exhilarating in the infatuation of an heroic ignoramus, but this holy simplicity of Mr. Machen's is overdone. Conceivably, on reflection, and after consultation of Paine, Renan, and Strauss, to mention no others, he will recognize that sobriety of statement is not precisely the quality in which his talents shine.

Mr. Machen is not so childlike and bland as he appears to be. He follows the beaten track of theology in talking of mysteries, which is a subterfuge to cover the retreat of a defender of the faith. Here are his words:—

> The truth is that, whether we like it or not, we live, if we live well, in and by and through mysteries.

Mysteries, forsooth! And Mr. Machen has not illuminated them with his camouflage of controversy. Wishing to keep the religious instinct in mystery, or obscurity, he objects to explanations. He cannot tolerate that men should talk of these things too inquiringly. Even if the critics are right, the subject is taboo. The older theologians were definite; the modern defenders of the faith are indefinite. As man advances, God retires. With each increase of our knowledge of Nature the sphere of the "supernatural" is lessened. Presently people will find that deities and devils are but the reflections of man's imagination and symbols of his ignorance. So religion develops, "till by broad spreading it disperse to nought."

When the Sultan of Zanzibar sent a second-hand tramp steamer to sink the British Fleet, a hearty laugh rang through the civilized world. Mr. Machen's acting the part of St. George attacking the dragon of Freethought is equally exhilarating. "Is it reasonable," asks the amusing Mr. Machen, "to spend time in reading about Mr. Pickwick, who never existed?" Christians, it might be retorted, worship a being who never existed, and employ fifty thousand parsons to perpetuate the comedy. There is a world of difference between the Freethinker, who labours for rational progress, and the journalist, who turns Christian for half an hour, to bolster up the delusions of faith. Christians are surrounded by the waters of Rationalism, and stand a bad chance of drowning. And the matter will not be unduly prolonged because a journalist essays the part of Mrs. Partington, the courageous woman who sought to sweep back the Atlantic with a mop.

MIMNERMUS.

The Bible and Immortality.

THE NEW TESTAMENT SOUL AND SPIRIT.

OUR search for "eternal life" necessitates an examination of the New Testament, where we naturally expect to find it; and we *do* find something which looks like it in connection with the words life, soul, and spirit; but, as in the case of the Old Testament, we must ascertain what these words really mean. This is rendered more necessary by the confused and conflicting ideas which many Christians have upon the subject. With this object in view I will commence with the word "soul" which occurs twice in the following extract:—

> Mark viii. 36, 37.—For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

In this passage the Greek word translated "soul" is *psyche*, which is said to mean "soul or life." Now, we all know what is meant by "life," though we may, perhaps, find some difficulty in defining it; but we do *not* know what is meant by "soul." This we have to discover. In the foregoing passage, then, the word *psyche* in both cases means "life," and is so translated in the Revised Version, the alternative reading "soul" being placed in the margin. Hence, in this passage, we are asked a perfectly rational question—What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his *life?* We find, also, that the word *psyche* is rendered "life" in the following passages even in the Authorised Version:—

> Matt. ii. 20.—They are dead that sought the young child's *life (psyche)*.
>
> Matt. vi. 25.—Be not anxious for your *life (psyche)* what ye shall eat, &c.

Again, we find the word *psyche* used in the New Testament to designate the whole man, regardless of any soul or spirit which he might possess. Thus we read:—

> Act ii. 43—And fear came upon every *soul*.
>
> Acts vii. 14.—All his kindred, three score and fifteen *souls*.
>
> Rev. xvi. 3.—And every living *soul* died.
>
> 1 Peter iii. 20.—In the days of Noah.....only eight *souls* were saved.

In each of these examples the word translated "soul" is *psyche*. We are told by orthodox Christians that the soul is the "spiritual part" of man, and that, being immortal, it lives in some unknown locality after the

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death of the body. Yet in the examples we have noticed so far, we find that in some cases *psyche* signifies nothing more than "life," and in others it means merely a "living person." In the last four examples the word is applied, not to an imaginary spiritual part of man, but to the whole natural body—like the Hebrew word *nephesh*.

In the expression "eternal *life*," however, the word used is *zoe*, even when the word "eternal" is not expressed but only implied. The following are some examples in which *zoe* appears: Matt. xviii. 9; xix. 29; Mark x. 17; Luke x. 25; xviii. 30; John iii. 36; and throughout the New Testament. The following are further examples of the use of *psyche*:—

> Matt. xxii. 37.—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy *soul (psyche)*, and with all thy mind.
>
> Heb. x. 39.—But we are of them that have faith unto the saving of the *soul (psyche)*.
>
> Rev. xx. 4.—I saw the *souls (psychas)* of them that had been beheaded, etc.

According to the first of these passages the heart, soul, and mind in man had all three the power to love; according to the second, the soul was something within man which it was thought desirable to "save"—his life, for instance. In the third passage the writer does not tell us what the objects which he calls "souls" really were, or what they looked like—whether they appeared to be headless bodies, the heads only, pools of blood, or phantoms.

We will now look at two Greek words, *empsychos* and *apsychos*, the first of which signifies "living, animated"; the second, "lifeless, spiritless." The prefix "em" signifies "in" or "with"; the prefix "a" denotes "not" or "without": the literal meanings of the two words are thus "with life" and "without life." From this fact we have positive proof that the original meaning of *psyche*, before new words were formed from it, was simply "life" or something internal, such as the blood, which was necessary to life.

Leaving the word "soul" for the present, we will next look at some examples of "spirit."

> Mark i. 10.—He saw.....the *Spirit* as a dove descending upon him.
>
> Mark i. 12.—And straightway the *Spirit* driveth him forth into the wilderness.

In these passages the Greek word *pneuma* (without a capital letter) is translated "Spirit"; but this "spirit," sometimes called "Holy," is an imaginary being or influence from another realm. Setting aside, therefore, this class of spirits, I will select examples connected with man.

> Luke viii. 55.—Jesus "called, saying, Maiden arise. And her *spirit (pneuma)* returned, and she rose up immediately.
>
> Acts vii. 59.—And they stoned Stephen.....he saying, Lord Jesus, receive my *spirit (pneuma)*.
>
> John iii. 8.—The *wind (pneuma)* bloweth where it listeth.....so is everyone that is born of the *spirit (pneuma)*.

In the Greek the word *pneuma* is said to signify: "breath, life, soul, air, a gentle wind." As a matter of fact, *pneuma* was derived from the verb *pneo*, "I breathe": hence the word was given both to the breath and to some supposed force within all living persons which enabled them to breathe. When this breath or force had left the body, those from whom it had departed were dead. In the first of the passages quoted, Jesus is stated to have caused this indispensable self-acting energy to return. In the second passage, the breath or spirit was returned "to the Lord who gave it" (Eccl. xii. 7). In the third passage we have an example in which *pneuma* denotes "the wind," and another in which it is applied to an imaginary divine influence; but from Acts ii. 2, 4, this also appears to be wind. It is in the latter sense—as a holy wind—that the word most often appears in the New Testament. In the following example the *pneuma* is said to be "troubled" and "refreshed":—

> John xiii. 21.—Jesus was "troubled in the *spirit*."
>
> 2 Cor. vii. 13.—Paul says of Titus: "his *spirit* hat been refreshed."

These two passages refer to conditions of the mind. In the first case, a thought had arisen that things were not progressing favourably, which is called being "troubled in spirit"; in the second case, a feeling of relief was experienced upon hearing that things were not so bad as had been thought—which sensation is spoken of as being "refreshed in spirit." In neither case had "the spirit" anything to do with the matter referred to in the context.

We have seen that the original meaning of *psyche* was "life," and that of *pneuma* "breath or a gentle wind"; but as the years rolled on the two words were employed in several other senses. With the latter I have nothing to do. The primary signification of *psyche* and *pneuma* are sufficient to show that the so-called "soul" and "spirit" in man are purely materialistic, and could not by any possibility survive the death of the body. To say, then, that the life and breath could be separated from the body and live after death is to utter pure, unadulterated nonsense.

If there be an immortal part of the body, it must have the power to think and reason, and to feel that it was a complete personality in itself. Now, according to the New Testament, there really *is* an internal part of the human organism which is the seat of the will, the understanding, the moral sense, the affections, desires, and passions. This great internal organ is the heart, which was known to contain four cavities, in which it was conceived were stored up all kinds of thoughts imaginable. The latter were called the "abundance" or "treasure" of the heart (Luke vi. 45; Matt. xii. 34, 35), from which store might be brought forth any of the thoughts at will. In the case of the righteous these thoughts were all good, in that of the ungodly they were all evil. The following are examples:—

> Matt. ix. 4.—Wherefore think ye evil in your heart?
>
> Matt. xii. 34.—Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.
>
> Luke ii. 19.—Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.
>
> Luke iii. 15.—Men reasoned in their hearts concerning John.
>
> Luke xxiv. 38.—Wherefore do reasonings arise in your heart?
>
> Acts viii. 22.—Repent.....perhaps the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee.
>
> Rom. x. 10.—For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.
>
> Heb. iv. 12.—To discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The foregoing are but a few of the many passages which might be cited. We are also told that "the heart was glad" or that there was "sorrow in the heart," showing that this organ was the seat of those sensations. It may, of course, be said that these and all other references to the heart were merely metaphorical, and that we ourselves have in a large measure adopted the same manner of speaking. The latter statement is, no doubt, true; but we never could have done so had it not been believed in past times that everything stated in the New Testament was inspired, and therefore correct. But that the early Christians believed the heart was the seat of all thoughts, reasoning, and emotions is evident from the fact that the word employed is *kardia*, the common

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name for the material fleshly heart, and also because all the New Testament writers speak as if there could be no possible doubt upon the subject. Take the following, for instance, as an example:—

> Mark vii. 18-22.—Are ye so without understanding? Perceive ye not that whatsoever from without goeth into the man.....goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draught.....But from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, railing, pride, foolishness.

There is nothing metaphorical here: the writer plainly refers to organs of the body—the stomach, the intestines, and the heart—and he undoubtedly believed that the feelings and desires which might result in the iniquities mentioned proceeded from the heart. The Hebrews in Old Testament times had the same ideas respecting that organ, which were handed down without being questioned. The ancient Assyrians, however, believed that the seat of all sensations and emotions was the liver; so in their writings we hear of the latter organ rejoicing, or being grieved or troubled. In the passage last quoted, Jesus is represented as endeavouring to prove to his disciples that the heart was the seat of all the mental faculties; of this there can be no doubt whatever. In this connection it should also be remembered that prior to the year 1628 not a single medical man in all Christendom knew what was the real function of the heart.

ABRACADABRA.

A Fable.

ONCE upon a time, a child was born. It was nameless, but its father's name was Eternal Right, and its mother's name was Instinct. In its right hand was a cluster of grapes; in its left a harp with only one string. In its hair were almond blossoms, and over its head a golden nimbus shone faintly.

Now, having been born in a respectable land where everyone is respectable (yes, you may smile), and where all are naked under their clothes, as was befitting, the child had to be christened. Therefore, a number of people took the child and set out on journey to a church. The walls of the church were made of the golden pollen from bees' legs; for the roof violet petals were used; and, would you believe it? segments of a rainbow were used instead of mortar. I think that now you would like to know who were the people who went with the child. Well, I will tell you. In the company there was a mystical Atheist, a man who sang pretty songs, a smiling woman who said something about heaven being near the hearth; and—oh bother, everyone was there who did not have locks on their doors and did not mind whether you wore low heels or high heels. To me they cried, "Come with us." But I replied, "No; I cannot. I am busy trying to explain the universe in my prospective book on the game of 'Tiddley Winks, or what a little Ignorance governs the World.' Call him," I shouted, "Tosspot or Tinklenob."

So they went to the church, and the Friar took the child in his arms. "What shall we name him?" he asked. Before there was time for an answer the infant was transformed into a torch. The Friar ran like hell, and has not been seen since. The smiling woman grasped the torch, which did not burn her, as she had had dealings with worse things than fire, and they are matters which I must not talk about in a fable. "God bless my soul!" said the mystical Atheist, as he brushed a fly off his nose. The man who sang pretty songs laughed, right down from his mouth to the tip of his toes, and they all agreed that the name of the torch should be Reason.

WILLIAM REPTON.

The Blank Wall.

IV.

THE mind sufficiently virile to detach itself from the local conventions of commonplace existence and resist the stream of mediocrity is rare. This natural docility of the normal mind, intensified by the daily deluge of fatuous newspapers, creates a mental atmosphere in society which is hostile to all ideas outside the most elementary and obvious manifestations of life; and absorbs every cunning tyranny and sly despotism with an almost incredible eagerness. No lie is too great or too fantastic for the normal mind, providing that the lie is based upon the continued acceptance of commonplace ideas and conventional thought.

The evolving of character in such a diseased environment where servile emotions must predominate, is almost an impossibility. By character it is not intended to convey the orthodox conception. The mechanical devotion to a mechanical and joyless labour; the feverish slavery of body and mind to the immoralities of modern business and trade do not involve the necessity of character at all; they demand the lifeless infallibility of the electric clock. "Character" which submits without even a minimum of mental protest to the insistent demands of modern conventional ideas, either in religion, art, or in commerce, cannot correctly be termed character—it is inertia, indifference to the reality of life, contentment, mental vacuity, the cessation of growth, and death.

The modern civilized world is peopled with that type of devitalized individual whose mental and intellectual qualities have never even commenced to function. You can do very little or nothing for them, or with them. Everything seems to fail. Religion, Art, Science, Philosophy, Freethought, Mysticism, Materialism. It seems that the whole gamut of human thought is entirely unable to aid or develop the normal civilized brain.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Acid Drops.

The capture of Jerusalem by the British has quite naturally given rise to a lot of pious "gush" in some of the newspapers, and later we quite expect columns concerning the feelings of devotion with which the Christians, and Jews, and Atheists, and Agnostics, etc., which make up the Army, approached the "Holy City." Informed readers will smile, even though pious ones are moved to tears. And one thing we have observed is that our English papers are wisely discreet when dealing with the former conquests of Jerusalem, in their handling of the earlier Christian captures. Jerusalem has suffered more from the presence of Christians than from that of Mohammedans, and for hundreds of years they set Christians an example of tolerance and enlightenment.

Even modern Christians ought to feel grateful to the Mohammedans for one thing. Until the War broke out they provided, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a guard of soldiers, for the purpose of keeping peace between Christians when they came to worship at the grave of their Saviour. This form of entertainment between brethren in the Christian faith was suspended when Europe offered a wider theatre for the exhibition of their activities.

At the Home Ruridiaconal Council, the Rev. W. S. Flynn read a paper on "The Difficulties of the Church with regard to Children." We admit that this is a difficulty. There is the difficulty of getting hold of them, and there is the difficulty of keeping them afterwards. And there is the increasing difficulty of inducing parents to hand over their children to the manipulation of these organized kidnappers.

The Young Men's Christian Association is nothing if not modest. A Christmas appeal on its behalf for half a million of money has been made. Christian finance is more flourishing nowadays than when the Founder was sold for thirty shillings.

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The newspapers have been publishing bold headlines concerning the death of the Rev. Alfred Brandon, of Chelsea, who died at the age of 101. What would those editors have done had they had to record the deaths of Adam, Methuselah, or Noah, who each lived nine centuries?

Defenders of the Design Argument will note with pleasure that the wife of a labourer at Mold, Flintshire, has given birth to four children, and that the quartette are living.

The *Evening News* is to be congratulated upon having discovered and engaged the services of the newest and most unique of all Christian apologists. Week after week Mr. Machen's contributions become more and more astounding and bewildering, and there must be boundless rejoicing in the camp of the orthodox. He began by declaring that we live "in and by and through mysteries." Then he affirmed that "to remove the veils of enigmas is the office of religion." His next statement was that religion is irrational and "entirely incredible." The Faith is the supreme mystery, and yet its office is to remove the veils.

Mr. Machen's last article, which appeared in the *Evening News* for December 7, surpasses all its predecessors in irrationality. This is the seventh article on "God and the War," and for a wonder the War is at last alluded to thus:—

> We say we do not understand how an Almighty and most merciful Father can allow the abomination of the War—can allow any pain or anguish of body or spirit. But have we the slightest ground for expecting to understand this or any other problem?

We unhesitatingly answer that question in the negative; and we maintain that we have no more ground for believing in "an Almighty and most merciful Father." Mr. Machen admits this himself when he tells us that even God is nothing but an hypothesis. Surely, apologetics never fell to such depths of absurdity before.

Mr. Machen seems incapable of stating a case accurately. For example, he says that it is idle for a man "to declare himself a purely rational creature, living in a rational, demonstrable universe"; but no Freethinker worth his salt ever even imagined that he lived in a rational universe. Our claim is that we are rational beings, trying our best to understand and utilize the chemical and physical laws under which we live. Mr. Machen also asserts that Atheism is "the confession that there is no riddle of the Universe." A falser statement was never made. Science takes the riddle for granted, and has for its only aim the solution of the same by observation and experiment. Really, Mr. Machen is either wickedly trifling with a great subject, or else mischievously pulling the legs of credulous readers.

Although there are many hundreds of Church of England army chaplains, the result of their work is questionable. "Seventy per cent. of the men at the front do not know that the Church has a message at all," says Dr. Lyttleton.

The Rev. W. M. Davidson, vicar of Christ Church, Tottenham, dropped dead whilst acting as referee in a hockey match. There is no moral.

Gipsy Smith has written an article with the title "Behind the Firing Line." Many of the clergy are behind the rectory door.

"The chief fault of the Conscientious Objector is to have taken Jesus and His Gospel too seriously," says the Rev. Thomas Phillips. Most Christians jocularly regard the Prince of Peace as the God of Battles.

Mr. Macpherson, M.P., stated recently in the House of Commons that there were 2,082 Army chaplains serving abroad. As these gentlemen rank as officers, we may estimate their pay at £300 a year each, and the total represents an annual outlay of £624,000. The rest of the Black Army is exempted from military service.

An Anti-Semitic bias seems to be one of the many attractive features of our amusing contemporary, the *New Witness*. There is nothing to be ashamed of in a bias. We are willing to admit that we have an anti-Christian bias. We are not certain that the Brothers Chesterton would be equally candid. They would probably dodge the question by telling us that some of their best friends are Jews. We cannot see that there can be any reasonable objection to a bias if the criticism it prompts is well-informed as well as witty and malicious. Our English Jews, more particularly those of politics, finance, and commerce, have their weak spots, which are fair enough game for ridicule. You cannot pay them a greater compliment than to mistake them for blue-blooded Englishmen; and if by any means they acquire an old English surname, they prize it more than platinum, gold, or precious stones. It may be a subtle compliment paid to the qualities of the British race when Samuel becomes Montagu; Cohen, Palgrave; and Levy is disguised as Lee. We could point out other idiosyncrasies less amusing in the English Jew; but, no doubt, the editor of the *New Witness* has already noted them in his friends.

While we have no occasion here to dispute seriously Mr. Chesterton's knowledge of the social and mental habits of English Jews, we are afraid we cannot but think that he and his readers are amusingly ignorant of many things they ought to know before they abuse the foreign Jews. A week or so ago we noticed that a Mr. Ashton had ventured, presumably for the first time in his life, so far East as Houndsditch, which, as everyone knows, is only Semi-Semitic. Yet even on the fringe of Jewry he had made a wonderful discovery. We can imagine how great would have been his success if he had had the courage to voyage so far as Brick Lane. He returned West with his marvellous addition to the world's knowledge verified by laborious studies in the British Museum, and then amazed Mr. Chesterton and the guileless readers of the *New Witness* with an article called "The Truth about Yiddish."

What, then, is the truth about *Yiddish?* It is really no more than what every schoolboy in the East End knows. Who, except the Editor of the *New Witness* and his readers, needs to be told that *Yiddish* is only the English form of *Judisch* = Jewish; that the basis of the language is German; that, although written in Hebrew characters, the percentage of Hebrew words is only small, say about ten per cent.? All this is damning evidence of the pro-German sympathies of the foreign Jew, he thinks in German, of course, in spite of the fact that he can neither speak nor understand literary or spoken German, and that no German can understand him. How did Mr. Ashton come by his great discovery? Probably some more intelligent Anti-Semite told him that *Yiddish* was, of course, *Judæo-German*, and then our truth-loving young gentleman rushes to the British Museum Reading Room, finds nothing under *Yiddish* in the ordinary encyclopædia, misses, in his feverish hurry, an informative article under this heading in an American encyclopædia, but comes across what he wants in the *Jewish Encyclopædia* in a learned article by Professor Leo Wiener of Harvard. The amazing truth about *Yiddish*, as known to the *New Witness*, is nothing more than a few quotations from Professor Wiener, a fatuous suggestion that the Jew uses the Hebrew characters to disguise the Teutonic basis of the language, and a stupid sneer at the Jews having an encyclopædia of their own, as if none of us had heard of or used *The Catholic Encyclopædia*. It is, perhaps, too much to expect an Anti-Semite to learn Yiddish; but if he makes inquiries, he will find that it is not a mere jargon, but a language with more "than mere historical importance, grammatically constructed, and possessing something of the straightforward word-arrangement of English." We do not want to discourage Mr. Ashton. We hope he will make many excursions to the real East End Jewry, and we hope his

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future discoveries will be not less amusing and instructive than his *Truth about Yiddish*.

Witchcraft, says the *Daily Express*, "still flourishes apace in Germany." But we understood that Germany had given up everything Christian, and was devoted to freethinking and Materialism! As a matter of fact, witchcraft "flourishes" in all parts of Christendom—Britain included. And look at the trade in charms that is carried on. The truth is that in every country in the world there are large numbers of people who are little removed—mentally—from savages. And the clergy everywhere make full use of the circumstance.

Immediately after reading the above statement concerning Germany, we came across an account of stones and pieces of rock that were lifted from the ground during the digging of a dug-out at Embrook Manor, Cheriton. Our readers will not have forgotten the Angels of Mons, and, later, the angels seen at Grays, Essex. How much removed are the people who believe these stories from the mental conditions amid which witchcraft flourishes? And when we have done with these affairs, what are we to say of the beliefs that go to make up orthodox Christianity? Is there any difference in quality between these and the other beliefs noted above? Hobbes' statement remains eternally true; religion is superstition allowed, superstition is religion not allowed.

"Romance is perpetually illustrated in the history of the Church," says the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell. Fiction also has its place in the same history.

A publisher announces a new publication with the alluring title, *The Tree of Heaven*. That tree should look well in the golden streets.

A newspaper paragraph states: "The death has occurred of Captain Robert Hoare, an Elder Brother of the Trinity." A cynic might add that this makes the tangle of the Trinity still more complicated.

Sir Robert Perks condemns State public-houses on the ground that they would be rivals of the Sunday-schools and the Church Institutes. Yet the alternatives are between spirituous and spiritual intoxication.

We have said the same thing times out of number, but we are none the less pleased to find it re-echoed in the columns of the *Daily Mail*. It is from a Reading correspondent of that paper:—

> My work in life takes me a great deal into various parts of the country, and as I go about I am surprised at the growing number of people who, like myself, are Churchmen, and who are saying that "the Church is one of the biggest failures of the war."

The Church has given neither effective help towards winning the War nor reasonable help towards creating a frame of mind for making future wars impossible. It has shown all the timidity and indecision of the opportunist; and that type of person, if he makes no deadly enemies, makes no warm friends.

A movement is on foot to close all public-houses, picture palaces, etc., on January 6—the "national" day of prayer. We would suggest that a more effective way of filling the Churches on that day would be to make abstention from church an offence under the D.O.R.A., or giving a pound of sugar to everyone who attends. Where humbug is in evidence, bribery or force seem not unfit accompaniments. And it is in line with Christian tradition for parsons to call God's attention to the worshippers in church—many of whom are there because they can't get either into a "pub" or a picture palace.

At a conference held at Birmingham of representatives of the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Free Church Council, a protest was made against proposed interference with the present marriage laws. It is highly significant that the proposed extension of divorce, which will chiefly benefit the working classes, should have united these three ecclesiastical opponents.

While worshipping in Merthyr Catholic Church, John Killaher died suddenly. Had he been attending a Freethought lecture, there would have been an awful warning to others.

Many a true word is spoken in jest. Also the deepest truths are sometimes uttered by children. According to an educational periodical, a boy in a school examination wrote as follows in an essay on the Japanese: "Until recently the Japanese used to fight with bows and arrows, but now they are equipped with the dreadful arms of Christians."

The Prussianizing of the nation goes on apace, and even the Churches are imitating the officials. The National Free Church Council is considering a scheme of home visitation. In each district "Church messengers" will undertake to call at the houses, especially those of "wives, widows, and dependents of soldiers and sailors." We hope that these busy-bodies will meet with the reception they deserve.

A "Y.M.C.A. synagogue" is an unexpected feature of the camp of the Jewish Regiment stationed in the West Country declares the *Daily News*, and adds that the colonel is "an Irishman and a Christian." It looks as if the age of miracles had not passed.

The Bishop of Southwark will introduce a Bill in the House of Lords to close St. Olave's Church, Tooley Street, London. Is this a symptom of the long-promised revival of religion?

Rev. R. F. Horton, Dean Inge, Rev. Principal Garvie, and a number of others have just issued a manifesto declaring that only Christianity can bring healing to the world, and suggesting that "belligerents and neutrals" should meet together in prayer. We haven't much doubt that if the *people* of the different countries could meet together, the War might be soon brought to a close. But it will need something better than prayer to either bring them together or to produce good from the meeting. It is lack of sense, not want of prayer, that is mainly responsible for the present trouble. Religion did not prevent the trouble occurring, and it will certainly not put an end to it. And what is the matter with the piety of Germany? It is as Christian as any other country in the War, and more Christian than some.

Referring to the Romanes lectures, the *Daily News* points out that Dr. Romanes was, "for the greater part of his life," an Agnostic, "but he died an extreme High Churchman." It did not add, however, that Romanes change of opinion was preceded by a lingering and terrible illness.

Canon B. H. Streeter, writing on "Immortality," says he would "not be satisfied by a future life from which the element of kindly humour was excluded." The worthy canon will have some difficulty in finding what he wants in the religion of the Man of Sorrows.

Some pious folk assert that Providence imposed the world-war on account of our "sins," but there are few signs that the War is improving morals. At Kent Assizes in one day thirteen cases of bigamy were dealt with.

Dr. Charles Sarolea, in his new book, *German Problems and Personalities*, denounces "the poison of Lutheranism," which he considers has aided and abetted Prussian militarism. Yet the dear clergy will insist that the Prussians are "Atheists."

The *Sydney Bulletin* recently referred to the Kaiser as "The man who slew his God." Before the War religious folk professed to admire the Kaiser's piety.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 6, Manchester; January 13, London; January 20, Southampton; January 27, Swansea; February 3, Birmingham; February 17, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

C. M.—Of course, it is not "business," in the commercial sense, to sell pamphlets at cost price, and make no charge for labour, etc. But it is excellent business from the point of view of propaganda, and it is for that the *Freethinker* exists.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—From a Brother O. A. S., £1; B. Jenkins (Johannesburg), £1; P. Morris (Bechuanaland), 5s.; R. Viedge (South Africa), £1 1s.; A. Cayford, 10s.

A CORRESPONDENT is very anxious to possess a copy of Shelley's *Refutation of Deism*. This was issued as a pamphlet a few years back, and if any of our readers would care to part with his copy, will he please let us know.

T. HERLOTT.—Pleased to have so hearty an appreciation of the *Freethinker* from a friend of Charles Bradlaugh. Your order has received attention from our shop-manager.

R. L. (Plymouth).—We should ourselves like to more frequently deal with new books that are of interest to Freethinkers. But there are so many other things that need attention, and we have only 16 pages—and 24 hours per day. Morley's *Recollections* was one of the things that could not be put off.

H. KEANE.—We have very pleasant memories of Blackburn. Why not see what can be done to revive the Movement in that town?

F. DORRINGTON.—Something on the same subject may have been done, but not this pamphlet. *The Mother of God* is a quite new pamphlet.

S. LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.—Reports of meetings must have the signature of the writer attached, who should be an official of the Branch.

W. M.—Glad to see the letters in the *Essex Chronicle*. Such communications do much good to the cause.

WE are reminded by a correspondent that the "Acid Drop" in our issue for December 2, reading "Catholic Game. Day to Heaven," should have read "*Way* to Heaven."

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.

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 have space to do no more than barely acknowledge here the response to our appeal, on behalf of the Committee, for funds to discharge the balance of the liabilities incurred in connection with the fight with the L.C.C. A full list of acknowledgments to date appears in another column. All our correspondents agree it is a great victory, and we hope the Council will be content to leave it as it is. If not, we shall all just have to buckle to again. The entire sum to be raised is between £80 and £100, and this we hope to see accomplished in the course of a week or two.

There were two splendid audiences at Glasgow to listen to Mr. Cohen's lectures on Sunday last. The hall was comfortably filled in the forenoon and crowded in the evening. The audiences followed both lectures with the keenest appreciation, and no lecturer ought to expect more than that. There is a prospect of a real forward movement being initiated from Glasgow in the near future, and the West of Scotland will thus take its part in the new advance of Freethought that is taking place all over the country.

Travelling to and from Glasgow takes up practically the whole of Saturday and Monday, and, with Sunday on the platform, a great hole is made in the week. A number of letters remain, in consequence, undealt with this week. Correspondents will, we have no doubt, appreciate the difficulty, and excuse the delay. As it is, a deal of the writing in this week's issue has had to be done in the train going to and from Scotland. The compositors are the chief sufferers by this, as it makes our "copy" a little less legible than usual.

It seems there is now a chance—even though a small one—of Mr. Fisher's Education Bill coming before Parliament at an early date. In the circumstances we should like Freethinkers all over the country to see what can be done in connection with Trades Unions, labour groups, and other local bodies to get a resolution passed in favour of Secular Education, and to see that the same is forwarded to the Minister of Education. We gave this advice some time back, and some of our readers acted on it, with good results. The resolution should move along three lines: (1) The long-standing quarrel over the control of the schools by the clergy, and its obstructive effect on our educational policy; (2) The manifest injustice of compelling all citizens to support the religious opinions of one section of the community; (3) The duty of the modern State to maintain an attitude of strict neutrality with regard to all forms of religious or anti-religious opinion. We hope Freethinkers will take this counsel seriously to heart. We *must* clear the clergy out of the schools if our work is to bear its full fruits.

Freethought papers, which have always a struggle to exist under the most favourable conditions, naturally feel the War pressure acutely. Our gallant contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*, announces that it is compelled to raise its subscription price from $3 to $3.50. This is owing to the increased wages of compositors, etc., and to an advance of 60 per cent. in the price of paper. The *Truthseeker* is dirt cheap at the advanced price, and we do not think that any American Freethinker—or English one either—will begrudge the advance.

In this country the paper shortage is becoming more acute, and the price is rising week by week. It is now nearly *600* per cent. above pre-War prices. But the shortage is bothering us even more than the price. The latter may be got over somehow; but we can't print without paper, and early in the new year we may have to take a fresh review of the situation. But we shall put off making any alteration so long as we can. The *Freethinker* is one of the few papers that has continued unchanged, and we should like to keep it so during what we hope are the closing months of the War.

Manchester friends will please note that Mr. T. F. Palmer, whose articles will have made his name familiar to all *Freethinker* readers, lectures twice at Manchester to-day (Dec. 16). The afternoon lecture is at 3 o'clock, subject: "The Birth and Death of Worlds"; evening, at 6.30: "The Antiquity of Man." We hope to hear that the Co-operative Hall (Downing Street) is well filled, if not crowded, on both occasions.

One of our friends at the Front writes Miss Vance:—

> We had a parade on Sunday morning, and were addressed by the Assistant Chaplain-General to the Forces. Knowing your horror of war, I feel sure you will be delighted to know that the A.C.G. promises that Christianity will banish war in the future. He was very emphatic about it. Unfortunately, we were not invited to ask questions, so I was unable to find out why it (Christianity) had always bolstered up war in the past. Neither could I understand why its leaders, from Benedict XII. to the Archbishop of Canterbury, seem to have made no protest at the beginning. Indeed, that brilliant intellect, the Bishop of London, called it a "holy war" the other day. To do the A.C.G. justice, he didn't do that: he termed it "a hellish business": but he thought it wiser not

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to go into the matter of proving that Christianity could stop it. Or perhaps he thought that was a little too deep for us.

He also said that he knew most of us didn't believe the Bible, but rather had some idea of evolution at the back of our heads. He didn't attempt to disprove our ideas, but he went on to make a few nasty remarks about "those brutes of the R.P.A." I felt horribly guilty then, because in my pocket reposed the *Freethinker*.

Most of the men took the *Daily Mail* to read in the back benches, while waiting for the service to follow, *of course*, and I took the *Free*. I refrained, because I found him so interesting. However, all is well, now that we know that a sans-war future is assured to humanity.

Mr. P. M. Killop writes us from Cape Town:—

I have noticed with very much pleasure that you have lately had several correspondents from this part of the world. I have been in this country some thirty-six or thirty-seven years, and have travelled all over it. I think that I may fairly claim to know a little about its people, both Dutch and those born in other countries than this. In almost every part—more particularly in Johannesburg and Cape Town—there has been for the last ten years, at least, a pretty vigorous Freethought campaign carried on. Of course, I know very well that the work done would appear to be very small compared with the work carried on in such centres of huge populations as London, Paris, or Berlin; but taking the small number of even our largest towns, and the shifting nature of their inhabitants into consideration, the few Freethought stalwart residents here have done wonders. A few years ago in Johannesburg there was a very strong Freethought organization which held meetings regularly every Sunday evening with great success, and distributed large quantities of Freethought literature. These meetings were well attended, and had some very able lectures. I have forgotten most of their names. After the lectures the meetings were open for questions and discussion, and we used to have a real good time. But, alas, the meetings gradually died a natural death—not from lack of interest or enthusiasm—but through the dispersion of its members. That is the real cause of the failure of all organizations in this country. The settled population is so very small. Here to-day and in Pretoria, Durban, or some other town to-morrow. This, I believe, has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. Your real Freethinker is always at work, no matter where he may be. I call to mind one man—a Frenchman, named Strauss—one of the first to leave here for Europe when this horrible War started, and, poor fellow, one of the first to die for the France which he devotedly loved—carried on a Freethought campaign, almost unaided, in Cape Town for years with great success. Since then the work has been done by several others, including George Martin (who has also gone over to the great majority), and Messrs. Evans and Rafter. I sometimes put in a word or two, but I am now well on for seventy years of age, and, I suppose, am getting either tired or lazy, and do not feel equal to doing much outdoor speaking. There are not near enough copies of your paper find their way here I am perfectly sure ever so many more could be sold if they were available. There is plenty of literature in the shape of pamphlets and books which a few of us purchase, and, after reading, pass round, and in that way, I have no doubt, do a little good. I would like to tell you that I read every line of your paper. It is my weekly treat. No other paper that I get has anything like the attraction for me that yours has.

We are quite sure from what we have learned that South Africa needs at present a capable organizer. Perhaps the man will arise one day. With regard to the *Freethinker*, when the War is over, we hope to make arrangements for a more effective supply of the paper, both in South Africa and elsewhere—not forgetting the United States.

We have often complained of the Post Office; it is only just to give a word of praise when it is deserved. The other week we wrote an article at home, and posted it to the office. There was no indication *inside* the envelope, save the signature, that could lead to delivery. The letter did not turn up, and then we said things—particularly as we had to turn to on Tuesday afternoon (press day) and write a second article. After a time the letter arrived at the *Freethinker* office, and we then found that we omitted to address the envelope. Someone had "spotted" its destination, either through the signature or the nature of the article. So we again said things—about ourselves.

Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

Previously acknowledged, £6 16s.—Belgravia, 5s.; W. Mather, 10s.; J. Sumner, £1 1s.; J. Pendlebury, £2; W. P. Kenot, 5s.; E. B., £1 1s.; A. Delve, £1 1s.; Mrs. Harden, £1 1s.; L. Brandes, £6 6s.; A. J. Watson, 2s. 6d.; Lubton, 5s.; South London Branch, N. S. S., £1 1s.; H. Reeve, 2s. 6d.; A. Cayford, 2s. Total: £21 19s.

The Everlasting Hills.

V.

(*Concluded from p. 780.*)

THE Nebular Hypothesis, originally propounded by Kant and other thinkers, and subsequently amplified by Laplace and Herschel, has since been subjected to a searching criticism by a succession of scientists. From this ordeal it has emerged purified and strengthened, and has now attained "a degree of probability amounting to proof." The Nebular Theory assumes that the space now occupied by the solar system was, at a period immeasurably remote, filled up by a rotating spheroid of high tenuity and tremendous heat. This nebulous haze was the probable outcome of the collision of two previously separate bodies. The stupendous heat thus generated having gradually radiated into space, the glowing gases cooled, and shrank into a nucleus now represented by the sun.

Although astronomers and astro-physicists may differ concerning the precise details of these phenomena, they remain practically unanimous in their adhesion to some form of Nebular doctrine. They all take for granted a natural genesis and development of all the starry systems of the universe. Ball, Newcomb, and other eminent astronomers espoused the brilliant hypothesis that, for a time, the tendency on the part of the nebula to contract was counterbalanced by centrifugal force, but ultimately this disruptive force gained the ascendancy, and the outer region of the nucleus became detached from the remainder of the sphere. Rings similar to the first were successively detached, and from these the planets and their moons were formed. Plateau's fascinating experiment proves that by rotating a sphere of oil in a mixture of spirit and water this phenomenon may be repeated on a minor scale.

Many of the phenomena displayed in the solar system lend strong support to the Nebular explanation. For example, the planets lie much in the same plane. Their orbital and axial revolutions proceed in the same direction, thus providing numerous coincidences which are hardly accidental, the chances against which are many millions to one.

> Again, the rate of cooling would of course follow the size: a small body cools more rapidly than a large one. The moon is cold and rigid; the earth is solid at the surface, but intensely hot within; Jupiter and Saturn, which are immensely larger, still retain much of their original heat, and have a much lower density than the earth.

The earth's rotation has fashioned it into the form of an orange. In other words, our planet is an oblate spheroid flattened at the poles. Its outline is also influenced by contraction caused by a gradual lowering of its temperature. When the earth had cooled down sufficiently, a thin crust appeared on its surface which slowly increased in thickness as the centuries rolled away. The present thickness of our planet's crust is still a matter of conjecture. But in the light of the fact that the density of the globe is about five and a half

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times that of water, its interior must be extremely dense. For various weighty reasons many men of science have concluded that the earth is solid throughout, and possesses the elasticity of steel, a substance which is vastly more elastic than any other solid, even india rubber. Other scientific experts, however, favour Sir George Darwin's contention that the greater inequalities of the earth's surface require the support of a crust as rigid as that of granite, and extending to a depth of 1,000 miles only.

In any case, the constant cooling of the earth was certain to mould its crust into giant folds. The distribution of continents and oceans appears at the first glance to be so irregular that one might reasonably conclude that even the leading features of our planet's surface could scarcely be explained on any general principles. Deeper reflection, however, reveals the existence of certain peculiar features of the earth's configuration. There are the three main oceans—the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic, with the lesser Arctic Sea. There exist also three huge land masses—North and South America, Africa—Europe, Asia—Australia, with a smaller Antarctic continent. It is true that Europe and Asia form a continuous land surface, but there are cogent reasons for considering them as separate continents. There lies a profound depression to the east of the Urals, and a slight lowering of the land-level would submerge the soil in the Caspian and Black Sea regions northwards to the Arctic Ocean. As Green insisted, the three chief continents have all been carved across by the hungry waves—Australia—Asia by the Sunda Straits, America by the Mexican Gulf, Europe—Africa by the Mediterranean. Moreover, each land area tends eastwards to the south. Nearly all South America is situated to the east of the Northern continent, while similar phenomena occur in South Africa and Australia.

Obviously, in a spinning sphere, its different parts would revolve concordantly, but as its continents emerged, the northern land masses, in consequence of their increased distance from the earth's centre, would revolve with a diminished and insufficient velocity. Therefore, it is claimed, there would occur "a tendency to torsion, giving rise to a line of rupture between the north and south, and carrying the Southern lands somewhat to the east. This consideration may account for the remarkable depression which runs round the world, forming the Gulf of Mexico, the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and the sea between Asia and Australia."

The Arctic Ocean was long regarded as a comparatively shallow sea, but recent investigations, notably those of Nansen, prove that it is very deep. It is now estimated that the oceans cover three-fourths of the earth's surface, but this statement conveys an extremely inadequate idea of its vast volume of water. But this vastness becomes apparent when we remember that the average elevation of the continents is about 1,000 feet only, while the average depth of the oceans is probably 13,000; so that if our seas were spread evenly over the globe's surface, their depth would exceed 8,000 feet.

Although our earth has been the theatre of enormous changes in the distribution of land and water during the course of its protracted career, still, should the foregoing hypothesis prove sound, its chief protuberances must have persisted from primitive geological times. This theory has found eminent advocates, but many geologists of the first rank agree with Dr. Gregory's contention that the early aspects of our continents have long "been obliterated by the changes of geological times." Or, in the language of the famous Hutton: "The ruins of an older world are visible in the present state of our planet." hemisphere is very striking, whatever its causes may be.

The marked inclination displayed by continental areas to project southwards occurs in the case of India, South Africa, Southern America, and other regions. Again, several peninsulas show at their extremity an island or island group. Sicily stands near the southern end of Italy. Greenland has at its extremity an island chain. The peninsula of Alaska terminates with a group of isles. Lying off the extremity of India, we find Ceylon; the Terra del Fuego isles are adjacent to South America, while Australia ends southwards in Tasmania or Van Diemen's Land.

The preponderence of the ocean in the Southern Avebury argued that folded mountains arose from a diminution in the earth's diameter, and therefore "every great circle must have participated equally in the contraction." The earth's mountains running east and west would, therefore, broadly speaking, counterbalance those ranging from north to south. Now, the principal mountain masses of the Old World run more or less from east to west, while the tendency of the American mountains is to travel north and south. The one series of elevations thus appears to balance the other to a very material degree. Moreover, in the Northern hemisphere the mountain chains range east and west; for instance, the Pyrenees, Carpathians, Alps, and Himalayas; while the leading elevations of the Southern hemisphere extend north and south. This is true of the African ridge, the Andes, and others.

Lord Avebury also contended that the north and south directions of the mountains in the Southern hemisphere, combined with the presence of the vast ocean in the same region, suffice to explain the existence of southern promontories. Sir Francis Galton, however, replied that no conceivable accumulation of water could possibly give us promontories with a northerly direction. As a matter of fact, nearly all our northern promontories point south. But Avebury's rejoinder to this objection is very suggestive. "No such prepondérance in the northern hemisphere would give us northerly pointing promontories, because there the great folds run not from north to south, but from east to west."

The map plainly shows the mountains stretching through Europe in a general east and west direction, but the fact is less apparent that, commencing with the Pyrenees, and passing through the Central Alps, the Carpathians, the Caucasus, and the chain of Elbruz to the Hindoo-Koosh, we at last reach the elevated plateau of Pamir, which towers at a height of 15,000 feet. Resuming our journey, we arrive at the still loftier tracts of Tibet—giant plains which exceed in altitude the greatest Alpine summits. These elevated plains lie enclosed between the stupendous heights of the Himalayas to the south and the Kuen-Lun range on the north. From this region the mountain fortresses ramify into other ranges until they finally reach the Pacific Ocean at Behring's Strait. These far-flung elevations form the backbone of the Eastern World, just as the mountain ranges of the Western Continent form the backbone of America.

In our own Alps the last important upheaval elevated the Mont Blanc range, and although at present no considerable changes are occurring there, the occasional earth movements which invade the Alpine area indicate that the processes of mountain-building are still in operation.

T. F. PALMER.

Lord Hugh Cecil said in the House of Commons that we are "Christians first and Englishmen afterwards." A writer in a Sunday paper retorted that he was born an Englishman, and Christened some weeks later.

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Writers and Readers.

THE Editor has been kind enough to invite me to write a monthly article, wherein I am to talk about writers and their readers, and any other bookish matters of interest to Freethinkers. I am thus given plenty of scope, since of all people, Freethinkers are the most catholic in their tastes. Preferences we all have, undoubtedly; but, I trust, few or no exclusions where good literature is concerned. Unlike our Catholic friends, we have no *Index expurgatorius;* or, at least, we have no black list of the world's greatest books. What all of us can do, and what a few of us have done, is to draw up for ourselves a list of books that are really bad. My own list is becoming a rather long one, and one day I intend to print a short guide to the worst books in our language, which, I trust, will delight and perhaps, surprise, my literary friends. But here I shall avoid, if possible, any reference to worthless books, except when they are necessary for the pointing of a moral. My concern will be to recommend books that I have myself found valuable, or suggestive in thought or style, or in both. Another thing I want to say is, that I shall be glad to consider any relevant comments my readers may be inclined to make, if they will put themselves to the trouble of writing to me in care of the Editor. Many things that appear difficult turn out to be easy enough when once you have altered your point of view, when you try hard to see a book from some other person's angle. My aspiration is to be a sort of literary father-confessor, to absolve you from your sins of commission or omission, to set you, with your own assistance, on the narrow path of literary rectitude.

Let me give an example! An earnest young friend of mine once went in fear of damnation, because, with the best intentions, he could not bring himself to believe in George Meredith. Mr. Foote, he knew, had a sort of discipular veneration for the master, and this knowledge did but serve to make his own want of faith all the more glaring. In the end he came to me for ghostly advice. What could he do to be saved? I found, as I had shrewdly expected, that he had approached Meredith in the wrong way. He had been told that the novels were among the finest pictures of modern life, and, having no guide, he had begun with *The Shaving of Shagpat*. He could make neither head nor tale of this somewhat difficult allegory; it was not what he had been led to expect. He then turned to *One of our Conquerors*, in which the story for the first hundred pages moves about as easily as a fly in a glue-pot. He tried again, being attracted by the title of *Diana of the Crossways*. Those who know that abortive attempt at epigrammatic brilliance can imagine his feelings. I hardly think that Mr. Foote, with all his ardent will-to-believe could have stood such a strain upon his faith My earnest young friend, at my suggestion, began again; this time, with *Evan Harrington*, *Harey Richmond*, *Rhoda Fleming*, and the incomparable *Richard Feverel*. He is now a confirmed Meredithian, albeit with certain wise reservations on the score of the master's style and treatment in fiction. To any writer the method of approach is important, to the more difficult it is everything.

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Any reason is good enough which prompts us to read, or read again, a book that has something of a solid value; and the centenary of the birth or death of a writer, or the year of publication of a book, is generally felt to be a valid excuse for a permanent, or, at least, a passing, interest. It is certainly so for those of us who have no more than an average share of intellectual curiosity. The year just coming to a close has seen quite a number of centenaries of birth. Holyoake, G. H. Lewes, Jowett, and H. D. Thoreau, a sort of American blend of Rousseau and Carlyle, the "Bachelor of Nature," as Emerson called him—all these began their sublunary careers in 1817. Holyoake, one of the pioneers of popular Freethought, is known to most of us nowadays only by repute, and through his books. He seldom lectured, I believe, in the latter part of his life, and when he did, he gave us the impression of being out of touch with the militant methods of current Rationalism, of being just a little too anxious to show himself amiable to everybody. I don't think that he was consciously a "trimmer," but he seems to have prided himself on the number of his acquaintances among the kind of people who have little sympathy with advanced thought. Mr. McCabe's biography, which is, or ought to be, known to all Freethinkers, is padded out with complimentary letters from political bigwigs. Yet, in the main, it is a painstaking piece of work, if not quite critical enough, the subject being touched up after the manner of the popular painters of literary full-length portraits. Holyoake was a ready writer, with a natural turn for eloquence and picturesque phrasing. His volumes of recollections are entertaining and instructive. The best side of him is seen in his *Trial of Theism*, which was first published in 1857, and later, with revisions and additions, in 1877. I suggest that the Rationalist Press Association might do much worse than include it in their valuable series of cheap reprints.

Lewes (1817-1878), who was one of Holyoake's acquaintances, was, like him, a pioneer of Rationalism, but of a somewhat less popular kind. He was a versatile writer, with the born journalist's knack of putting difficult matter in an engaging way. His *Biographical History of Philosophy* is a good example of bright expository criticism from the anti-metaphysical or Positivist standpoint. The *Problems of Life and Mind* (1874-9) was the result of a lifetime's study of nature and mind, and he became, as he went on, more critical of the Comtean doctrine. As one of his admirers rightly says, "he rejected as 'metempirical' what lay beyond experience, but he would not, like Spencer, affect to derive comfort from the unknowable. He was one of the first to emphasize the importance of the social factor in the development of the mind." To literary criticism Lewes brought an excursive understanding and a well-developed taste unhampered by a preconceived system. His *Life of Goethe*, if supplemented by Carlyle, Scherer, and Dowden, is quite the best introduction to the poet and thinker. In a more popular manner, his little book on the *Spanish Drama* (1847)—Studies of Calderon and Lope de Vega—has long been a favourite of mine. It brings out in a luminous way the world of difference between the dramatic art of Catholic Spain and that of our freethinking Elizabethan England. The little book has not been reprinted, but copies are often to be met with on the stalls. Many of Lewes' essays are hidden away in the volumes of the more scholarly reviews of the time, and to the *Fortnightly* (Feb., 1872) we have to turn for the best all-round appreciation of Dickens ever written.

Benjamin Jowett (1817-1893) was Regius Professor of Greek, the Master of Balliol, and *the* authority on Plato for those of us who have little or no acquaintance with the language. He did a good deal to undermine the faith of the young men of what are called the ruling classes, who came under his influence, but I am afraid he would have had an epileptic fit if he had seen his name associated with those of Holyoake and Lewes. His paper on the "Interpretation of Scripture," in *Essays and Reviews* (1860), is said to have created a panic in the Church, and

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he came near losing his Oxford post. This taught him—if, indeed, he had much need of teaching, being at bottom a Pragmatist—the value of compromise, and henceforward undermined, rather than assaulted, the theological positions. His *dictum* that the "practice of divinity has permanently lowered the standard of truth," and many others equally severe, no doubt helped many to avoid a theological career. Jowett remained a priest of the Established Church, believing, as so many of its members do, in a Christianity *without* Christ. A witty and malicious caricature of his style and religious ideas will be found by the curious in Mr. W. H. Mallock's *New Republic*.

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Thoreau (1817-1861) is as stimulating a writer as his friend Emerson; but his readers, unfortunately, are few and far between. Laziness seems to be the only excuse for not reading him, as "Walden," "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," and a volume of essays, poems, and letters are reprinted in the "Scott Library." His father was a phlegmatic and sober Frenchman, and his mother a volatile and voluble Scotswoman. It is small wonder that the son was given to paradox. Thoreau was a sickly boy, and no great lover of work, and his parents decided to send him to Harvard and make a pedagogue of him. But there was as little of the schoolmaster in Thoreau as in Hartley Coleridge. He left Harvard without a diploma which, he told the authorities, was not worth the five dollars he was asked to pay for it. In 1843 he began the experiment of living by himself in a shanty near Walden Pond, some few miles from Concord, Mass. His craving for the open air was perhaps less symptomatic of a lover of Nature than of bodily disease. A consumptive man needs a sanitorium and a liberal diet, not a draughty and damp hut, and a diet of nuts and ill-cooked or uncooked vegetables. Add to this all too "plain living" an abundant exercise of mind and body in the observation and recording of Nature's secrets, and no wonder the man was worn out at the early age of forty-four, when he was just at the height of his power to see, to think, and to enjoy. But to turn from the man to his books; if you have no more interest in Nature than she has in you, if a minute and poetical enumeration of her beauties means nothing to you—I do not suggest you are any the worse for this—you had better begin with the volume of essays. You will be an exceptionally dull person if you do not find on every page thoughts that throw a new light on existence, and paradoxes that leave you amused or angry. I promise you that you will not have one dull quarter of an hour. Try the essay on "Civil Disobedience," or the plea for John Brown, the tribute to the power of Carlyle. Read "Walking," or "The Landlord," if you prefer the flavour of the imaginative essay, the quality—albeit, with a Yankee twang—which you get in Hazlitt and Lamb. When you have got as much nutriment as you can digest out of the essays, go on to the other books; but make a point of never reading as a mere duty. It is better to read Mr. Garvice or Mr. Begbie with genuine enjoyment than it is to read Meredith or Mr. J. M. Robertson with a feeling that you are doing the right thing as a Freethinker, while really you are just bored.

Geo. Underwood.

Society News.

North London Branch.—On Sunday evening, owing to miserable weather, a small but very appreciative audience assembled to hear Mr. J. K. Harris's address on "Judaism and Christianity." Next Sunday Mr. Saphin will open the discussion: "Does the Solar Myth Explain the Bible?" This will be our last meeting in 1917. We re-open on January 6, 1918, and hope to continue until the end of March. We are very much gratified by the interest shown in our discussions and debates, and hope our friends will make them still more widely known. Our new syllabus will be ready next week, and I shall be delighted to send it to anyone forwarding me name and address.—H. V. Lane (Hon. Sec.), 29, Burton Street, King's Cross, W.C., 1.

Swansea Branch N. S. S.—The success of our autumn campaign has so pleased our members that they have decided on another "push" for the new year. The audiences throughout were good, and attentive. Little opposition was offered, which argues either "conversions" or the exercise of discretion. I take this opportunity of thanking all local friends and supporters for so well assisting in achieving the success attained. It is a source of joy and inspiration to all who are working in the front line, and has maintained the enthusiasm of members at a high level. We are looking forward to our next "offensive" with pleasurable excitement. We have made a good breach in the walls of pious Wales. —B. Dupree (Hon. Sec.), 12 Short Street, Swansea.

South London Branch N. S. S.—On Sunday we were favoured with a thoughtful lecture on "Essential Christianity," by Mr. F. A. Davies. Opposition was offered by a well-known Christian Evidence speaker, who, in the course of his opposition, threw out a challenge to a debate. Arrangements may be made to bring this about.—G. Shambrook.

Correspondence.

GOD AND THE WAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Dear Sir,—In the *Freethinker* for November 25 there is a letter from Major C. Russell, in which he makes the following statement:—

> The law of "The Struggle for Existence and Survival of the Fittest" rules the world, and so long as that law holds good, so long must we go on fighting, and shall continue to turn this fair world into a hell more awful than anything dreamt of by Dante (p. 749)

In the first place, this law no more "rules" the world than does any other law. Like all other so-called laws of nature, it is no more than a mental summary of processes which have been observed to go on in nature. If such a law, or if such processes, did "rule," the world, I am afraid, there would be little hope for humanity in the direction of nations ever overcoming the habit of going to war in order to settle disputes. But it is a well-known fact that we can check and modify the processes of nature, and from that fact springs our hope of improvement in more than one direction. In the second place, as I pointed out some time ago in an article on "Biology, Economics, and War," the "struggle for existence" does not necessarily mean that men *must* continue to fight each other in order to settle their international disputes. "Struggle for Existence" will no doubt continue in some form or other, until the end of the world; but there may come a time when men will realize that, in order to reach a high standard of development, they will have to cease fighting each other, and turn their energies more and more in the direction of the struggle between man and non-human nature. Then it will be possible for international warfare to cease, and possible for the struggle for human existence to take on a more elevating form than that of inter-human slaughter.

I would also like to remark that the "Survival of the Fittest" does not always mean the survival of the best. This is especially so in war. Many of the best sons of Europe have already gone under; many have been mentally or physically disabled for life.

E. Egerton Stafford.

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THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I should like to protest against half a dozen statements in Mr. G. O. Warren's article, "A Rich New World"—such, for instance, as:—

> Thrift, being the greatest of virtues, is based on the fallacy, etc.
>
> It is impossible to save wealth, because the moment any form of wealth is produced it must be consumed.
>
> Any general attempt to save wealth would lead to general stagnation of trade and widespread misery.
>
> The actual labour cost of thus (by book-keeping) financing the War should not have exceeded five millions annually.

The plain facts of existence prove each of the above statements to be utterly false. Then, further on, we find that our "artificial arrangements" are the cause of poverty, for "we see that there is not a single wild animal, if left alone by man, which cannot make a comfortable living." Here, in a single sentence, the proverbial tin hat is placed on the head of our devoted Darwin and all his followers, and Freethinkers are left without either God or Evolution.

Spencer advised the would-be sociologist to study biology; and the salient and universal law in the world of living things is the struggle for existence, due to the tendency to outstrip the means of subsistence. How few Freethinkers there are, however, with sufficient digestive apparatus to chuck up God, who really take the trouble to study Evolution from fundamental principles upwards.

It may be quite an arguable proposition that the nationalization of land and the abolition of a gold currency will bring about the millennium; but, in any case, such a theory cannot be bolstered up by misrepresenting ascertained biological truths. In conclusion, who is Mr. Arthur Kitson? He should write a short reply to Huxley's foolish essay on *The Struggle for Existence in Human Society*.

Meantime, we can be certain that, with a currency of gold, paper, brass, or none at all, so long as unrestricted multiplication goes on, the struggle will continue.

YOUNG COLQUHOUN.

HELL FIRE.

Those persons who terrify the young with the fear of hell and purgatory do not often enough get a chance of hearing what is thought of them by decent people. It is the merest cant for anyone who defends Drummond or Moody to pretend to be shocked at the German Kaiser or Bernhardi. If there is any man on earth who deserves the punishment described by Dank of being shut up in a red-hot coffin for all eternity, it is the man who talks to boys and girls of seventeen about being "lost." There are still a great many such preachers, and millions of human beings are still terrorized by them.—*Extract from a letter to the "New Age."*

Religions have seized upon the metaphysical faculties of men, which they first of all lame by the early instilling of their dogmas, respecting which they taboo all free and unprejudiced expressions of opinion, so that free research respecting the most important and interesting of problems, respecting man's existence itself, is in part directly forbidden, in part indirectly hindered, being rendered subjectively well-nigh impossible by mutilation, and thus the most noble of man's faculties lies in fetters.—*Schopenhauer.*

Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Mr. Charles Green, of 16 Balaam Street, Plaistow, E., which occurred on November 27, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. Mr. Green was a staunch Freethinker, who lived and died in the Secular faith. He was held in high esteem by all who knew him, and will be greatly missed as husband, father, and neighbour. He was buried at the East London Cemetery on Thursday, December 4, when a Secular Service was rendered at the grave-side, in the presence of sympathizing friends. We tender our sincere condolences to the bereaved family.—J. T. L.

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, "Does the Solar Myth Explain the Bible?" Affirmative, E. C. Saphin. Open debate.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Oval Tube Station): 7, Miss Kough, "Freethought Women, and War."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Kells, and Swasey.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

NEW MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick); T. F. Palmer, 3, "The Birth and Death of Worlds"; 6 30, "The Antiquity of Man."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor): 6.30, R. Chapman, "The Life of Truth."

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Views and Opinions.

Christmas in the Trenches.

For the fourth time in succession our soldiers are spending Christmas at death-grips with the enemy, while our sailors hold their less spectacular but more vital watch at sea. It is over three years since the Christian peoples of Europe flew at each other with a ferocity and a hatred to which no other war holds a parallel. But it is over 1900 years—if we follow Christian chronology and the Christian myth—since angels sang of the peace and goodwill born into the world through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. They sang it to a Pagan world, the civilized portion of which was mainly under the dominion of Rome. Pagan Rome was without the glorious Gospel of Christ, but it nevertheless came nearer establishing universal peace and a genuine liberty than any other empire has ever done. More; surrounded on all sides by barbarian enemies, it could in its greatest day keep the peace of the world with 400,000 soldiers. At present, Christmas will be celebrated with over 20,000,000 armed men engaged in actual warfare. The difference in the two figures is the measure of the success that has crowned the Christian Gospel. There is no need to discuss theories. The facts are there, damning and damnable. The nations of Europe Christianized have not learned to trust each other more than they did Pagan. Suspicion, hatred, greed, fear, tyranny, all those forces from which wars spring, have flourished under Christian domination. Christmas A.D. 1 with angels singing the inauguration of a new era of peace and brotherhood; Christmas 1917 with the Christian peoples of the world engaged in the most universal and the most bloodthirsty war the world has ever seen! Was there ever a more damnable failure in the whole history of mankind? * * *

Ammunition for "Infidels."

In *The Outlook for Religion* the Rev. W. E. Orchard warns his fellow-clergymen that the attitude of the Churches during the War, and their impotency to prevent the War, will be "collected and served up for purposes of infidel propaganda." Why should they not be? Look at the Churches in all the belligerent countries. Everywhere they have blindly followed the leads of their respective Governments. And one feels that had the decisions of these Governments been different to what they were, the support of the Churches would have been not less wavering. It is not upon a particular decision of the Churches that shrewd observers base their judgments, but upon the fact that whenever there is war, whether the cause that leads a country into war be clearly just or as clearly unjust, the support of the Churches is certain. "Theirs not to reason why"; their function to find a justification for whatever course the ruling powers adopt. In Germany, the militaristic Government has no stronger supporter than the Church. That is equally true of the Church's relation to the Government in this country. And when men see this, they realize that the conviction of the Church counts for nothing in arriving at an unprejudiced decision on the truth of a situation. The Christian Church is consistent only in one thing—in supporting anything and everything that will advance its own interests. No wonder Karl Marx said that the Church of England would rather sacrifice thirty-eight out of its thirty-nine Articles than lose one thirty-ninth of its income.

* * *

Christian Germany.

So far as we are concerned, we intend to see to it that the lesson of the War in relation to the Churches is well utilized. Freethinkers would be fools to allow so forceful a weapon to remain unused. Look at Germany! It was, and is, one of the most Christian countries in Europe. Its educational system is saturated with Christian teaching of the most pronounced type. Its soldiers bear "God with Us" on their caps. Its militaristic leaders are almost wholly Christian. It is the home of Protestant Christianity. And it has conducted the War with a ferocity and a barbarity unknown at least in the annals of modern warfare. Think of these things, and then assume that Germany, by some strange chance, had remained outside the current of European life, and had never been Christian. Can anyone imagine that had it continued the current of Pagan civilization, it would have been worse than it is? Might it not easily have been better than it is? Make German deceit, German lying, German barbarity as bad as you will, the worse it is, the stronger the indictment of Christian influence. Germany is as generations of Christian training have left her. Said Dean Inge, speaking in London on December 14:—

> It is the deepest tragedy of modern history that every civilized nation seems compelled to choose one or two forms of government, both so bad that it is not easy to see which is the worse. On the one side is the Prussian system, efficient, economical, and honest, but which ends in putting the civilian under the heel of the soldier with his brutal, blundering diplomacy, and methods of frightfulness, until the nation now stands without justice, chivalry, generosity, sympathy, or mercy.
>
> On the other side there is a squalid anarchy of democracy, wasteful, inefficient, and generally corrupt,

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> with a Government which quails before every agitation, and pays blackmail to every conspiracy, and in which sooner or later those who pay the taxes are systematically pillaged by those who impose them, until the economic structure of the State is destroyed.

And to that we need only add that this is a picture of the European world after having been for centuries under Christian control. Christianity could cover the world with churches, and keep armies of priests at work. It could make its influence felt in all governments and in all classes of society. It could permeate education and control the press. But it could evolve neither a desirable form of government, nor create durable feelings of goodwill among men. Decidedly, Freethinkers will not lack ammunition to carry on their warfare against the most hopeless and most useless of superstitions. And it will be their own fault if this ammunition is not fired with shattering effect.

* * *

Waking Up to the Facts.

Let us hope that the millions of soldiers who are spending this Christmas amid the discomfort of the mud, and cold, and filth of Flanders and Northern France, will reflect a little upon the moral of the situation. Thousands of them, we know, have already done so, and have drawn therefrom a sound conclusion. They have seen the clergy eloquent in sending men to war, and yet demanding complete exemption from their own order. They have seen them silent, while thousands of people have made fortunes out of the nation's necessity —silent while the very food of the people has been raised to famine price, and yet eloquent to turn the War to the advantage of their own order. They have seen, and properly seen, in the impotence of the Churches to prevent these things a proof of their worthlessness, and have learned to appreciate the cant of Christian love and brotherhood at its true value. A question often put to the Freethinker before the War was: "How can you explain the world without God?" To-day thousands are reversing the question and are asking: "How can you explain the world with God?" How can any reasonable being reconcile belief in the Christian deity with this world War? Try how one may, the theory will not fit the facts. The War has shattered many theories, and exploded many reputations. The theory of God and the reputation of Christianity, if not completely shattered, are, at least, so damaged that, in thousands of cases, they now excite derision where they formerly commanded respect.

* * *

Peace on Earth.

More now than ever does mankind feel the urgency of this message and the need for its realization. And it may well be that in making plain the brutality, the savagery, and the inconclusiveness of war, Germany has unconsciously done the world a service. But peace on earth will never come through the prevalence of the Christian religion. If the centuries have made nothing else plain that lesson is clear. You cannot keep men on the level of savages intellectually and have them highly civilized in other directions. You cannot place a Church in a position of commanding influence without its working harm to the social structure. Professor Kingdon Clifford wisely warned us that Christianity wrecked two civilizations and came very near wrecking a third, and that warning has had a peculiar urgency given it by this War. Peace and goodwill comes not by the Christianizing but by the humanizing of mankind. And if that humanizing process has hitherto proceeded but slowly, a large part of the blame must be given to those superstitious fears and teachings which have so universally prepared man for tyranny and exploitation.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Bibliolatry.

THE Bible has a most marvellous history, some knowledge of which every literary critic is in duty bound to acquire. The Bible is at once the creature and god of the Church, and were it to be lost the Church would cease to exist. It has always been regarded as the objective rule of faith, and as the court of final appeal on all religious matters. Augustine was "most deeply impressed with the evidences of Divine inspiration in the Scriptures," with the result that he could write thus: "To the canonical Scriptures alone I owe agreement without any dissent." That great divine had faith in the absolute inerrancy of Holy Writ. To the Protestant Reformers the central principle was that of the exclusive authority of the Scriptures. Luther positively denied the infallibility of the Pope, and declared that Councils often erred. Even in our own day there are a few who verily believe that God's Book is infallible from cover to cover, and who dismiss the conclusions of the Higher Criticism as groundless fancies. Professor Sayce, the distinguished Egyptologist, published a book with the bold title, *Monument Facts and Critical Fancies* in which, however, he has the candour to say that "the doctrine of verbal inerrancy is Hindu and not Christian." The amazing fact is that the overwhelming majority of present-day divines no longer hold that absurd dogma. They even grant that the Bible contains numerous errors; that much of its history is unreliable; that large portions of it are purely legendary; and that in no sense can it be looked upon as infallible. And yet, whilst making such concessions to criticism, they still believe in inspiration. In the *Christian World* for December 13, there is an article entitled "The Condition of Evangelicalism," in which such a position is vigorously defended, and the Evangelical Party is warned that, unless it adopts it, it is in danger of shrinking into "an obscurantist sect more Biblicist than Scriptural." The Correspondent says:—

> Everywhere else the modern method is accepted in principle. The principle of an historical scholarship, at once critical of the record, conservative for the Gospel, and constructive for theology, is now as secure as Copernican astronomy. The particular conclusions from that method may be those of the conservative right wing That is a minor matter. The main thing is that they shall flow from that method, which is the invention of no one man and no one movement, but is the gift of the modern Church of the same spirit that put the Bible there; and which is also a completion of the Reformation, reconstructing the perennial Bible by the Gospel of the Kingdom which made it. But, rightly or wrongly, the general belief is that the Evangelical side of the Church (which is the vital side) is committed to the obscurantist view of the Bible (which the High Churchmen have rejected). And for the Bible's sake and the Gospel's, it becomes of great moment that the prospects of evangelical religion should not be water-logged by the old infallibilism of the record.

We maintain that the policy recommended in that extract is at once illogical and immoral. The Evangelical Party is fully justified in adhering to the orthodox tenet of the verbal inerrancy of the Word of God. The Bible, if fallible, cannot be Divinely inspired. The Rev. Mr. Webb-Peploe is perfectly consistent in the statement that he has in this Book "not *some* words of God which are to be discovered by human wisdom and human selection, but *the* Word of God from cover to cover." Mr. Peploe admits that there are errors of transcription in all copies now extant; but he entertains the hope that some day we may be permitted to see a complete edition of God's original gift to man. For him there is absolutely no escape from "the conclusion that the Book,

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if it be of God, must be perfect originally, and that all that lies with man as a critic is this—to discover the Original—if he can." It was to us incomprehensible how the late Professor Robertson Smith could be a Higher Critic of the most iconoclastic kind, and yet continue to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith. Sir George Adam Smith puzzles us in precisely the same way. In his *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, several lectures are devoted to the task of proving the legendary character of many Old Testament books; and yet the fourth lecture is called "The Proof of a Divine Revelation in the Old Testament." We have read that chapter with great care, but we have failed to find in it any proof whatsoever of any Divine Revelation in any part of the Old Testament. Indeed, in endeavouring to prove his proposition, Sir George presents us with a highly derogatory conception of the Divine character :—

> The Hebrew writers claim for Israel a special choice and providence by God in order that he may make known to them, as he directly does to no other people of mankind, himself (p. 113).

Equally inconclusive is the reasoning of the *Christian World*. In no sense whatever is the Bible record infallible. The Correspondent tells us that "a fact or a truth is not true just because it is in the Bible," and that "in no such sense is the Bible infallible." Then comes the following conundrum :—

> Infallible as it is, it is infallible not for information, but for salvation. Pietism may be a flush on the face of truth, but it is neither its base nor its method. Unction does not qualify us to judge of historic fact or even theological reality. And a mental gerontocracy is no fit form of rule for a Church of the Spirit.

What that extract really means is an insoluble mystery. The Bible *is* infallible, after all, but not for information. Here is what purports to be an item of vital information: "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; but the Correspondent assures us that it is not infallible—that, in fact, it may not be true. Paul had his share of unction, but unction did not qualify him to "judge of historic fact or even theological reality." His pietism might have been a flush on the face of truth, but it was neither its base nor its method. In other words, the information about salvation he pretended to supply his converts was by no means infallible. What on earth we are to understand by the statement that the Bible is "infallible for salvation" we have no means whatever of ascertaining.

At this point the Correspondent loses himself in vagueness and barren verbiage. What he means by "competent knowledge" and "inspired divination" no one can tell. If we have it, he says, it will "deliver us from the dilettantists"; but who are the dilettantists and what do they teach? And what does "inspired divination" signify? The dictionary defines "divination" as "the pretended forecast of future events or discovery of what is lost or hidden, by supernatural or magical means." In Roman law it denoted the operation of choosing one of several accusers to conduct a criminal prosecution, and also the address in which the appointment of the prosecutor was proposed. It surely cannot be that the Correspondent uses the term in that sense; and yet he avers that "we need the divination of moral faith," whatever that may be. "A penetrative conscience on the scale of the kingdom of God" is a hopelessly ambiguous expression, as is also "the large ethical tact to read historic judgment unto salvation, whether it be the judgment of the Cross or the judgment of the War." To call the Bible "the charter of the kingdom of God among the nations," "the organic centre of human history and Christian civilization," "the treasury of mankind's ruling power and the revelation of his moral destiny," is but a mere "mapping" of it which "ends in undermining it." This is a new species of Bibliolatry which is more injurious than the worship of the mere letter so bitterly denounced.

The curious thing is that the Correspondent characterizes this method of treating the Bible as scientific, and declares that the neglect of it has resulted in "the corresponding slackness of moral fibre and moral *flair* in the grasp of revelation." The truth is that the genuinely scientific method of treating the Bible robs it of all title to be regarded either as being or as containing a supernatural revelation. The historic and atoning Cross is an adaptation by the theologians of a superstition common to all the great religions. This is the view to which scholars are gradually coming round. The Correspondent, whose strange views and stilted style remind us so forcibly of Principal Forsyth, is fully aware of this, and significantly says: "The ship wants docking and scraping. Or must it be scrapped?" It is a scrapping process that is now going on, with the result that Bibliolatry in all its forms is doomed.

J. T. Lloyd.

A Festival of Falsehood.

> The divine stands wrapt up in his cloud of mysteries, and the amused laity must pay tithes and venerations to be kept in obscurity, grounding their hope of future knowledge on a competent stock of present ignorance.—*George Farquhar.*

There is a legend as old as any in the Christian Church, which has put a premium upon gloom and has made it part and parcel of the orthodox superstition. It is that Christ was never seen to smile, but often to weep. This does not concern Freethinkers overmuch, for those unrepentant sinners do not think it likely that the "Man of Sorrows" would, as Shakespeare says, "laugh mortal." Man is, however, a laughing animal, and in this he is superior, if in nothing else. To be ashamed of laughter, to hold back merriment and mirth, to live in gloom and seriousness, may suit the ascetics, but is unworthy of men, who love sunshine and the song of children, and the open breezy day, rather than the spectral quiet and gloom of the cloister.

Hence the convivial nature of Christmas Day, alleged to be the birthday of Christ, has frequently been noted to the discomfiture of theologians, who object to the rationalistic explanation of Christianity. "God's birthday" is an annual orgy of gluttony and godliness, and the reason for this is an excellent piece of Christian evidence, for it plucks the heart out of the orthodox superstition.

Christmas Day was not kept regularly as a holiday until many generations after the alleged birth of Christ. When first observed, it was kept on varying dates. The precise time of Jesus's birth, like that of Jeames de la Pluche, was "wropt in mystery"; but it certainly was not in December. Why, then, do Christians observe Christmas Day on December 25, and why is the birthday of the ascetic "Man of Sorrows" a veritable carnival of conviviality?

Like all human institutions, the Christian Churches and their feast days have had to contend in open warfare for survival. The festivals of Pagan Rome were numerous, and it was in competition with the feast of the Saturnalia, one of the principal Roman festivals, that Christmas Day came to be instituted by the Christians, and the date fixed as December 25. The anniversary of Saturn was an old-established institution, and the propensity of converts from Paganism to cling to custom proved invincible. If the apostates were to be retained in the folds of the new religion, it was impera-

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tive for the Christians to incorporate the old under the mask of the new.

This struggle for survival has also incorporated other Pagan 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 also, and the mistletoe and carol-singing still play their minor, if amusing, parts in the celebration. The clergy have always had a keen instinct for proselytising. In the past the Church sought for adherents by increasing her festal days, and she crushed opposition by bribing the weak and silencing the strong. In the twentieth century she is cajoling apostates all over the non-Christian world by means of medical missionaries, and at home by instituting Pleasant Sunday Afternoons in the place of painful Sabbaths, and by hypocritically identifying herself with social measures which appeal to the working classes.

Nor is this all, for the bitterest irony is everywhere interwoven in this celebration of the birthday of a man-god who never lived. "Peace and goodwill amongst men" proclaim tens of thousands of pulpits, and the clergy also bless regimental colours, and pray for the troops of contending armies. The nations which profess to worship the "Prince of Peace" are in the stronger grip of Mars, the god of war. From the Elbe to the Spree, from the Seine to the Neva, the roads of Europe resound to the tread of armed men, and the continent is a shambles, ankle-deep in human blood. The countrymen of Moliere are cutting the throats of the countrymen of Martin Luther, and the compatriots of Kossuth are disembowelling the brothers of Mazzini. The women of Europe, "like Niobe, all tears," are mourning their dead fathers, husbands, and sons; and whole nations, professedly Christian, are engaged in wholesale killing. The death-moans of hundreds of thousands are drowned in the Te Deums of the victors, and the survivors are blessed in the name of the Prince of Peace.

To such a pass, after so many centuries of the Christian superstition, has the Western world come. Milton's hymn on "The Nativity of Christ reads like the bitterest mockery:—

> Nor war, nor battle's sound
> Was heard the world around,
> The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
> The hooked chariot stood
> Unstained with human blood;
> The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
> The kings sat still with awful eye,
> As if they knew their sovran Lord was by.

It reads like a beautiful fairy-tale. "Peace and goodwill" must wait till another year; and the present celebration of "God's birthday" must make serious men and women think. The Christmas festival itself, with all its hypocritical professions and its legendary associations, is largely pretence and make-believe. It is the paradox of paradoxes that the woeful welter of a tragic contest is going on in almost every corner of a world that professes to worship a God who commanded his followers not to kill and to obey his behests of non-resistance and forgiveness. Christmas, so far as the Christian Church is concerned, is an organized hypocrisy, a fitting celebration of an event that never happened.

MIMNERMUS.

CONFIDENCE.

A motorist, stopping his car at a country hotel, called to a man who was passing to look after his car. With much dignity the man replied, "Do you know that I belong to the Salvation Army."

"Oh!" replied the motorist, "that doesn't matter. I'll trust you."

The Bible and Immortality.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

RESUMING our examination of the New Testament statements, we have next to notice those relating to the resurrection of the body and the last judgment. With regard to the latter there appears to be no doubt; but in the case of the resurrection this is not quite so certain. Thus, in the following paragraphs, no raising from the dead is mentioned:—

> Matt. xxiv. 30, 31.—Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn.....And he shall send forth his angels .....and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.
>
> Matt. xxv. 31-33.—But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him.....before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

In the latter case the sheep are all "blessed," and are to "inherit the kingdom prepared for them"; while the goats are all "cursed," and are to receive "eternal punishment." From the foregoing passages it would seem that only those alive at the "second coming" would be judged, and rewarded or punished. In the following passages, however, a resurrection is distinctly stated:—

> John v. 28, 29.—For the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of eternal life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment.
>
> Rev. xx. 13, 15.—And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and Death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.....And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.
>
> 1 Thess. iv. 15-18.—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.

According to the first two of these extracts there is to be a resurrection of all men, to be followed by a judgment; but, according to the third, it would seem that only those believers in Christ who had died while awaiting the "second coming" are to be raised from the dead, and that they and the believers then living are all to mount up to heaven without a judgment. This, in some measure, agrees with the first quotation from Matthew, in which the angels are to gather together all the elect then alive from the four winds. We thus arrive at the theory that all believers in Christ who are living on the day of judgment will be taken to heaven just as they are, and that the believers who are dead will be raised and given earthly bodies before entering Paradise. But we have next to see what the great apostle of the Gentiles has to say on the subject. In 1 Cor. xv. 35 to 53 that apostle endeavours to explain the resurrection by the sowing of a grain of wheat, to which he says, God gives "a body of its own." In the case of a human body in the tomb he states:—

> 1 Cor. xv. 42, 44.—So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.....It is sown a *natural* body; it is raised a *spiritual* body.

In this passage the word "natural" (*psychikos*) is derived from *psyche* (life), and the word "spiritual"

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(*pneumatikos*) is formed from *pneuma* (breath, air, wind). Here Pauls says that the natural body of flesh and blood is the psychic, thereby recognizing the fact that *psyche* means animal life; he also says that the spiritual body, which is given to those raised from the dead, is pneumatic (*i.e.*, pertaining to air or breath). According to this statement all our writers on Psychology have chosen the wrong word, probably because *psyche* is generally translated "soul," whereas that word has nothing to do with soul or mind. Paul further says:—

> 1 Cor. xv. 50-53.—Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.....We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed.....For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Paul says nothing of a judgment of all nations or of the punishment of the wicked. The ideas of the early Christians upon the subject of "eternal life" would appear to be expressed in the paragraphs quoted from 1 Thess. iv. and 1 Cor. xv., though they are not in complete agreement. Thus, in 1 Cor. xv., the bodies of those raised from the dead, as well as those then alive, were both to be "changed" into "spiritual bodies" before entering the abode of bliss. But in 1 Thess. iv. nothing is said about any such change, though it appears to be implied that those raised from the dead were to be given the same bodies which they possessed before death. This metamorphosis presented no difficulties to the primitive Christians, who believed that "with God all things are possible." In any case, those living at the time were to go straight up to heaven in their natural bodies, accompanied by their resurgent brethren who, we must assume, could not enter paradise in their mouldering post-mortem bodies.

According to the apostle of the Gentiles, the natural physical body of flesh and blood could not enter heaven: the heavenly body must be spiritual (pneumatical), that is to say, possessing the qualities of pneuma (breath, air, wind). We may perhaps conceive this spiritual body to be a living, breathing phantom; but, as a simple matter of fact, Paul knew nothing about such a body. He simply imagined what he has described, just as he imagined that he had been "caught up to the third heaven" where he heard "unspeakable words" (2 Cor. xii. 1-4). Moreover, in neither 1 Thess. iv. nor in 1 Cor. xv. is there a single word said about "the spirits of the dead" in Hades; in both the reference is to the crumbling bodies in the tombs, as is also the case in John v. Setting aside, then, the theories of Paul—for they are nothing more—it would seem that the resurrection to which the majority of the early Christians looked forward was the raising of the bodies in the grave, which were to be changed into their former living bodies of flesh and blood—the resuscitated beings eating, drinking, and sleeping as they did before death. That this was the conception of the future life by the early Christians receives confirmation from the following circumstances recorded in the Gospels.

1. Jesus is represented as saying to his disciples at his Last Supper—"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine *until the day* when I *drink it anew with you* in my Father's kingdom (Matt. xxvi. 29).

2. In the hypothetical case of the woman who had had seven husbands (Matt. xxii. 23-30) it is clearly implied that in heaven men and women would appear in their former earthly bodies.

3. In the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 24) it is assumed that these two individuals were clothed in their earthly bodies, and that each saw and recognized the other.

4. Jesus himself, after his resurrection, appeared to his disciples in his natural body. When they "supposed that they beheld a spirit" he said, "Why are ye troubled? .....Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me having. And he shewed them his hands and his feet." After this he asked, "Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it, and did eat before them" (Luke xxiv. 38-43). Jesus also showed the sceptical Thomas "the prints of the nails" in his hands and the wound in his side (John xx. 27).

5. Others are stated to have been raised from the dead in their natural bodies. Thus in Matt. xxvii. 52, 53, we read that "the tombs were opened, and many *bodies* of the saints that had fallen asleep *were raised*; and coming forth out of the tombs, they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many." Admitting that this story and also that of Jesus are pious fictions, they at least show what was the belief in apostolic times. We have, again, the case of Lazarus, who was raised from the dead after he had been in the tomb four days and disintegration had commenced (John xi. 17, 39).

6. In Matt. xviii. 7-9 Jesus is represented as saying that if a hand or a foot caused a believer to sin, that person should "cut it off and cast it from him"; for it would be better for him "to enter into eternal life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire." These words, it is true, have been given a metaphorical interpretation; but, all the same, the fact of going into the abode of bliss with only one hand or foot plainly indicates that the believer would, as a matter of course, enter that abode in his former earthly body. There is no getting away from this inference; for if an entirely new body would be given after the resurrection, the mutilation of the old earthly body could not affect the new heavenly one.

The New Testament idea of the resurrection of the dead would thus appear to be that of the entire body—changed in the raising into the former earthly body, when in health. Of this belief it need only be said that it is utopian, and one which can never be realized; for we have no evidence of the existence of a being "with whom all things are possible." The same is the case with the heart (the supposed seat of reason, thought, and feeling), and of the psyche and pneuma: these all perish with the body.

There remains now but one point in connection with "eternal life" to be noticed: this will form the subject of the next paper, and bring this series to a conclusion.

ABRACADABRA.

Why Was Christ Born?

WERE a visitor from a distant planet, knowing nothing of this world's religions, to walk about in a Christian country, say in England, on the day of that ancient Pagan festival which is now called Christmas; were he to observe the eating and drinking, dancing and card-playing, and general jollification; he would never suspect that the people around him were celebrating the birthday of their God.

Were the visitor informed of this fact, and resolved to pursue his inquiries, he would discover that the celebrants were, for the most part, as ignorant as stones of the whole matter; that they were, in fact, the dupes of a long train of imposture.

Jesus Christ, whom the Christians worship as God, was not born on the twenty-fifth of December; at least the chances are very much against it. If he ever lived, he must have been born on *some* day; but, in the absence

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of all positive information on this point, the odds are three hundred and sixty-four to one against any day that is selected being right. The orthodox date is, indeed, quite inconsistent with the Gospel narrative. The birth of Jesus Christ is related to have been proclaimed to shepherds who were watching their flocks by night. This is impossible in Palestine in the depth of winter. The flocks are not pastured out at night until the spring.

Jesus Christ had been dead for generations before his birthday became an object of interest. According to the Acts of the Apostles, it was at Antioch that his followers were first called Christians; yet it was at Antioch that St. Chrysostom said—three hundred and fifty years after the Crucifixion—that they had but lately heard of the twenty-fifth of December as their Saviour's birthday.

The twenty-fifth of December was, as we have already said, a Pagan festival. It celebrated the new birth of the sun. The twenty-first of December is the shortest day, and is assigned in the Roman Calendar to St. Thomas, who doubted his Master's resurrection. For three days (as may be seen by the Almanack) the orb of light appears to be stagnant; but the fourth day begins to lengthen, the sun decisively commences another progression, and the Pagans expressed their joy at the auspicious occurrence. This festival was seized upon by the Christian Church; the SUN was turned into the SON; and the Pagans who were weaned or forced into Christianity, under Constantine and his successors, were gratified to learn that the new religion, while it altered their shibboleths, made very little difference with regard to their rites and customs.

But if the day of Jesus Christ's birth is uncertain, the determination of the year is equally difficult. We are informed by the third Gospel that Jesus was born when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. This was at least six years after the commencement of the Christian era. Jewish chronology assigns a much earlier date for the birth of the Nazarene; a point on which the reader may consult the *Jewish Life of Christ*, a remarkable production that should be read by every student of the origins of Christianity.

All this would be discovered by our imaginary visitor from a distant planet. He would also find that the deity of Jesus Christ was never suspected during his lifetime; that the doctrine grew up gradually, with many fluctuations of fortune, in the Christian Church; and that it was only imposed on the whole Christian world after generations of fierce controversy and cruel bloodshed.

Supposing, however, that Jesus Christ *was* God, or part of God, or a messenger from God, we may still ask —Why was he born? What was his object? And how has he carried it out?

Jesus Christ was certainly not born to teach the world anything new in religion, philosophy, or morals. Every good (or bad) text in the Gospels is a repetition of what had been previously uttered. Originality was not one of his characteristics. Even the assertion that he brought immortality to light is false in the light of Jewish doctrine before his birth, and ridiculous in the light of the ancient systems of Egypt and India.

Christ did not come as a man to illuminate the world, but as a god to redeem it. Such is the teaching of orthodox Christianity. But if Christ's object was the world's redemption, his failure is "gross as a mountain, open, palpable."

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," was the command of Christ to his apostles. He also said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." This can only mean that they, or their successors, were to convert the world to Christianity; it must at least mean that they were to preach the gospel to all ears, so that all might have an opportunity of embracing it. But has this been done? And after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, more than half of the world's inhabitants have never heard the gospel preached. Only a quarter of the human race are professed Christians, and among *them* how many are *real?* Buddhism, which was founded by a man, includes more millions than Christianity. Nor is there the slightest prospect of further success. The races that stood outside Christianity at first are outside it still. Missionary effort makes no considerable impression on the vast populations of Asia and Africa. The heathen who *are* converted in distant lands do not equal the number of persons in Christian countries who are either sceptics or indifferent.

Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace. Angels sang at his birth of "peace on earth and good-will among men." Surely this was ironical. More blood has been shed in the name of Christ than in the name of any other deity. It is an indisputable fact, also, that all other differences—racial, political, or social—are aggravated by difference in religion. Englishmen and Irishmen are both Christians, but they worship Christ in different ways, and this diversity is the principal secret of their long antagonism. Had Ireland been Protestant, or England been Catholic, the two nations would have found a speedier way to reconciliation. The last great war in Europe was between Catholic France and Protestant Germany. It was fomented by the Jesuits, who used the Empress Eugenie as their tool. Christ's priests never shrank from crime to win their ends. They have ever been ready to drench the earth with tears or blood to promote the interest of their Church.

Peace was *not* brought by Christ. If it was it ascended with him. He was born at a time of peace, during the reign of the mild and wise Augustus. Less than half a million soldiers sufficed to maintain the peace of that far stretching empire, and to secure its frontiers against the outer barbarians. At present, in Europe alone, six millions of soldiers grasp arms in readiness for mutual slaughter. At the close of every winter we speculate on war in the spring. After all these centuries of the reign of Christ the military systems of Europe are crushing the nations. Young men spend their days in barracks, two hundred millions are wrung from the people to support armies and navies, and another two hundred millions to pay the interest on national debts.

Peace on earth! The brotherhood of man! Yes, the peace of kings and priests; the brotherhood of Cain and Abel.

Christians dwell on the love for the poor and oppressed displayed by the Hebrew prophets, and declare that Christ, as the last and greatest prophet, was to be the best friend of the needy and the desolate. But is this a fact? So far as the poor are concerned, Jesus Christ might as well have remained in heaven. Poverty is a standing curse of Christian societies. Men die worth millions, and their ignominious corpses repose in a marble-pillared mausoleum. Many of their fellow-citizens die daily from starvation, or the diseases of ill-fed bodies, and are buried out of the way as public nuisances. Dives and Lazarus still live in the same city. The beggar's stomach is as empty, and his sores as painful, as ever; and Dives is never frightened by that little parable about the dry tongue and the missing drop of water. Christ said, "The poor ye have always with you," and the remark was a prophecy. The poor *are* always with us. *They* have not been redeemed. They owe nothing to Christ. He was not born for them.

Peace has not come, poverty has not gone; the people still suffer, and are still cheated with "kingdom-come." Christ was not born to redeem us in this world. Oh, they say, he will redeem us in the next world. He was

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born to lead us to heaven and save us from hell. But if he cannot help us *here*, how will he help us *there?* Let the truth be told—He is a failure. As a god he is contemptible. He came to this world to no purpose. It would have been better if he had left us Home Rulers to manage our own affairs. Jehovah was a curse to the Jews, and Christ has been a curse to Christendom. We at least are not grateful to him. We hope he will soon go the way of other gods into oblivion. We believe he is going there rapidly. He is perishing because he is being found out. His pretensions are belied by the history of nineteen hundred years. He was born once, but it was a mistake. All he has now to do is to die.

(The late) G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

Hundreds of years ago the Jews took a great revenge for all the injuries that were to be inflicted on them. They gave the Christian their God, and that was one of the most cold-blooded acts of cruelty in history. Now, Mr. Balfour proposes another act of retaliation. He is going to give the Jews Jerusalem, and found a Jewish State. This game of reprisals ought to be stopped. It will only lead to fresh trouble in the future.

To be quite serious, the foundation of a State for Jews is only of value so long as there are large numbers of Jews suffering oppression, and to whom any place is preferable to the one wherein they live. Where Jews are not persecuted they neither desire a Jewish State, nor will they avail themselves of one if it is offered. English, French, or Dutch Jews are Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Dutchmen. Their religion no more expresses nationality than does Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. True, they profess a longing for Jerusalem—in their prayers. But that is about as real as the Christian's longing for heaven. And we are quite sure that nothing short of forcible deportation will ever induce Jews to leave countries where they have been settled for generations and are fairly treated.

And what is meant by a "Jewish State?" Does it mean a theocracy on the Biblical plan with Jewish regulations enforced? That would mean a tyranny so intolerable that it would soon have to be suppressed. And if the State is to give absolute freedom to all, with no State religion, and no compulsion or restriction in any form, it is a travesty of language to call it a Jewish State. Perhaps, one day, people will recognize that the "Jewish Question" is really a sociological question.

In a recent issue of the *Daily News*, a nineteen-line extract from Paine's *Rights of Man* was published as a quotation for the day. We hope the editor did not give his readers too much pain.

Although there is a shortage of paper, and periodicals are greatly reduced in size, editors still find room for religious news. A Sunday paper actually had a bold headline: "200 Eton Boys Confirmed," with following letterpress. Perhaps the editor thought it a big bag of prisoners for the Church offensive.

Considerable interest has been excited by the *Morning Post* attack on the Papacy as having been partly responsible for the recent disaster to the Italian Army, and, of course, Roman Catholics in general are highly indignant. So far as individual English Roman Catholics are concerned, their indignation may be genuine enough. But with the Vatican itself that is quite another affair. There is a very powerful Roman Catholic party in Germany, and Austria is a stronghold of the Papacy. Here are two good reasons why the Roman Church should oblige these powers as much as is possible. Added to this, the Vatican has never relinquished its aspirations after temporal power, and the dream of a Pope who shall exercise a temporal sovereignty over Italy itself is not too fantastic for its ambitions. Finally, the Roman Catholic Church is a *Christian* Church, and all history teaches that a Christian Church will support any and every cause that promises help. The principles of the Christian Churches are not exactly up for sale, but they can always be so explained as to assist any cause or government that supports them.

The *Referee* calls attention to the fact that just one hundred years ago the vicar of Sutton summoned Sir Montague Burgoyne, the Lord of the Manor, for non-attendance at Church. The case was tried at the Bedfordshire Assizes, and Sir Montague pleaded that he was an "invalid and had prayers read at home." So the jury found him "Not guilty." But how the clergy to-day, with their empty churches, must long for a return of the good old days!

"This hath God wrought," says the *Church Times*, with reference to the recent capture of Jerusalem. And the *C. T.* is grateful for the "privilege" accorded to the English people in this matter. It is not for us to say what "God" had to do with the capture of Jerusalem, but we do suggest that his presence—if he can achieve this kind of thing—is sadly needed on the Western Front. What God can do in the East, he might attempt in the West, and it would be far more effective there than elsewhere. It would be blasphemous to suggest that "God" is only powerful against a weak force, and powerless against a strong one. Perhaps the *Church Times* will explain the success of "Providence" in the one case, and its failure or carelessness in the other.

It was characteristic of the thoughtfulness of "Providence" that, after the terrible explosion at Halifax, Newfoundland, which killed about 1,500 people, it came along with a severe blizzard while thousands of people were homeless. And people who are indignant over German atrocities thank God for his "loving mercy."

Bristol clergy have also been holding a conference to consider the serious aspect of the future. The Bishop of Bristol dwelt strongly upon the responsibility of the clergy at the present crisis. We do not see it. Had he spoken of the responsibility of the clergy *for* the present crisis, we might have agreed. But no sensible person cares to the value of a mouldy communion wafer about the "highfalutin" talk of the clergy. All that is required of them is to get out of the way.

We cannot congratulate the members of the House of Commons on the success of their opposition to the 27C Regulation. It was first proposed that all leaflets and pamphlets relating to War and Peace should be passed by a censor before publication. This was such a glaring piece of autocratic legislation that the Government was driven to make concessions. The concessions amount to this: every pamphlet dealing with War and Peace must be placed before the censor three days before it is printed. If the censor decides that it must not be printed, it is forbidden. And the aggrieved party may seek a remedy in the Courts if he so desires.

We fail to see the value of the "concession." The right way, the way of real freedom, would be for the censor—who must be a Government censor—to take the pamphlet into the courts and allow judges to decide whether it really infringes the law or not. That has hitherto been the English way. To condemn it first, to seize type, etc., on the strength of the condemnation, and leave it for the aggrieved party to seek redress, is the way of Russia in its worst days. Moreover, the concession concedes nothing. To appeal to the courts was a privilege the subject always possessed, and still has, in spite of D.O.R.A. Finally moving the courts is an expensive matter, and an organization without plenty of money cannot act. It is only wealthy men, and wealthy societies that can threaten the Government, and the Government does not attack men of money.

We are not concerned in the least with the political aspect of the matter, and we protest against the fashion of labelling

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all criticism of this regulation as "Pacifist." That is a mere political trick. Our sole concern is with the setting up of a practice that is foreign to our traditions and to our institutions. Freedom is the one thing in the world worth fighting for, and one must be prepared to risk something in its maintenance. Make the penalties for illegal, for treasonable, action as heavy as you please, but let the decision as to what is illegal rest with the courts of law. That is the only guarantee of freedom the subject has. That gone, everything is gone.

Patriotism and piety is a sad mixture. A poor woman at Bradford cut the throat of her boy of sixteen because she thought that her "sacrifice" would help the Allies. She had been a regular attendant at Christian Science meetings.

It looks as though "Providence" had been running amok amongst the clergy. In one newspaper paragraph the other day it was recorded that the Rev. J. W. Thorndike, of St. James the Less, Vauxhall Bridge Road, died suddenly in his church; Rev. W. T. Nicholson died after an operation for apendicitis; and Prebendary F. Wodehouse died suddenly at Exmouth.

The Illustrated Record of the Tower Hamlets Mission believes in making one's flesh creep—as the best means of raising subscriptions. In its Annual Christmas Appeal it darkly hints that it could give "numerous pathetic accounts" of those who have come to their teas and been converted. We are not quite certain whether the pathetic stories belong to the tea or the Gospel, but we can quite believe it of either.

In another portion of the same "Appeal" we read that the Mission is accumulating information "of a most terrible character as to the demoralization of boys and girls" in cinema shows. These "horrible centres of corruption" are open on Sundays to all, etc. Of course, we are not given particulars; so that every pious reader is given the utmost freedom to indulge his or her pruricut imagination without check. But it is very thoughtless of Mr. Charrington to give the game away by saying: "Our immediate object will now be to arouse the Churches to their danger, and the terrible effect Sunday opening is having on the attendance at churches and Sunday-schools." And that, apparently, is the "corruption" that is at work. So it looks like a case of trade jealousy, after all.

A general dealer of Merthyr, S. Wales, was summoned for driving a motor cycle with side-car, thus infringing the Motor Spirit Restriction Order. The defence was that the car was being used to fetch some butter and eggs. The essence of the offence appears to have been that the cycle was being ridden on a Sunday, and one suspects that it was the Sabbatarian feelings of the Chief Constable that were hurt rather than the Motor Spirit Restriction order. Piety *plus* patriotism is a strong combination.

"The name of Father Christmas is on the lips and in the minds of all children," declares a London newspaper writer. The dear little Pagans.

The forthcoming celebration of the merry birthday of the Man of Sorrows led to an order of the Liquor Control Board relaxing in England and Wales some of the drink restrictions.

The campaign in Palestine has given the journalists an opportunity of re-hashing much Biblical knowledge. The *Times* had a lengthy note on Hebron, the City of Abraham, and said "the oak of Mamre under which the patriarch camped is still pointed out a little to the north of the town." This is the stuff that is retailed in the columns of one of the foremost daily papers.

"Take no thought for the morrow" does not, in the opinion of the vicar of Krodeshall, Suffolk, apply to sugar. At least, we assume such to be the case, seeing that this gentlemen was found in possession of a sack of sugar. When charged under the Food Control Order, the defendant was unaware of the Control Order. The vicar was fined £3, and the local grocer who supplied the sugar £5. We do not understand why the grocer was fined more than the vicar, particularly as, in small country places, the clergy have a way of bringing considerable pressure to bear upon local tradesmen. And in these days grocers are not exactly begging people to take sugar off their hands.

The War Office has issued the information that "clerks in holy office" who volunteer for military service "are permitted to select the corps to which they wish to be posted." If they do not come up to the requirements of the selected corps, they will be permitted to return to civil life. Will anyone please explain why a clergyman joining the Army should be given a privilege denied to other people? And why, if he is not suitable to that particular corps, should a clergyman be permitted to return to civil life? Under this regulation a parson has only to select a corps for which he is clearly unfitted to escape service altogether, and retain the credit for being anxious to do "his bit." And we may trust the members of the "Black Army" to make the most of the occasion.

The relation between religion and conduct, says "Vanoc," in the *Referee*, is always a mystery to the average layman. We daresay; but it is only a mystery because theology has deliberately caused the confusion. Whatever relation exists between the two, in fact, is purely accidental; it is never causal. Religion operates on morality precisely as does politics. It may lead people to regard things as right that are wholly wrong, or it may induce them to brand as crimes qualities that are of quite an opposite character. That is why religious belief forms no guide whatever as to how a person will behave. He may have enough native goodness to overcome the influence of religion, or enough inborn "cussedness" to fly in the face of its better teaching. Religion and morality spring from different roots, and it is regrettable that "Vanoc" makes such a mystery of a problem that could be answered by a very casual study of moral development.

"Vanoc's" wonderment is due to an article written by Commodore Henderson, at present interned in Holland. The Commodore finds that some of the prisoners in his camp go to church, but "there are plenty of men who never go near a church. Yet they are living straight, upright, clean lives which many Churchmen might do well to imitate." If Commodore Henderson is surprised at this, it only shows that, like "Vanoc," he also has much to learn on the question of ethics. And the value of "Vanoc's" philosophy is well shown by the following:—

> Commodore Henderson's creed, which is shared by innumerable thinking souls, is that no dogmas are necessary unless belief in an All-good God can be called a dogma. With the evidence of our own existence, Nature, and the laws of Nature before us, the existence of a Supreme Being is a self-evident fact which nobody except Conchies of the baser sort, degenerates, and arrogant and unobservant ignoramuses can dispute.

We do not know in which category we are to be placed, but it is long since we came across a more ignorant outburst than this: "Nature and the laws of nature!" The poor man thinks they are distinct, evidently. We have no space or time to disentangle all the absurdities in the passage cited, they will be clear enough to *Freethinker* readers. We can only regret that "Vanoc" was not with General Allenby when he entered Jerusalem. Assuming "Vanoc's" ability and willingness to bear the burden, the General might then have entered the city in the same way as Jesus is said to have done.

At Broadstairs Sunday cinema shows are restricted to soldiers and sailors, and humorous films are excluded from the programme. The pious folk evidently wish the soldiers and sailors to take their pleasures sadly.

The *Daily News* anxiously asks the question, "Will there be Feasting As Usual" at Christmas? Presumably, the birthday of the "Man of Sorrows" will be shorn of some of its merriment.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 6, Manchester; January 13, London; January 20, Southampton; February 3, Birmingham; February 17, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

A. L. (Glasgow).—Pleased to hear of the increased sales at your newsagents. That is becoming a very general experience, but we are hungry for still more.

PTE. J. SCOTT.—Your suggestion of a fund for the distribution of literature among soldiers is a good one, but we have had to ask our readers for help in other directions, and we do not feel warranted in making any further appeals that are avoidable. We do send out literature on our own account, so far as our means permit, and we have the gratification of knowing that it does good. Thanks for your efforts in distributing pamphlets. The literature ordered has been sent.

PTE. STARLING writes: "Freethought is, in my opinion, making great strides among the soldiers, and it would be well worth getting the parodies the boys sing to the hymns they have been forced to learn" We shall be very pleased to receive specimens. Some may be quite usable.

PEDRO.—Sorry we are not able to use the MSS. you have been good enough to send.

S. R. (Belfast).—We do not know what you mean by "details of the death-bed" of G. W. Foote. The only pertinent details are that he died in his own home, with none but members of his own family in the house. And he died as he had lived, a firm Freethinker.

B. DUNLOP.—Next week. Thanks.

R. ELMES.—It is a very foolish policy to offer an explanation before you are quite sure the statements made are a record of facts.

E. RAWLINGS.—You have misunderstood Mr. Holyoake's discussion with Bradlaugh, it was not of the nature you assume. Mr. Holyoake made many professions of his authentic opinions in quite plain and unequivocal language.

J. BREESE.—We are obliged for your promise of further help in the event of there being more trouble with the L.C.C. But we do not think that likely. We can quite appreciate the worries of a business man at the present time.

J. ROBERTSON.—We quite agree with your view that in winning the fight in London against the L.C.C. it will have its influence elsewhere. By the way, is it not time Edinburgh did some work again in the shape of propagandist lectures? We shall be glad to give any assistance we can.

W. H. DEAKIN.—Thanks for good wishes. The letter to which you refer is not yet to hand, but trust it will arrive in due course.

W. JONES. G. E. GILL, AND OTHERS.—We are obliged for offers of pamphlet, but a parcel, wrongly labelled, was discovered in stock.

PIPER W. H. FYFE.—We are sending you a small parcel of literature for distribution.

J. LIVESY.—Will see about an article on the subject you name; but there are so many other things that call for attention. Thanks for your good opinion of the paper.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—"Ernest," 2s. 6d.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—"Ernest," 2s. 6d.

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.

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 impudence of some officials almost passes belief. A friend at Goldthorpe, near Sheffield, was good enough to display a *Freethinker* poster in his shop window. The shop is situated in the central part of the town, and opposite the police station. The poster had been displayed for some weeks without anything being said, but on December 10 a police sergeant, accompanied by a constable, arrived on the scene, and informed the shopkeeper's wife that it was illegal to display such a poster, and that he had "gone into the matter fully with his superiors and they had concluded it was against the law." Our friend's wife properly asked this official to call again when her husband was at home. The reply was that there was enough trouble these times and he didn't want any more. Of course, the whole proceeding was quite illegal, and nothing else than an attempt to bully our friend into taking the poster down. We have instructed that the poster be kept where it has been, and that in case of any further trouble to let us know at once. There is nothing at all illegal in displaying the poster, and if any trouble occurs, our friends may rely upon our full support. Meanwhile, we have written for further particulars with a view to bringing this particular police officer to book.

Under the heading of "An Earnest Thinker," the *Cambridge Magazine* (December 15) has a notice of the death of a well-known Cambridge figure, Mr. H. J. Wolstenholme, of Christ's College:—

> Those who knew him well would agree that his grasp of social and general philosophy was in many ways unrivalled in this country. Trained originally for the Ministry in some Nonconformist sect, his inquiring mind soon found itself unable to accept the fundamentals which others allowed to pass unquestioned, and though he retained an understanding of and a respect for the convictions of those from whom he parted company, he was reluctantly faced to the conclusion that the hypothesis of the existence of a God was amongt the least helpful and least fruitful of all the cosmogonief that mankind has devised.

We were pleased to see a letter, in the *Wine and Spirit Trade Record*, from Mr. H. Latimer Voigt, strongly recommending Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer* as a "crushing" reply to the contention that the wine mentioned in the Bible is unfermented. The pamphlet is a crushing answer to other things beside this, and we should like to see it circulated by the tens of thousands.

We regret that by the transposition of a line in Mr. Palmer's article in our last issue one paragraph was robbed of part of its meaning. The last line at the bottom of p. 795 should have appeared as the second line in the second paragraph in the second column. The line must have been displaced in making up the columns.

We are asked to state that the "Social" arranged for Boxing Day by the Manchester Branch, N.S.S., has had to be postponed owing to local circumstances. We are glad to learn that this Branch is winding up its quarter's work with plenty of enthusiasm to recommence early in the New Year.

THE POLITIC CHRISTIANITY OF THE KAISER.

The mainstay of the (Roman) Catholic Church rests with the Austrian monarchy and with the death of the old Emperor (written in July, 1914) they would have to look to some other country and ruler for protection. There is no Catholic ruler in a Catholic country to-day able to support and protect the dignity of the Church. The German Emperor is a Protestant monarch, but he is first and last a Christian, and thanks to his usual keen and far-sighted policy, backed up by his strong spiritual convictions, religious dissensions are almost unknown in his Empire. The Catholic religion enjoys in no country, save the United States and the British Empire, more real freedom from persecution than it does in Germany. And the Emperor's personal standing with the Vatican is excellent.—*Armgaard Karl Graves, "The Secrets of the German War Office."*

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Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

THE purpose of this Fund is to clear off a portion of the liability incurred in fighting—and defeating—the attempt of the L.C.C. to prohibit the sale of literature in the London parks and open spaces. The legal expenses incurred amounted to about £250. Of this, between £80 and £100 remains unpaid, and the Protest Committee is appealing for contributions from all who appreciate the value of the triumph achieved. This is a question that should appeal to Londoners with special force, and it is hoped to raise the required amount by the end of the year. The following is the list of subscriptions to date:—

Previously acknowledged, £21 19s. E. Whitehorn, £2. Dr. B. Dunlop, £1 1s. H. Jessop, £1. J. Burrell, 1s. J. Breese, £1. G. Saunders, 2s. J. Robertson, 2s. T. Dunbar, 2s. 6d. Mrs. Annie Poole, 1s. Dr. R. T. Nichols, 10s. 6d. W. H. Hicks, £1 1s. Manchester Branch N. S. S., £1 1s. T. Underwood, 2s. E. Reynolds, 2s. 6d. "Ernest," 2s. 6d.

The Prayers of the Righteous.

THE REV. CHAS. GOODHEART is the vicar of a fine old church in one of the suburbs of London. Most of his parishioners regard him as a real old English gentleman, and a sincere Christian. Obviously, he has never critically examined the tenets of the faith in which he believes, and he knows nothing, or comparatively speaking nothing, of the heretical views of many of the more learned members of his own church. All along he has said that he has accepted his religion on faith. He believes that the Bible is God's Word—every word alike, from the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis to the last verse in Revelation; and every man, whether he is a brother in Holy Orders or only a layman, who dares to throw the slightest doubt on the authenticity or genuineness of the Gospels, he regards as a heretic who will ultimately find his portion in the lake of fire that burns without ceasing for ever and ever. And he not only believes in Christianity, but he tried to practise it in his daily life. One thing he believes in most fervently—and that is, in the efficacy of prayer.

Throughout this long and terrible War he has insisted that the one thing wanted is the united prayers of Christians, offered up in all sincerity to God, so that He would turn the hearts of men to nobler and better purposes than human destruction.

But since hostile air-raids have become very frequent in London, many have noticed that the kind face of the dear old vicar has worn a very troubled expression. People have come to church more regularly, and joined with him in prayer to God to stop this merciless and horrible murder of innocent citizens—men, women, and children; but let them pray never so hard, the air-raids continue, and not even the shot and shell of hundreds of guns can keep the infernal machines away from the London area.

One evening they had a special service of prayer at the church, and the vicar appealed in very eloquent language to the Great God of Battles to save the poor innocent children from destruction by bombs. He appealed to God more especially as "Our Heavenly Father," who watched over and protected his children; but even in the midst of his prayer, a churchwarden was observed to walk up the middle aisle, and, to the astonishment of the congregation, proceeded up the steps to the pulpit, and presented the vicar with a note. The anxiety of the congregation was soon increased, for the vicar made the solemn announcement that he had just received notice from the police that an air-raid was taking place, and that they must "take cover" as soon as possible. The vicar said that he was inclined to continue the service and offer up further prayers, and trust to the Lord. But no sooner had he made the announcement than he observed that nearly all the members of the congregation were hurrying out of the church into the crypt, where no doubt they thought they could find safer shelter than in the church itself. Before they had been in the crypt a quarter of an hour, the members of the congregation, largely augmented by strangers, who had also sought what they considered the safest cover, were engaged in singing hymns and songs alternately, and making all kinds of noises, to drown the booming sound of the guns.

But as they proceeded with their singing a terrible sound was heard outside, as though in close proximity to the Church, although as a matter of fact it was some distance away. A dull, heavy, thud, like the falling of a bomb, followed by a terrible crash, like the tumbling down and the destruction of a great building. The boys in the crypt kept up the singing and shouting and clapping of hands to cheer up the women and children, many of whom were hysterical and in tears. For over two hours this kind of thing went on before the sound of bugles could be heard, and people knew that all was "clear" once more, and those who had sought the shelter of the crypt emerged into the streets and proceeded homewards. Some among the crowd, however, met friends who informed them that a terrible calamity had happened not far away—that several dwelling-places in a crowded thoroughfare had been reduced to ruins, and that many people had been buried beneath the débris. Many of them joined the constant stream of people who were going in search of the scene of the great catastrophe.

When they arrived the sight was terrible to behold. People were running about the streets in a dazed condition. The police were trying to keep the crowd back, and every now and then men appeared with stretchers carrying the bodies of those who had been killed or maimed in the destruction of the buildings. Many of the women fainted as they saw the dead and dying being taken away on ambulances. Somebody in the crowd mentioned that about a dozen children were buried beneath the ruins of the building in the cellar where they had sought shelter with their parents.

One man, who was evidently a Freethinker, said that God might at least have spared the innocent little kiddies. Another, who was probably a Christian or a Nothingarian, said that these awful calamities were enough to make a man doubt whether there was a good God or not.

"Ah," said one, who joined in the conversation, "all these disasters were brought about by the wickedness of the people. People had given up going to church and were seeking a life of pleasure, and forgetting all about God."

"What about the poor kiddies who are buried in the ruins—what have they done to offend God?" asked the Freethinker.

"God, in his wrath, sometimes destroys the children as a punishment for the sins of the parents."

"Oh, does he?" exclaimed the Freethinker. "Then all I can say is that he is very unjust, and not at all like a good father who would certainly try and protect the young, who could not help themselves."

But the Christian still persisted in saying that it was the wickedness of the people that had brought all the trouble upon us, and that what we wanted was more prayers.

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"Don't talk nonsense," said the Freethinker, "there are plenty of prayers being offered up. They don't stop the enemy from dropping bombs. What we want is more guns and a stronger barrage."

"Ah, I see you are one of those who are in favour of using force against force; but that will never do," said the Christian. "We want some higher force. The Bible says the prayers of the righteous availeth much."

"Yes—but," said the other, "the Bible also says, 'There are none righteous—no, not one.' But let us cease this talk, they are bringing out some more dead. Let me quote Shakespeare: 'If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.'"

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Storm Cloud's Burden.

I.—CATS.

A CAT is a diminutive tiger conspicuous for its love of comfort, its dexterity in lapping milk, and its ability to see in the dark with its whiskers. It obtains access to the Englishman's home because of a pleasing purr which, by some subtle alchemy, succeeds in creating around it an atmosphere of deep content. It enters the Englishwoman's home because it is rough on mice, and, occasionally, as a substitute for a husband.

The cat population *tends* to rapidly increase beyond the means of subsistence, but here God proposes and man disposes. The murder of the cat's young is according to a section of the unwritten law. We do not care for recent extensions of this law to human beings, but a moderately worded clause providing for the painless extermination of juries would meet with our approval.

The whereabouts of a cat is easily located in the daytime (at night-time it is a matter of grave difficulty). Presuming that the larder door has been slammed, barred, and bolted, puss will be found in the position which would have been chosen as the most comfortable seat in the house. This, although not proving the animal to be of great intelligence, proves it to be, in some respects, of equal intelligence to man.

If, perchance, this position should be unoccupied, we are afraid it will be necessary to re-inspect the larder.

The young cat, or kitten, is a delightful object. The play of a kitten is an altogether joyous spectacle, albeit there is something in it of pathos to one who has seen a few decades roll away. The blot on the kitten's escutcheon is the refinement of torture it displays towards the luckless mouse before consuming it. This trait, however, disappears with age and experience, the older cat considering the mouse as a meal, and, therefore, too solemn a thing to be trifled with. Similarly a Scotsman may be observed to drink his glass of whisky with avidity, fearing lest the whirligig of time should bring about its downfall. The progress towards a kindlier spirit is often in an inverse ratio in the human race, sixty years often finding a man bubbling over with bloodthirstiness. The symptoms first become apparent, though in a restrained form, about the age of forty-five.

Owing to a cat's gentleness, affectionate disposition, and playful little ways, chivalry has fixed upon the term "cat" as a generally appropriate term to apply to the fair sex.

Where food is concerned, the ability to make distinctions between *meum* and *tuum* is not over-conspicuous in a cat. This peculiarity is not, however, confined to them. The National Anthem of Wales, in fact, is written round one Welshman—Taffy, to wit—who had quick and easy methods of dealing with a food shortage. Because of the patriotic entente, we hasten to remark that this was a very long time ago, and that it was in Scotland where the blind beggar missed his decoy shilling.

Many mis-spent years in lodgings have convinced the writer that the cat, in these matters, often sins vicariously.

A cat has nine lives, and herein it possesses a great pull over man, as it need never think of turning over a new leaf and attending to its religious exercises until it has spent seven or eight of them. This is no small advantage. On the off-chance of influencing the character of our next re-incarnation, we here and now publicly plump for the career of a well-fed cat.

The love of a cat for its keepers has been described as cupboard love by those in whom any old kind of love would be a refreshing discovery. Yet, surely, there could be nothing more *rational*[1] than cupboard love.

> Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
> Thou art not so unkind
> As man's ingratitude.

Puss can be relied on, at least, to love the hand that feeds her.

II.—AND DOGS.

One need not say so much of dogs. They speak for themselves.

A dog is an animate object with a bark, a bite, and one or two tails. Those with two tails are quite unreasonably happy. A tail over two and a half inches in length on dogs of certain breeds is considered by connoisseurs to be a defect. Consequently, the excess is removed, the dog whose property it is not being consulted. The only effective permanent method of removal is to have it bitten off. The gentleman told off for this duty it has been observed has rarely, if ever, had a classical education; neither is he bound over to keep the peace.

In all impartial investigations conducted by man, he is found to be a much superior creature to a dog. The foregoing paragraph lends point to this finding.

We only know a dog to be a dog by an act of faith. Artemus Ward once said he couldn't define an elephant but he knew one when he saw one. This is a very clever remark, indeed, but it doesn't apply to a dog, for the more dogs you see the less inclined you are to dogmatize. You wouldn't mistake a Dandy Dinmont for a Newfoundland even on the darkest of War-time nights. Yet many estimable people are ready to swear that they are both dogs, so we leave it there.

When they had fashioned a few dogs up aloft in the canine department the artificers were so pleased with their work that they decided not to add further ingredients, but to leave well alone. That's how a dog comes not to have a soul.

We are inclined to agree with this judgment, for a dog is a highly creditable piece of work, and, obviously, not the work of a first-year man. We make an exception, of course, of the Daschund, which is a low-down crawling beast—for the duration of the War.

Similar caution, unfortunately, was not observed in the Adam and Eve department. There the soul was introduced, probably as a make-weight for the lack of a tail. This led to original sin, saints and sinners, the Prince of Peace, the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the rarity of Christian charity under the sun. It also led to a most infernal row in the celestial pattern shops, since which time there has been no further experimentation.

Defining a dog is child's play compared to defining a soul. For this task many years of theological training are necessary, and, even then, the definition must be launched in an atmosphere of reverential calm for it to have even an equivocal success. But we do know that, because of it, a man doesn't die like a dog. No matter

[1] We have written it, so let it stand.

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how snivelling a lout he may be, when he's dead he is as objectionably alive as ever, and he goes either to heaven to be, for all eternity, a nuisance to the less unworthy of those who have backed the winning formulæ, or to hell, where he'll be a damned nuisance for a like period.

What happens to men, women, children, and kind words doesn't happen to a dog. A dog just dies. No canine celestial celebrations, no dead dog's Derby days, no *post-mortem* prowls for puppies. Let him wag his tail, then, while he may, for when he's dead he's done for.

But dogs can be faithful unto death; they can love with a love that wavers not; they can grieve with a grief that kills.

So what matters?

T. H. E.

A Winter's Day.

In the gloomy month of November when the people of England hang and drown themselves.—*From the French.*

THE poet asks, When Winter's here can Spring be far behind? And one reflects that the "great War" is three years and some months nearer an end than it was in the beginning. That is some comfort. To be quite exact, it was Thursday—a notable day with Freethinkers; for on that day the up-to-date one arrives, and when it does not, said Sceptics swear softly, and console themselves with a "back number," and find there, perhaps, much they had missed, and would not have missed for money. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, these, since our unhappy school days, were somewhat forbidding days, and simply appalled. Thursday was brighter, Friday lighter, Saturday was *jour de fete!* Sunday was somewhat irksome to the juvenile; but to the emancipated adult, or even to the patriarchal sceptic, it is a Pagan day of joy.

We awoke in the morning in those distant years and wondered what day was it; and the warm or cold tints of the "spectrum lines," cast on the white bedroom walls by the rising sun in at the window, were prophetic of the weather. It was Saturday, with its free and errant happiness; or merely the beginning of the week, and we trudged to the house of correction, but even this penance redeemed by azure pools in the roadway, in seeming deeps profound, but clear and fresh as the childish mind itself, reflecting the rolling skies. It was "Alice in Wonderland," and "Through the Looking Glass," as we learned later from that creator of realest fairylands, Lewis Carrol.

But to return to our Thursday and our November day. There is a conical islet in our misty Firth known as Holy Isle. It is clothed these days in glooms opaque; or only partly dwelling in the cloud—cloud, edged with the serene silv'ry splendour of filtered light from the lower horizon. Close at hand are the vandyke woods and rusty vegetation of November—landscape of sombre sere. Suddenly the sun illumines the scene, turning the bronze to gold, in the glow, as it might seem, of some Vulcan's milder, deeper, softer fire; field and wood are for the moment steeped in a rich glory the Summer never knew. Life itself is made up of mere contrast, light and shade; nor is this mere analogy—man is compounded of the elements, just as are the clouds and skies—he is gay and gloomy, good and bad; remove one quality and he is something else. No one, says the Hebrew Bible, has seen God at any time. In like manner, it may be said, no one has ever seen *himself*. Perhaps no one could endure himself if he had. Illusion there must be; natural illusion—distinct from *delusion*—and in our own minds we rear an artificial metaphysical environment in which, complacently contented, but much beguiled, we live and move and have our being.

And now it is the evening, and all is still as we peruse the dying glories of the short November day. The great furnace of the sun would seem to be extinguished every night. Its calm, mellow radiance steeps in amber-yellow light the quiet interstices of the clouds, and turning the cloud itself to glowing embers and the ruddy hue of consuming charcoal. Slowly and softly, noiselessly, the shadows fall. It is peace. And yet we are at war. I never could understand this lust of empire. I have all the empire I desire. I have just suggested it. No; I would rather be the fuddled farmer of whom Burns wrote:—

> Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
> O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

and go down to the tongueless silence of the dreamless dust, than to be one of those iron advocates of force and murder variously known in the various countries they represent and curse alike. A clear, pearly glow lights all the encircling horizon beneath the grey and dun of the beautiful, brooding, beneficent night.

And out of the misty seas and cloudy twilight, dim shapes appear, the shoulders of huger hills, massive but mild, gigantic yet gentle, shrouded, softened, sublimed, faded at length in the folds of night's descending pall. Perhaps out there, in intervals in the rolling mists, the fitful hermit moon looks down and gleams on rock and scaur, on peak and dark ravine, lighting the solemn, solitary wild, refulgent, recluse, immune; and the sea surrounds it sobbingly and goeth forth, "dread, fathomless, alone."

ANDREW MILLAR.

A Sounding-Board for Prejudice.

THIS suggestive—and comparatively mild—description of our daily British Press has been borrowed from a paragraph in "Acid Drops" (November 25) referring to Dr. Lyttleton's expressions about newspapers. Anybody who has seen anything of the inner workings of newspaper offices knows quite well that newspapers are primarily commercial undertakings. But one effect of the War has been to make it more difficult for newspaper proprietors to ascertain what current public opinion on many questions is. Circulation is being kept up because all classes want to have the latest news about the progress of the War; but some editors would find their cynicism tinged with surprise if they saw the sneers of many thinking members of the public when they glance at the trashy pabulum often offered for public consumption. There was never war bread like it!

"Give us this day our daily thrill" used to be the peace-time prayer of the editor of the orthodox daily paper. The universal sensation of the War has bewildered the editorial brain, and the Government has "controlled" the editorial right hand—which, incidentally, has not yet quite lost its cunning. If it cannot do anything else, it can boom the "National" Mission of Repentance and Hope or the "National" Day of Prayer, and so try again to test the condition of the public mind; and—well, if the "National" Mission results have neither materialized nor spiritualized—and if the "National" Day of Prayer does not come up to the most sanguine expectations—we make no rash prediction one way or another—can the poor editor be blamed after he has done his best? Now, can he?

Some of the leading dailies have, unfortunately, afforded evidence to justify the description of the daily press which forms the title of this article. In these columns, more than once, have appeared reasonable, temperately worded letters containing unfashionable opinions which, though supported by arguments of general interest, had been

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refused the hospitality of the columns of leading daily newspapers. And as the big cock crows, the little one learns; so, with one or two praiseworthy exceptions, we find the provincial press following in the wake of the big organs, and cutting out with valiant censoriousness any contributions which would be likely to offend the susceptibilities of the old ladies—male and female—who form the most important part of their clientele.

But we have another—and, we fear, a graver—criticism to offer about the daily press. It has of late been placing itself in a sinister light by its lack of taste in recording news about individuals. One may take leave to say that every decent person's susceptibilities were shocked by the gross and inconsiderate way in which the proceedings at the inquest on the late Mr. Fred Billington were reported. We refrain from repeating the details. Many who had no personal acquaintance with the gifted actor, but who had frequently seen him perform, and in a sense felt he was their friend, could not finish the paragraph without a sense of outrage. Such an unbecoming business accentuates the prejudice of which the daily press is the sounding-board. Independence of opinion on unpopular topics they boycott; but they are quick enough to flourish any personal matter about an actor—however offensive it may be to the man's friends. This is not the liberty; it is the licence of the Press. The Press is not free; it is the slave of convention.

Ignotus.

Correspondence.

THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Your correspondent, "Young Colquhoun," tries to discredit my claims for a Voluntary Co-operative Commonwealth on the ground that population tends to outrun subsistence, so that there must always be a struggle for existence, in which the weakest go to the wall. This is the exploded theory of Dr. Malthus, who was a Church of England parson, and propounded his plausible theory over one hundred years ago to ease the consciences of himself and his wealthy patrons. It is not a question of *tendency*, but a question of *fact*. Never mind what the tendency may be, but is it a fact that the world is now overcrowded? Is it true at this present time that every available acre of land, and every machine, and every man, woman, and child are utilized to their utmost capacity in the production of wealth, and yet found to be insufficient to maintain the population? So far is this from being true that there are millions of acres of land in the British Islands lying absolutely uncultivated, and that plenty of food for double our present population could be raised without the least difficulty.

The late Professor Huxley was a clever comparative anatomist, but showed himself to be quite ignorant of economic science when he tried to prove in a leading magazine, some thirty years ago, that capital employs labour. The idea of a spade employing a man might have occurred to him as being too ludicrous for sober assertion, yet he wasted much thought in his ill-fated attempt to prove it, and thereby lost all claim to be an authority in economic science.

If "Young Colquhoun" will study Mr. Arthur Kitson's valuable works on finance, he will find out all about the War Debt, and how easily it could have been avoided.

G. O. Warren, Major (retired).

GOD AND THE WAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Please allow me to thank your correspondent, Mr. E. Egerton Stafford, for his letter with reference to mine, on the above subject. I fear I did not make my meaning sufficiently clear. As a firm believer in evolution and the Darwinian theory, I hold that some *force*, which, possibly, I erroneously called a *law*, compels us periodically to fight for our very existence, because we constantly tend to increase beyond the means of subsistence. Man being the most highly developed of all animals has attained largely the command over the rest of creation, and, consequently, his struggle with the lower animals is comparatively a minor matter. Probably the whole world is, at all times, populated up to the limit of subsistence.

Although we see little of the struggle amongst the lower animals, the struggle is, nevertheless, intense, and instantly that an animal falters on the way there are innumerable foes at hand to assist in administering the final coup.

Now what could look more peaceful than the picture which *Nature* presents to us on a fine spring or summer day? Yet all the time the struggle for existence is there.

On the other hand, what could be more unrestful than the appearance of any of our large and busy towns during working hours—at least, to those of us who have eyes to see? Avarice, toil, vice and misery meet us at every corner, and one wonders how such a mass of numbers manage to exist at all.

The cause of all this hopelessness is, of course, "over-population," but, as your correspondent says: "it is a well-known fact that we can check and modify the processes of nature." Man has now attained to "reason," but of which, alas, he has so far made but little use!

C. Russell (Major)

Margarine.

The parsons write stale sermons in their sleep,
And church bells ring on Sunday by the score;
The bishops on their "Holy Missions" creep,
Mumbling the platitudes that we ignore.
Oh! wondrous wheels of God's divine machine;
For though in pain, with contrite hearts we weep;
Our soldier's wives must fight for margarine.

The Sunday-school may "cleanse the infant soul,"
And Christian ladies walk in fear of God;
The chapel may become life's highest goal,
And Baptist aisles the best that can be trod.
But though we stick to God like secotine,
And walk beneath the everlasting rod;
Our soldier's wives must fight for margarine.

Arthur F. Thorn.

The people have begun to suspect that one particular form of their past misgovernment has been that their masters have set them to do all the work, and have themselves taken all the wages. In a word, that what was called governing them, means only wearing fine clothes, and living on good fare at their expense. And I am sorry to say the people are quite right in this opinion also. If you inquire into the vital fact of the matter, this you will find to be the constant structure of European society for the thousand years of the feudal system; it was divided into peasants who lived by working; priests who lived by begging; and knights who lived by pillaging.—*John Ruskin.*

The great remedy for calumny, as for afflictions of the heart, is time. If people find fault with our principles or our conduct, good or bad, the best course is to pay no regard to them, and go on as before. After a short time the subject will become stale, and the slanderers will cease talking about it, in order to hunt the trail of some fresh scandal. And the more we show ourselves steadfast and consistent in pursuing our own course, regardless of all idle gossip, so much the sooner will that which was at first condemned as strange or unreasonable be seen in another light and acknowledged as rational and sensible. The world always comes round in the end to the views of those who firmly persist in following their own path, and ends finally by giving up its own opinions and adopting theirs. Whence it results, as is well known, that the weak live as the world wills, and the strong as they will themselves.—*Leopardi.*

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Views and Opinions.

Religion and History.

A correspondent asks, *apropos* of the capture of Jerusalem, What is the function of the Jew in history? We can only reply, in the words of the famous essay on snakes in Ireland, "There isn't any." The question strikes us as a spilling over of theology into the realm of sociology. It is essentially a theological notion that certain peoples have particular parts to play in the development of the world, and it is responsible for a great deal of confused thinking and social harm. We have seen this kind of thing illustrated in the talk of its being part of the mission of Britain to carry civilization to various parts of the world. We see it in the German appeal to God as to the "destiny" of the Germanic race. And it is also seen in the familiar Christian apologetic that while to the Greeks was assigned one function, and to the Romans another, to the Jews was given a genius for religion. And all this is pure nonsense. A nation or a people may play a certain part in the history of the world, but that part is dependent upon the accident of position, of its relations to other peoples, and of a hundred and one other factors. The Jew has no greater innate genius for religion or for finance than anyone else. His clinging to religion and his devotion to finance is an easily imaginable result of discernible historic forces. Modify these and he loses his religion as quickly as anyone else, just as the Jewish people produce quite as freely as other peoples an idealistic non-commercial type. There is no "destiny" driving a people to a set goal. There are numerous forces that determine the direction of a people's development. God in history is as ridiculous as is God elsewhere.

* * *

Life and Religion.

Apart from the view of the subject—a full discussion of which would occupy more space than we have at our disposal—there is one aspect of the part played by religion in history that is worthy of a little attention. At present the case of the German Empire is being held up to us as an awful example of what happens to a nation when it forsakes religion—a warning usually accompanied by the saving qualification that the religion forsaken is the "true" religion. Little more than a century ago it was France that furnished the example to English conservatives and clericals. A few years hence it may be Russia. And these special examples are part of a general theory that religion promotes the welfare of a nation, and neglect of religion leads to its decline. This theory is not only held in the absence of evidence in its support, it is proclaimed in defiance of the clearest evidence to its disproof. The ordinary apologist, even when better informed himself, knows that ninety-nine people out of every hundred are supremely deficient in anything approaching a philosophy of history, or of even a working knowledge of historic processes. And thus, while on the one hand there is the plainest proof that nations have declined in proportion as they have allowed their secular life to be overshadowed by religious considerations; we have, on the other hand, the confident assertion that nothing is of value to a people once they have lost their grip of "true" religion.

* * *

The Case of the Jew.

Take as an example the case of the Jews. On the Christian thesis, the Jews alone among the people of antiquity possessed the "true" religion. With what result? Instead of this producing a strong, healthy national life, we see them being continually overrun by less religious peoples; while whatever of value the Jew has contributed to the world, he gave *after* the destruction of his national life. In art or in science the Jews, so long as they remained a nation, gave the world absolutely nothing. Egypt, Assyria, Phœnicia, Greece, Rome, have all left enduring records of a healthy national life. Ancient Judea left positively nothing at all. And it lies on the face of the facts that whatever position the Jew assumed later in the world was due to forces causally unconnected with his religion. That the Jew became great in physical, medical, chemical, and mathematical science in the mediæval period—under Mohammedan protection—was due not to his religion, but to his following the line of Greek and Roman developments, and to the boycotting of science by the Christian Church. That he became the financier of mediæval Christendom was again due to the attitude of the same Church towards the Jew and to the development of secular life. And even the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people was wholly due to the sustained persecution of the Christian world. Without that, the Jewish people and the Jewish religion might long since have disappeared. The Jews were preserved as a people by the very means adopted to exterminate them. Persecution here, as is so often the case, defeated its own ends. Persecution, when it does not annihilate, preserves. But the religion of the Jew gave him nothing worth having, and gave the world nothing worth the having. It made for unprogressiveness before Rome finally scattered the Jews over the world. And in common with all religions, it makes for

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unprogressiveness wherever it is in a position to exercise coercive influence.

* * *

Rome, Pagan and Christian.

Take, again, the case of Rome. Of all the peoples of antiquity the Romans were, probably, the least religious. A formal religion existed, but, as Gladstone admitted, it exerted but little active influence on their life. This was certainly the case before the time of Julius Cæsar. And we see Rome extending its sway over one people after another, in each case more religious than itself. The history of Rome after Cæsar conveys the same lesson. As it became more religious, it became less open to the influence of progressive ideas, its social life began to contract, its statesmanship narrower and more repressive, culminating finally in the welter of superstition and obscurantism that sat enthroned on the ruins of ancient civilization as the Mediæval Christian Church. No Christian will deny that Europe had more of the "true" religion from the fourth to the fourteenth century than it had prior to that period. And no one but a priest would hesitate to place the pre-Christian period as greater in all that makes for a healthy and progressive social life.

* * *

The Case of Spain.

Or consider the case of Spain. Under Rome we have that country sharing in the progressive life of the Empire. Till the eighth century we have it under the sway of Christian ideas, and as stagnant as the rest of the Christian world. Under the Mohammedan conquerors —themselves saved from the consequences of their own religious belief by a succession of wise, liberal, and, probably, Freethinking caliphs, we see it for over 500 years developing a civilization that was without a competitor, and laying the foundations of a general Renaissance in science and philosophy. Reconquered by the Christians, we see Spain becoming the most Christian nation in Europe, and sinking lower and lower in the scale of civilization with every advance of Christian influence. Spain owed its greatness to its liberal Mohammedan rulers, as it owed its decline to the rise to power of the Christian Church. Under the one it was great in commercial, scientific, and social life. Under the other it became a synonym for intolerance, obscurantism, and national decay. And, as with Christianity, so with Mohammedanism. Just so soon as the religious forces in the Moslem world gained the upper hand, decay set in. Christian or non-Christian, the lesson is everywhere the same. National greatness and a controlling religion cannot both exist with the same people.

* * *

The Writing on the Wall.

Examples are to be found in all directions that will illustrate the truth on which we have dwelt. They can be found in primitive as in more advanced communities. And the reasons are not hard to discover. By their very nature religions are committed to unprogressiveness. Every new idea is a threat to an established religion, which whether Christian or non-Christian, whether ancient or modern, stands committed to perpetuate the past to the utmost of its power. Everywhere the development of a nation is proportionate to the degree with which religion is checked and controlled by secularizing and rationalizing forces. In brief, no State yet has ever found it possible to give religion a free hand without endangering its own existence. When it has allowed religion to rule it has offered the world such spectacles as Spain or Byzantium, or, in a milder form, Geneva under Calvinism. But in general the State has been compelled to step in and moderate the zeal of religionists in the interests of its own well-being. That is why the history of civilization—genuine civilization—is everywhere a history of the rationalizing and secularizing of the State. The process is a slow one, but it is nevertheless a sure one. Churches may fight against it with varying degrees of success. Their tactics may delay the march of the army of reason and of humanity, but they are quite powerless against its ultimate triumph.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Apologetic Absurdities.

"VIATOR," of the *Church Times*, tells us of an old Baptist minister, who had learnt Hebrew for the express purpose of studying the first chapter of Genesis in the language in which it was written. To the critical examination of that portion of Holy Writ he devoted seven years. His all-satisfying reward was the discovery that the first chapter of Genesis anticipated all the discoveries of modern science. "And all those that are yet to be made," mischievously suggested a roguish bystander. The reverend gentleman was silent, with good reason, and possibly the bantering remark opened his eyes to the absurdity of his position. Not only Genesis did not anticipate the modern findings of astronomy and geology, but several of its most important statements are flatly contradicted by them. "Viator" does not deny this, but only hints that, in the opinion of his friend, "the text contains nothing inconsistent with such discovories," the theory being that the author was Divinely guarded against error in relating the story of Creation. As "Viator" says, "on any hypothesis of Divine inspiration there is no intrinsic absurdity in the supposition of such guarding"; but as a matter of indubitable fact there is absolutely no foundation for the theory. "Viator" goes so far as to make the following significant admission:—

> I do not expect Divinely inspired writings of two or three thousand years ago to be free from error concerning matters which have more recently come to light. If my friend's object was to justify Holy Scripture in this respect, I am afraid that he wasted his seven years, and perhaps also the preliminary months spent in the acquisition of Hebrew.

On December 19, 1891, Colonel Ingersoll's famous Christmas Sermon appeared in the *Evening Telegram*, the central teaching of which was thus summarized: "The good part of Christmas is not always Christian—it is generally Pagan; that is to say, human, natural." Everybody knows how literally true that statement is. Then came the addition:—

> Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy but with a message of eternal grief. It came with the threat of everlasting torture on its lips. It meant war on earth and perdition hereafter.

In reality the short discourse was a vigorous attack on Christianity, claiming that, though "it taught some good things—the beauty of love and kindness in man," yet "as a torch-bearer, as a bringer of joy, it has been a failure." Perhaps the most characteristic and mordant passage in it is the following:—

> It (Christianity) has given infinite consequences to the acts of finite beings, crushing the soul with a responsibility too great for mortals to bear. It has filled the future with fear and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men. Not satisfied with that, it has deprived God of the pardoning power.

While thus assailing the Christian religion, the Colonel expressed his gratitude to it for having borrowed from Paganism the joyous old festival called Christmas. Christmas had been in existence for countless ages before Christ was heard of, and throughout all its history

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in Christendom its Pagan elements have been the most conspicuous and by far the most popular. It celebrates the triumph of the sun over all the forces of darkness and cold. In the imaginary foretaste of spring and summer, all hearts rejoice. Washington Irving laments the disappearance of many games and ceremonials which used to characterize Christmas. "They flourished," he informs us, "in times full of spirit and lustihood, when men enjoyed life roughly, but heartily and vigorously: times wild and picturesque, which furnished poetry with its richest materials, and the drama with its most attractive variety of characters and manners" (*The Sketch Book*, p. 204). Colonel Ingersoll closed his celebrated Sermon in the following benevolent strain:—

> Christmas is a good day to forgive and forget—a good day to throw away prejudices and hatreds—a good day to fill your heart and your house, and the hearts and houses of others, with sunshine.

In publishing that "Christmas Sermon" the *Evening Telegram* displayed no little courage and impartiality, little dreaming, perhaps, how its action would excite the wrath of the self-appointed ambassadors of the Prince of Peace. The effect was much worse than that of stirring up a hornet's nest. A swarm of malicious enemies hastened to wreak their rage on both the Colonel and the journal. The first of these was the Rev. Dr. J. M. Buckley, editor of the *Christian Advocate*, the recognized organ of the Methodist Church, who headed his attack "Lies That Are Mountainous." This servant of the God of love called upon the public to boycott the *Evening Telegram* for its audacity in publishing such blasphemous stuff. He wanted all religious people to unite for the purpose of destroying the God-denying sheet. The *Telegram* unhesitatingly accepted the issue thus raised, and dared Dr. Buckley to do his utmost. A bitter controversy ensued, which was kept going for more than a year; and every now and then Ingersoll condescended to reply to his angry critics. All the leading clergymen of New York and Brooklyn took part in the attempt to demolish the wicked Infidel, which they vainly imagined they could do by heaping personal abuse upon his head. They called him a devil, a liar, a blasphemer, an enemy of God and man, but left his arguments unanswered. Dr. Buckley charged him with having written "gigantic falsehoods," but utterly failed to prove the charge. Another, unable to refute his statements, looked forward with great glee to the time when the Atheist would be finally discomfited, saying:—

> Let the world wait but for a few years at the most, when death's icy fingers feel for the heartstrings of the boaster, and, as most of his like who have gone before him have done, he will sing another strain.

Another, Dr. Deems, a popular New York preacher, and, in many respects, an excellent man, comparing Ingersoll to the Devil, said:—

> The Devil is an organizing, imperial intellect, vindictive, sharp, shrewd, persevering, the aim of whose works is to overthrow the authority of God's law.

That typical controversy took place twenty-six years ago, and the fact to be emphasized is that it serves as an instance of the complete futility of all attempts to demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion. Ingersoll was not answered; he was simply vilified for daring to criticize the popular creed. His crime consisted in holding views which differed from those cherished by the clergy. They had a perfect right to differ from one another, but they denied his right to think for himself. This was his retort:—

> What right has Dr. Buckley to disagree with Cardinal Gibbons, and what right has Cardinal Gibbons to disagree with Dr. Buckley? The same right that I have to disagree with them both.

Dr. Fort Newton assures his hearers that the unbelief so common twenty and thirty years ago has passed away never to return; but he is radically mistaken. Unbelievers are more numerous to-day than at any former time, and they are still multiplying. Why is it that only some ten or fifteen per cent. of the population of London attend places of worship, while the few picture palaces permitted to open on Sunday are crowded to their utmost capacity? Why is it that doctors of theology have lost their power and their anathemas do not count? Why is it that at places of amusement all allusions to the clerical profession are received with contemptuous laughter? The only explanation is that for the overwhelming majority of people the religion of the Cross possesses no reality whatever. Christmas is nothing but a national holiday for the bulk of the people, and not a religious festival, simply because they do not believe in the Incarnation, or in the God-man whose miraculous birth is commemorated by a few in churches and chapels. How can intelligent people honestly join in the singing of such lines as the following:—

> Hark; the herald angels sing
> Glory to the new-born King,
> Peace on earth and mercy mild,
> God and sinners reconciled.
> Joyful, all ye nations, rise
> Join the triumph of the skies,

when we are in the midst of the horrors of the most inhuman War ever waged? It is an exploded superstition—a myth that ought to have died centuries ago, and the only rational thing to do is to keep Christmas in honour of the triumph and glory of the sun, and all the good things which therefrom accrue.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Voltaire of Our Day.

> I am now of all humours that have showed themselves humours since the days of goodman Adam to the pupil age of this present twelve o'clock at midnight.
>
> *Shakespeare, "Henry IV."*

Of all the notable Continental writers, M. Anatole France is the most Voltairean, for he carries on the same splendid literary tradition. As he has himself wittily expressed it, he is a symbol, as the citizen Momoro represented the Goddess of Reason at the festivals of the French Revolution. The word Voltairean means also something of tone and character, something of an alert and indulgent regard, a delicacy of touch, a subtle irony which immediately suggests the very ideal of the French intellect:—

> Ravishing as red wine in woman's form,
> A splendid Mœnad, she of the delirious laugh,
> Her body twisted flame with the smoke cap crowned.

Over seventy years of age by the book, M. Anatole France has built up a splendid reputation, "four square to all the winds that blow." Not only is he known throughout the civilized world as a writer, but he is also a humanitarian. A convinced Freethinker, it was only natural that he should take up the brilliant sword of his wit by the side of the Atheist, Emile Zola, in the terrible days of the Dreyfus struggle, when the heroic Zola championed truth and justice in the supreme hour of danger. It was an abiding example of magnificent courage. Honest to their own injury, brave against the enmity of tens of thousands, these Freethinkers, in defending a poor, persecuted Jew, raised the world's opinion of human nature.

M. France's literary forefathers are Rabelais, Swift, and Voltaire; three of the most significant and virile names in literature. Yet he is no copyist, but strikingly original, modern, and Parisian. The thing he has in common with these great predecessors is his whole-

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hearted hatred of injustice and his power over language. Although a master of the lash, he uses his whip caressingly. He does not cut his subject to ribbons like Swift; nor, like Voltaire, overflow with an adroit and subtle humour, which stings like a thousand wasps. Rather is he like Rabelais, who shifts satire into the realm of imaginative comedy, and pities while he smiles.

Rabelais was so much more tolerant than Swift, who, writing in the shadow of the Christian superstition, found all the world a dunghill, and man the most loathsome thing that squatted upon it. But Rabelais, out in the open air, with all the winds of the Renaissance blowing upon him, was more than a mere satirist. Under the motley of the jester beat as generous and as kindly a heart as ever throbbed in the service of humanity. M. France possesses no small share of the tolerant humour of Rabelais, and at a distance of several centuries carries on the same intellectual tradition.

Although M. France has written quite a number of books, his works have a uniform excellence, and it is difficult to pick out any representative masterpieces. He has written no *Candide*, no *Les Miserables*, those seminal masterpieces which represent the sum total of their author's genius. Like his illustrious countryman, Montaigne, he is not to be judged by a single essay. And, like Montaigne, he is a philosopher in disguise. He has used the novel as a medium of expression, personal, and intellectual. In those ever-charming pages of *La Vie Litteraire* he has smilingly told us that he is not speaking pontifically, but only talking of himself, sending his mind adventuring among masterpieces. Similarly in his novels, he is always as personal and as intimate as Charles Lamb. In his *Isle of the Penguins* he puts modern society under the microscope, and in *The Gods Athirst* he unfolds himself on the subject of the French Revolution. With exquisite art and tender understanding, he gets to the heart of the Revolution. With what sympathy does he show the rebel Gamelin starving himself that a poor mother might be fed, or apologizing to the nine-years old child for his fanaticism:—

> Child, you will grow up free and happy, and you will owe it to the infamous Gamelin. I am ferocious that you may be happy; I am cruel that you may be kind, I am pitiless that to-morrow the whole French people may embrace each other with tears of joy.

This genial satirist can, in another mood, give us delightful glimpses of his own childhood. *My Friend's Book* is as delightful and trifling as a heart could desire, and in that perfect chapter, "The Hermitage of the Jardin des Plantes," he describes Pierre Noziere's childish passion towards saintship with inimitable grace and irony:—

> My sole idea was to live the life of an ascetic. In order to lose no time in putting my ideas in operation, I refused to eat my breakfast. My mother, who knew nothing of my new vocation, thought I was ill, and looked at me with an anxiety that it pained me to behold. Nevertheless, I persevered with my fasting, and then, remembering the example of Saint Simeon Stylites, who spent his life on a pillar, I climbed up on the kitchen cistern, but it was impossible to live there, for Julie, our cook, promptly dislodged me. Though I had thus been ousted from the cistern, I pursued with undiminished ardour the way of perfection, and next decided to imitate Saint Nicholas, of Patras, who gave all his riches to the poor. My father's study window looked out on the quay, and from it I proceeded to fling down a dozen coppers or so which had been presented to me because they were new and bright. These I followed up with marbles, humming tops, whip top, and eelskin whip.
>
> "The child is crazy," exciaimed my father, as he shut the window.
>
> I felt angry and mortified at hearing this judgment passed upon me, but I remembered that my father, not being a saint like myself, would not share with me in the glories of the blessed, a reflection from which I derived great consolation.

No one but a Frenchman could have wtitten this passage, and of this delicate and delightful stuff is woven the golden fabric of his genius. So original, so modern, is this great author, who, among other names, has been called the Pope of Freethought. Anatole France was born in a bookseller's shop, and has "ink in his blood." During the most impressionable years of his life he was surrounded by old folios, illuminated manuscripts, and artistic missals. At every pore of a sensitive nature he drew in the love of literature, and splendid use he has made of his intimate and peculiar knowledge. To-day he is the greatest living writer of French, a magnificent scholar, a student of the bye-ways of knowledge, psychologist, publicist, humourist, humanitarian, and wit. When, by a natural fitness of things, he became librarian to the French Senate, the environment was suitable for changing the bookworm into a delightful writer. Never a hustler, he was near forty years of age when his first notable story, *The Crime of Sylvester Bonnard*, was published, and this proved a veritable triumph. Crowned by the Academy, M. France has taken the tide at the flood which was to lead him to fortune. Later, he issued masterpiece after masterpiece until he had all Europe at his feet.

To this most distinguished of living continental writers we owe much of the present proud position of Freethought, for scepticism is nothing if not intellectual. In the far-off days, Francois Rabelais caught a glimpse of the dawn of liberty, and largely through the magnificent genius of his successors it has now permeated all classes of society. M. Anatole France stands for the liberation of the intellect no less than Rabelais. Like his illustrious predecessor, he is first and last a Freethinker, and has the same abiding faith in the triumph of what our own George Meredith has called "the best of causes."

MIMNERMUS.

The Bible and Immortality.

THE SON OF MAN.

IN searching the Bible for evidence of the belief in the resurrection of the dead and a future life, we find those doctrines in but one period of history—that of the so-called apostolic times. If we add to the canonical books those of the Apocrypha, written during the interval between the Old and New Testaments, we find that the belief in immortality had arisen among a small section of the Jewish people, not as a revelation from heaven, but merely as a speculative philosophy. In the New Testament, however, both the resurrection of the body and eternal life are stated to be undoubted facts, made known to the world by God's only son, Jesus Christ. It is this statement, found in all the New Testament books, which still remains to be verified.

The case stands thus: The God of the New Testament is also the God of the Old, who is represented as saying "I am the Lord; I change not" (Mal. iii. 6). This unchangeable deity chose the Hebrews as a people specially his own, and watched over them for 1460 years (from Abraham to Nehemiah). During the whole of this long period the utmost he ever bestowed on this people may be summed up in peace, prosperity, and longevity upon earth, so that they might enjoy a peaceful national life and die at a good old age: he never thought of giving them another life after death, and therefore never referred to the subject. This system was continued

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down to the year A.D. 28, when he suddenly decided that he would grant to all mankind a new life after death, to be passed by some in a paradise of delight, and by others in a place of torment. In accordance with this alleged project we read:—

> John iii. 16.—For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

In the same Gospel it is recorded that a Jewish teacher named Jesus went about the country proclaiming himself to be this "only begotten son," and declaring that he had been sent by God, his "Father," to promise all believers a post-mortem life of bliss. Now, with regard to this unique plan of redemption, the first point to be noticed is that not one of the writers of the thirty-nine books in the Hebrew scriptures appears ever to have heard that his God *had* an "only begotten son," or that that deity ever had thoughts at any time of devising a scheme of salvation other than that in force in Old Testament times. These Biblical writers, too, are alleged to have written under the direct inspiration of their God, and to have recorded that deity's will to mankind: but in all these writings there is not a single word, from Genesis to Malachi, which conveys the smallest intimation either that the Hebrew God was blessed with a son, or that he had any intention of drawing up a new plan of salvation for the human race. On the contrary, there are many passages which tend to prove that the "Lord God" lived in blissful ignorance of having any male offspring, and also that he had not the remotest idea of employing a new method of redemption for his people. We read, for instance:—

> Deut. iv. 39.—Know therefore this day, and lay it to thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is none else.*
>
> Isaiah xliv. 6, 9.—Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and *beside me there is no God.* Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no rock. *I know not any.*

Thus, the Lord God of the Hebrews, who must surely have known whether he had any divine relatives, knew of no other God or Redeemer save himself—which fact excludes the godhead of Jesus Christ. Again, we learn from the Jewish Scriptures that the only plan which the Lord had conceived for the benefit of all mankind was the conversion of the Gentile nations to Judaism. In accordance with this project all nations, it is stated, would at some future time go up to Jerusalem from year to year to worship the Hebrew deity. Witness the following:—

> Zech. xiv. 16.—And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles.
>
> Isaiah lxvi. 21, 23.—And of the Gentile nations also will I take for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. .....And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, said the Lord.

Here we see that the Lord God had no idea of ever giving up the Mosaic ritual. The offering of animals in sacrifice, the duties of priests and Levites, the observance of the Jewish feasts and holy days, as prescribed in the Law, were to be continued for ever. The following are some examples of these ordinances. The office of high priest was to be "a perpetual statute .....throughout their generations" (Exod. xxix. 9; xl. 15); the feast of Passover was to be "an ordinance to them and their sons for ever" (Exod. xii. 14, 17, 24); the feast of Weeks, the Day of Atonement, and the feast of Tabernacles were each to be "a statute for ever in their generations" (Lev. xxiii. 14, 31, 41); the Sabbath was to be observed "throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant" (Exod. xxxi. 16); the Peace offerings, and all other sacrifices were to be continued for ever (Lev. iii. 17; xvi. 29, 34; xxiii. 21; Num. xviii. 8, etc.).

Since, then, all the ordinances in the Mosaic ritual were to be continued throughout all the Hebrew generations for ever, no place is left for the New Testament Saviour: that Redeemer and his office are absolutely excluded. Upon this subject the great theorist, Paul, says that: "Since through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned.....For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (Rom. v. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 22). The reference here is to the story of the "Fall of man" (Gen. iii.); but Paul is wrong here, as he is in all his other theories. The Genesis account of the "Fall" is pure fable, and, as a matter of fact, the doctrine of original sin is nowhere to be found in the Old Testament. Atonement was made for the Hebrew nation as a whole by regular animal sacrifices, and for individual sins by peace offerings. A man who remained faithful to the national God, and was careful in the observance of the appointed festivals, not forgetting the tithes to the priests, was free from all sin in the sight of the Hebrew deity. There was, therefore, no need for a redeemer, or for an atonement by Jesus Christ. Hence, if the latter personage really went about proclaiming "eternal life" to the people of Palestine, he did so without the authorization or sanction of the "Father" in heaven. Neither, again, is any prediction to be found in the Old Testament of the coming of a divine teacher who should preach a new doctrine of immortality, and suffer death for the sins of the world. Every passage which has been cited for this purpose (including Isaiah liii.) can be shown to refer to some other matter.

We come now to the name which Jesus is represented as giving to himself in the Gospels—"the Son of man." This was probably suggested, in the first instance, by reading the book of Ezekiel, in which the Lord God employed that appellation over ninety times in addressing its prophetical writer; but in that book we find nothing but the name. In Dan. vii. 9-14 someone called "the ancient of days" is seated upon a throne ready to judge the nations; then comes "one like unto a son of man," to whom is given "dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him." By reference to verse 27 this "son of man" is seen to be a king or Jewish messiah, and the kingdom that of Israel—which agrees with the plan that all nations shall be converted to Judaism. In this paragraph verses 9 and 10 are misplaced; they should follow verse 12.

We now turn to the Book of Enoch, which was in the hands of Jude and other early Christians. In this book the "Son of man"—who is also named the "Elect One"—is found in seven or eight different chapters, from two of which I make the following extracts:—

> Chap. xlvi.—There I beheld the Ancient of days whose head was like white wool, and with him another, whose countenance resembled that of man. His countenance was full of grace, like that of one of the holy angels.....This is the Son of man, to whom righteousness belongs.....The Lord of Spirits has chosen him, and he has surpassed all in everlasting uprightness.
>
> Chap. lxviii.—He sat upon the throne of his glory; and the principal part of the judgment was assigned to him, the Son of man. Sinners shall disappear and perish from the face of the earth.....According to their ranks of corruption shall they be imprisoned.....Everything wicked shall disappear and depart from before his

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face; and the word of the Son of man shall become powerful in the presence of the Lord of spirits.

The writer of the book of Enoch, there can be little doubt, took his "Ancient of days" and "Son of man" from the book of Daniel, and then drew upon his imagination for all he has to say respecting the latter. The Gospel writers took their "Son of man" from "Enoch." This appears evident from the fact that only in the last-named book is the "principal part of the judgment" placed in the hands of the Son of man. Moreover, in the Fourth Gospel the Son of man is stated to have been "with God" before the creation of the world (John i. 1-4; xvii. 5). Where did this evangelist get his information? This, again, could only have been taken from "Enoch," where it is stated:—

> Chap. xlviii.—In that hour was the Son of man invoked before the Lord of spirits.....Before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars were formed, his name was invoked in the presence of the Lord of spirits.

The writer of the Fourth Gospel represents Jesus as saying:—

> The Father hath given all judgment unto the Son..... and he gave him authority to execute judgment *because he is the Son of man* (John v. 22, 27).

In the words here italicized we have the conundrum: Why did the "Father" give "authority to execute judgment" to Jesus *because* he was the Son of man? Was it because that saviour spoke of himself by this title? No; it was because the Son of man in "Enoch" had received that authority, and the writer of the Fourth Gospel believed that book to be the word of God; and since Jesus was the Son of man predicted in "Enoch," therefore he must of necessity be given that authority. Here I conclude the subject of Immortality so far as the Bible is concerned, to be taken up shortly when I shall have more leisure to consider the question apart from religion.

ABRACADABRA.

The Blank Wall.

V.

THE collective mind of humanity cannot claim to have answered the most important questions concerning its destiny. It has not even arrived at that stage of mentality which inquires these fundamental things.....What caused life?..... What is the meaning of death?.....What is the real purpose of human life?.....etc. This collective mind of humanity cares not whether life be worth living, or whether the mind of man can make it worth living. A few individuals have asked these important questions in every age, but with no apparent effect on the general scheme of existence. The mind of humanity, to put it crudely, cannot determine in what direction it is developing, nor in which direction it wishes to develop. It has not sufficient mental vitality to arrive at these fundamental problems.

The War has proved conclusively that humanity drifts into most indescribable barbarism at ten minutes' notice, yet cannot be settled upon one vitally humanitarian tenet in millions of years! It cannot decide to have a condition of life which would most certainly improve the mental and physical qualities of man, neither is it sufficiently rational to utilize what power exists in those rare and high types who strive against impossible odds to help it. Gods themselves have, throughout history, descended from the skies in a never-ending procession for the specific purpose of saving humanity from itself, but they have accomplished little unless it be additional friction and misery.....Priests gabble in the pulpits; journalists lie with hysterical reiteration in the press; politicians play their odious games of bluff in Parliament, and God says nothing. The voice of reason and common sense is drowned and overwhelmed in a continuous roar of cant, hypocrisy, chicanery, society scandal-mongering, and general mental degeneration. Nor is the worst manifestation of modern civilization to be found in all this, bad enough as indeed it is; the worst manifestation is to be found where monstrous instruments of war are, in this hour, blasting and rending the bodies of our fellow-creatures..... This is the play that humanity has devised for itself; this is the drama of the people.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Acid Drops.

In the discussion on the new censorship of leaflets it appears to have escaped observation—or perhaps it is that only a paper like the *Freethinker* would make it—that a licensing of books and pamphlets is quite a Christian institution. In ancient Rome and Greece people might be punished for having written and published certain things, but it never dawned upon these States to license a man's thinking and punish him if he did not submit his work for their approval. And for some centuries even the Christian Church did not venture on so drastic a step. The Christian Church is the first historic instance of regulating, with punishment for infraction, not only what men did, but also what they should think.

This much was pointed out by Milton. In his *Areopagitica*, after tracing the practice of licensing books to the Inquisition, he says:—

> And thus we have the inventors and the original of book licensing ripped up and drawn as regularly as any pedigree. We have it not that can be heard of from any ancient state, or polity, or church, nor by any statute left us by our ancestors elder or later; nor from the modern custom of any reformed city or church abroad; but from the most unchristian council, and the most tyrannous inquisition that ever inquired. Till then books were as freely admitted into the world as any other birth; the issue of the brain was no more stifled than the issue of the womb; no envious Juno sat cross-legged over the nativity of any man's intellectual birth.....But that a book, in worse condition than a peccant soul, should be to stand before a jury ere it be born to the world, and undergo yet in darkness the judgment of Radamanah and his colleagues, ere it can pass the ferry backward into light, was never heard before, till that mysterious iniquity.....sought out new limboes and new hells wherein they might include our books also within the number of the damned.

Those who ponder this fine passage will perhaps realize how incompatible are Christianity and real freedom.

We cannot forbear quoting another splendid passage from the same work:—

> I cannot set so lightly all the invention, the art, the wit, the grave and solid judgement which is in England, as that it can be comprehended in any twenty capacities, how good soever; much less that it should not pass except their superintendance be over it, except it be sifted and strained with their strainers, that it should be uncurrent without their mutual stamp. Truth and understanding are not such wares as to be monopolised and traded in by tickets, and statutes, and standards. We must not think to make a staple commodity of all the knowledge in the land, to mark and license it like our broad cloth and our woolpacks.....Nor is it to the common people less than a reproach; for if we be so jealous over them, as that we dare not trust them with an English pamphlet, what do we but censure them for a giddy, vicious and ungrounded people; in such a weak state of faith and discretion, as to be able to take nothing down but through the pipe of a licenser.

What would Milton have said had he lived in 1917?

In a letter published in the *Sunday Times*, Lord Alfred Douglas laments that his father, the Marquis of Queensberry, "was at one time unfortunately associated with agnostic views and propaganda," and adds that the Marquis died in the Christian Faith, and "absolution" was given him on his death-bed by Canon Lord Archibald Douglas. This recantation story is quite a family affair, like so many Catholic conversions.

The piety of journalists is a mercurial quality. The *Daily Express* refers to the Garden of Eden as the place "where

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Adam and Eve frivolled." In the ages of faith, Eden was regarded as the place "that brought death into the world, and all our woe," as Milton puts it.

The Catholic *Universe*, reviewing Lord Morley's *Recollections*, says that "his was one of those minds which, had circumstances been different, would have found their way into this City of God." Most people are glad that Lord Morley took the wrong turning.

Dean Hensley Henson has been appointed to the bishopric of Hereford, and the new bishop has been the subject of much eulogy in the press. In 1909 he was inhibited for preaching in a Nonconformist chapel. Even that heroic action scarcely entitles him to the position of a Christian martyr.

A Frenchman, after a visit to Scotland, was relating some of his experiences. "Ah," he observed, "the Scots they are usually good fellows, but what they do say one day they do not say on another. In Edinbourg I visit ze great music hall on ze Saturday night and ven an exciting event is happening on the stage I and others rise up to see more perfectly. How are we greeted? From ze place that is called 'ze gods' come great shouts of 'Sit down, sit down, for Christ's sake.' Then, on the following day, I visit ze grand church, and ven I am sitting quietly vaiting for ze service—a crowd of people jump up and shout: 'Stand up, stand up, for Jesus.' No, ze Scottish character—it is a paradox—vat you call *un peu difficile*.

A country minister of the old school had occasion to rebuke a slow-witted but fiery-tongued parishioner for a violent outburst of profane swearing: "I'm tellin' ye what it is, Weelum, if this gangs on there's only wan end for you. You will go to hell and burn for ever and ever!" "Eh, meenister," queried the swearer, "For ever *and* ever?" "But look, meenister," rejoined the man, "there's nae constitution could stand it!"

One of the Y.M.C.A. officials announces that after the war the recreation huts will be used as working-men's clubs. It will be like tempting an earthquake with a penny bun.

As the result of a breakdown of his motor-car, the Rev. G. W. Dauberry, rector of Knodishall, Suffolk, was fined £3 and costs for being in possession of a sack of sugar, contrary to the Food Control Order. A local grocer was fined £5 for supplying the sugar. The ethical value of religion is not conspicuous in this instance.

The refrain of the national song in Canada has been revised from "God save the king" to "God save our men." Nothing is gained in effectiveness, since the song may be sung a million times without saving a king or a man, but the amendment nevertheless has a more democratic sound.—*Truthseeker*, New York.

The clergy do not like any opposition, and the organizers of the Intercession Day are endeavouring to obtain an order closing cinemas, public houses, and theatres on that day.

Dr. Horton, in his *Autobiography*, says: "I knew that in Dissent it is absolutely impossible to obtain a distinction which gives you any acknowledged place in the national life." Yet Dr. Horton belonged to the Congregationalists, one of the oldest and most respectable Nonconformist bodies, whose leading ministers earn the salaries of Cabinet Ministers. What would he have said had he been in the position of a Bradlaugh or a Holyoake?

The official organ of the Saxon Protestant Community laments the absence of English co-religionists from the annual conference, and refers to them as "those brothers in Christ from across the Channel." This is strange language for "Atheists."

The Rev. W. Temple says: "The Church of England is not given to hasty or reckless action." This is profoundly true, for dear Mother Church has not yet decided whether the working-man is a brute or a human being.

In the *Nation* for December 15 there is an interesting article by "An Officer" on "What do Soldiers Believe?" He says, *inter alia*:—

> Organized religion seems to have no influence on the soldier. I should say that the Roman Catholic Church has the strongest hold, and, in its numbers, the various Nonconformist sects the second strongest hold, and the Church of England the least. Numerically, in my regiment at all events, the Church of England leads the Nonconformists and Roman Catholics, but it is perfectly obvious that many of the Anglicans are Anglicans but nominally .....
>
> I should say that, on the whole, Christianity has singularly little influence on the mass of men in the ranks, and since most of them have lately been in civil life, that is tantamount to saying that Christianity has singularly little influence on the whole life of these islands.....
>
> One detects in the conversation of the rank and file a curious strain of disappointment when they talk, as they sometimes do, of religion. There is something, they seem to say, which ought to have made this war impossible, but has not done so; and in that disappointment I find a strong strain of contempt, or failing that, indifference. Certainly the failure of Christianity to influence the lives of these men does not appear to me to be datable from August, 1914. The beginning of the decline was longer ago than that. The curious flippancy with which men speak of the Deity was not acquired in a couple of years, nor is the blasphemy—sometimes perfectly outrageous—which I frequently hear in the barracks, a thing of recent origin.

As a sample, the writer quotes this saying of a sergeant to his men just before entering church for divine service one Sunday morning: "Form two deep, for Christ's sake." He doubts if this style of exhortation assists one to get into a devotional frame of mind. After further analysing the soldier's psychology, the writer concludes:—

> There is no indication whatever—apart from exceptional individuals—that the Christian faith has any deep hold on our soldiers' minds. There are signs of an entirely non-commital belief in God, vaguely held. There are more definite signs of difficulty in understanding just what is God's purpose, and a strong suspicion that perhaps that purpose is not quite so beneficent as they had sometimes imagined. Another is an unshakable belief that, in this case at all events, Something has settled definitely and irrevocably that for some men, as my drill sergeant says, it is "thumbs up," and for some other men it is "thumbs down."
>
> Beyond that there is nothing more to be said.

The slump in Christianity continues. Here, for example, are three items from a Scottish paper, one following the other. The first is a plea from the Rev. J. White, that the Churches must present a united front in order to reach the outlying population of the cities. Then comes Rev. D. Watson, who warns people that they must work for a "National Re-Dedication" if they are to hold their own. Finally, the Rev. Professor Reid, advises that when there is a poor attendance at morning service people should spend the afternoon rounding up absentees for the evening. But all agree that the situation is a serious one. Whereat the parson mourns and sensible people rejoice.

Referring to a recent publication, the *British Weekly* says enthusiastically that it is "a book which must be taken into account for ever." Such rhapsodies are usually reserved for the Jewish Scriptures.

Nearly 10,000 cards signed at Y.M.C.A. huts by soldiers are being sent to local councils by the National Free Church Council. The families and dependents, whose addresses are given on the cards, will be personally visited by the representatives of local churches. In the case of Anglicans, the cards will be handed to the vicar of the parish. This information is published in the newspapers, and it shows the method by which the Churches hope to use the recreation huts for their own ends.

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Much beautiful nonsense has been written concerning the Holy land recently, but the cold facts discount a great deal of the pietistic platitudes copied from the Bible. A writer in the *Daily News* declares that Palestine is a tiny land, and adds that "an athlete could cross it from west to east in a day, and from north to south it is only a hundred miles."

Religion is a fearful and wonderful thing. A writer in the *Daily News*, referring to caste in India, says "it is humiliating that people should believe themselves polluted at a distance of sixty-four feet by a man who eats beef."

Mr. Ben Tillett, M.P., has the courage of his convictions, and, in an interview, published in the *Daily Sketch*, he has some very pertinent observations on the clergy and the War. "Comb out the parsons," he says, "There are two army corps of men of military age, some of them among the best athletes in the land, and engaged in a very healthy occupation. Longevity among them is especially high, and they ought to be in khaki. Many of them are more afraid of going to heaven than the average Tommy is going to the opposite region."

According to a London evening paper, Father Bernard Vaughan has been flying in an aeroplane. There is at least one real "sky pilot."

The call to a National Day of Prayer is meeting with a response from the Licensed Victuallers' Central Protection Society. That body has decided to recommend that the license holders in Greater London should close on January 6—Intercession Day. We daresay that they will remind their customers on the Saturday of the need for taking home an extra drop to last them till Monday. The newspaper paragraph announcing the resolution is headed "Publican's Sacrifice!" All that is needed now is for the clergy to follow the example and close their place of business for a day.

The piety of Germany is quite affecting. We must, says the Rev. Dr. Von Anon, clutch at the mantle of God, and he adds: "The mantle of this God, who has been with us from the first, is represented by Belgium, which has been forced into our hands by high Providence.....This is the mantle of God which we must clutch and retain in our hands." We expect the rest of the world will have something to say on this point; but one can trust the clergy for finding a religious justification for the worst features of even this War.

The Rev. H. J. F. Tringham, vicar of Longcross, Chertsey, is rendering assistance in other parishes where the staffs of clergy have been reduced. The reverend gentleman might be described as a "war loan."

Pious folk say that the War is the result of sin, but the chastening process is not beyond criticism. The Old Bailey Recorder declared that "bigamy is rampant all over the country." It almost appears as if the remedy were as bad as the disease.

Consoling itself for a war-time Christmas, the Catholic *Universe* says "plum-pudding and mince pies were not exactly served at Bethlehem." Just so! But they cooked enough trouble for the human race.

The Y.M.C.A. has invaded St. James's Square, London, and, according to the *Daily News*, is providing "sleeping accommodation for American officers" at the cost of some thousands of pounds. Doss houses for officers appears to be a novelty in Christian philanthropy.

The following curious advertisement appeared in the Catholic *Universe*: "Will good Catholic family adopt, for the love of Mary Immaculate, bonny, intelligent, good-natured boy (3 years 9 months), nursed from six weeks in religious institution? Never seen mother; no father; good references required."

Wanted, A New Year's Gift.

Is there any reason why the Editor of the *Freethinker* should not ask his readers for a New Year's Gift? Anyway, we are going to risk it, and we shall be greatly surprised if it is not forthcoming.

Everyone is to some extent alive to the difficulties under which a paper like the *Freethinker* is being carried on. Never in the whole thirty-six years of its existence have these difficulties been so great as at present. Month after month the cost of paper rises, and one is fortunate now to buy paper at five times the old price. Part of this increased cost has been met by our Sustentation Fund, part by profit from increased sales, part by the practice of the most careful economy, in which we have not spared ourself.

The steady, but gratifying, increase in the circulation of the *Freethinker* is mainly due to the loyalty and energy of our readers. They have done so well, we are now asking them to do more, and we are also asking others to join this band of willing workers.

That new readers can be got, the experience of the last two years has demonstrated. But there are thousands of others who are to be had almost for the asking. And we want them all without a week's unnecessary delay. Every hundred new readers means a larger sphere of usefulness for the paper; it means also a fresh contribution towards easing a heavy financial burden.

This, then, is the New Year's Gift we are asking for. Let, say, a thousand of our readers resolve to find a new subscriber within the next month. We would sooner have that gift than anything else that could be devised. We are not sparing ourselves, and, to be quite candid, we do not mean to spare others. We want everyone who can do something to do it. We have made a great advance during this now all but defunct 1917, but that should be but a new starting point for a still further move forward. The more readers we get, the more we want—and, we are proud to add, the more we keep.

That venerable structure, the Egyptian constitution, had been raised by no human hands. As the gods had appointed certain animals to swim in the water, and others to fly in the air, and others to move upon the earth, so they had decreed that one man should be a priest, and that another should be a soldier, and that another should till the ground. There are times when every man feels discontented with his lot. But it is evident that if men were able to change their occupations whenever they chose, there would be a continual passing to and fro. Nobody would have patience to learn a trade; nobody would settle down in life. In a short time the land would become a desert, and society would be dissolved. To provide against this the gods had ordained that each man should do his duty in that state of life into which he had been called; and woe be to him that disobeys the gods! Their laws are eternal and can never change; their vengeance is speedy and can never fail.—*Reade, "Martyrdom of Man."*

The modern Christian is a man who has consented to say all the prayers in the liturgy, provided you will let him go straight to bed and sleep quietly afterward. All his prayers begin with "Now I lay me down to sleep," and he is for ever looking forward to the time when he shall go to his "*long* rest." He has consented to perform certain old-established charities, too, after a fashion, but he does not wish to hear of any new-fangled ones; he doesn't wish to have any supplementary articles added to the contract, to fit it to the present time. He shows the whites of his eyes on the Sabbath, and the blacks all the rest of the week. The evil is not merely a stagnation of blood, but a stagnation of spirit.—*Thoreau.*

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

January 6, Manchester; January 13, London; January 20, Southampton; January 27, Swansea; February 3, Birmingham; February 17, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 6, Birmingham; January 20, London; January 27, South Shields; February 3, Failsworth; February 10, Swansea; February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester.

E. RAWLINGS.—We do not know on what authority you are relying. We can only say G. J. Holyoake's profession of Atheism was definite and precise.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—A. E. Maddock, £2; W. H. Deakin, £4.

A. E. MADDOCK.—Received. Many thanks.

F. E. WYKES.—Thanks for extremely tasty calendar. Also for subscription to L.C.C. Fund.

R. M.—We do not object to advertisements. They are not in evidence because they are not forthcoming. And we venture to think this a mistake, even from a business point of view. We are sure that a larger proportion of subscribers read this paper through from cover to cover than is the case with most journals, and Freethinkers—and others—in business would soon find the *Freethinker* columns a really good medium for advertising. We should certainly be surprised if they did not.

J. THOMPSON.—The quotation from Connoly is very striking, and is full of "horse sense." Your plan of getting the paper into new hands is a good one, and it often produces good results.

H. AUSTIN.—Information to hand, for which thanks. We are taking steps in the matter.

J. L. LIVESEY.—One of the names—the latter is from Browning's poems. The former is a piece of mediæval gibberish, and means nothing in particular. See "Views and Opinions." We may write more fully on the subject some other time.

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.

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. Cohen resumes his lecturing next Sunday, January 6, with two lectures at Manchester. He hopes to see there all the old faces, and also a large number of new ones. There can easily be too few of the former, and there can never be too many of the latter. The reformed Manchester Branch has made good progress, and a good rally will give extra encouragement to all who are working to make the meetings a success.

The N. S. S. is arranging a course of Sunday afternoon lectures at the West Central Hall, 31 Alfred Place, Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, W. The course will be opened on January 6 by Mr. Harry Snell, who will lecture on "King George's Day of National Prayer." This is a quite topical subject, and, we hope, will attract a good audience. Admission is free, and the lecture commences at 3.15.

Owing to the Christmas holidays, we are compelled to bring out two numbers of the *Freethinker* in one week. The issue dated December 23 was finished on December 18—to the accompaniment of the booming of guns and the dropping of bombs; and the present issue had to be finished on the Saturday of the same week. This will explain the shortage of paragraphic material in this issue; but in other respects we do not think the concluding number for 1917 has suffered.

Members of the National Secular Society and Branch Secretaries are requested to kindly note that annual subscriptions are due on Tuesday, January 1, except in the case of those who have joined the Society since September, 1917, whose subscriptions are reckoned already as dating from January, 1918. Both old and new friends may desire to save the time, stamps, and stationery involved in the sending out of reminders, and a letter-box overflowing with old cards and fresh remittances on New Year's Day at 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4, will be an undeniable proof of the good wishes of the senders for a happy and prosperous year for the Movement and for the officials responsible for the conduct of its business.

It is with pleasure that we quote the following sentences from a notice of Sir Henry Newbolt's *A New Study of English Poetry* by our witty and intelligent contemporary, the *Cambridge Magazine*:—

> It is a sign of the times that the Poet *par excellence* of the Public Schools should be entering the lists against expurgated editions! In future in art, as in science, there is to be "neither decorous nor indecorous, only relevant and irrelevant." If the vice of Catullus and the indecency of Donne are no longer to be taboo, merely on the ground that "they involve ideas which are contrary to the accepted moral code," it is possible that the irreligion of Lucretius and the atheism of Swinburne will no longer be dexterously glazed over. We foresee that not a few staid persons will tend to raise their eyebrows, when they contemplate the possibilities thus succinctly adumbrated by Sir Henry.

In noticing a little volume of sermons addressed to village congregations, the *Church Times* rather ungratefully—certainly unphilosophically—objects to the exercise of the imagination as shown in this passage:—

> Pilate in his palace, eating his mid-day meal of the daintiest luxuries procurable, with the choice vintages of Italy, was not at ease. His mind influenced his body. The good things provided seemed to pall upon him. Why so? Ah! Conscience, that inward monitor, would give him no rest.

We are more reasonable than our friends of the *Church Times*; we do not object to an imaginative interpretation of history, if only it be based on common sense and common knowledge. Pontius Pilate was hardly the man to be troubled with qualms of conscience for the mere suppressing of an obscure and troublesome Nazarene sect. The intelligent critic of Christianity is more likely to agree with M. Anatole France's idea of the effect of Christism on a Roman ruler of the period. Some while after the crucifixion, the Procurator of Judea is visiting a fashionable spa, and chatting with an old friend on bygone times and events. The conversation winds round to those silly and obstinate Jews who used to squabble over their wretched schisms at Jerusalem. The friends talk of the beauty of Mary Magdalene, "how in her prescriptural days she would dance on a dirty strip of carpet, by the light of a smoky lamp. Her back arched, her head thrown back, as if drawn down by the dead weight of her red-gold hair, her eyes drowned in lust, ardent and languishing, she would have caused Cleopatra to blush for envy." The friends sigh, for Mary was very beautiful in those days. Then the friend recalls how she followed a young Nazarean thaumaturge who was crucified for some crime or other. Pontius Pilate thinks for a long time, for crucifixion was common enough in those days. After a while he says: "Jesus? Jesus of Nazareth? No, I don't remember him." This is the sort of imaginative reconstruction, smiling and ironical, which is gall and wormwood to our religious friends

Fund for Fighting the L.C.C.

THE purpose of this Fund is to raise the balance of expenses—estimated at between £8 and £100 incurred in defending the right to sell literature at public meetings in the London parks. On the initiative of the N.S.S. a Protest Committee was formed, and after carrying the question into the High Court, the London County Council was induced to rescind the offending resolution. It was a splendid victory, and one which should specially appeal to all Londoners.

Previously acknowledged:—£30 8s.; H. J. Waters, 10s.; F. E. Wykes, 3s.; D. W. Stewart, 1s.

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Religious Education.

THE question of secular *versus* religious education is generally discussed from the point of view of the rightness or wrongness of compelling one man to pay for teaching the beliefs of another, in which he does not himself share, or from the more abstract standpoint of the propriety or otherwise of State interference with belief as such. From both these points of view much can be said on the subject. There is, however, a more vital consideration to be entertained, and one which the egoism and lack of imagination of the adult controversialist tends to overlook: viz., the rights of the child. If we define the rights of the citizen generally as claims to certain liberties or opportunities for the realization of which the State exists, it follows that the aim of education should be to enable the child, when it grows up, to take advantage of and enjoy to the full those liberties or opportunities. Of those liberties one, and not the least important, is freedom of thought. One function of education, therefore, should be to enable the growing citizen to use his or her intellect freely and fully, unclogged by prejudice, and conformably to the natural faculty of reason. This is a debt which the adult community owes to each rising generation.

Let us see how we pay it. Here I can only generalize from what comes within my knowledge. I know nothing directly of the kind of religious education given to the majority of children in public elementary schools, or of instruction given by parents to their children in Nonconformist, Jewish, or Catholic families. But I know what religion I was myself taught; and I have no reason to suppose it less rational than that given in most middle-class households of the Church of England, or than that which is deemed suitable for working-class children. In fact, the latter is probably much worse; so in generalizing from personal experience, I have no fear of unduly blackening the picture.

At an early age the child's curiosity is awakened by the question, "Who made him?" and satisfied by the answer, "God." The child naturally finds nothing absurd in thinking that he and other people are manufactured articles, like dolls or furniture; and when he comes to read it, the Biblical statement that God "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul," corroborates this view. He is taught that God wishes him to be good, and will take him to heaven when he dies, if he behaves. The doctrine of hell may or may not be thrown in; in most educated families, I should imagine, it is not; but this makes little difference, since a very little reading of the Scriptures will soon reveal that grim article of faith, and even parents and teachers who refrain from inculcating it do not venture, in many cases, to *deny* it to children. Inevitably the child, if curious enough to retain its interest in these matters, acquires the idea of God as, in Mr. Wells' words, "an old gentleman with a long beard and uncertain temper." A painting by an old master (I forget whom), familiar to me from very early years, actually portrays the Almighty in this guise, and depicts, underneath, what is meant to be heaven, an attractive green landscape peopled by saints in flowing robes, grouped round "the Lamb of God," who stands on an elevated throne or altar, spurting blood into a chalice from a wound in the chest. A truly edifying picture!

We hear much nowadays of the dangers of bad literature and films in their influence on the young; but I say emphatically - and it cannot be said too often—that the Bible is a worse thing from this point of view than any film likely to escape the attention of the police. No one would dream of putting Rabelais or Smollett, unexpurgated, into the hands of boys and girls; but our upright Christian parents and our sage educational authorities do not hesitate to afford the young every facility for the perusal of the purplest passages of Genesis, Leviticus, Judges, Samuel, the Song of Songs, Ezekiel, etc. Naturally, the facility is taken advantage of. This is bad enough; but it must not be supposed that the evil effect of early and uncritical Bible-reading is confined to this. The bloody and ferocious spirit of the Old Testament, where indiscriminate massacres are represented as the literal commands of God, to be fulfilled on pain of his extreme displeasure, and the equally ferocious threats of eternal torment against sinners and unbelievers in the New, have a moral influence which can only be called vile. Five centuries before Christ, old Xenophanes declared that "Homer and Hesiod had ascribed to the gods all things that were a shame and a disgrace among men, thefts and adulteries and deceptions of one another"; and Christians nod approvingly, thinking how superior they are to these heathen. But the God of the Bible licks the heathen gods into fits; he is Phalaris, Nero, Tamerlane, and Torquemada rolled into one, and raised to the "nth" power; beside him Von Tirpitz is a humanitarian, and the Kaiser a public benefactor.

All this is obvious to us Freethinkers; but it is not obvious to the child into whose hands the open Bible is put. When he is told that God, the author of his being, commands him to believe a certain creed on pain of everlasting perdition, he naturally does his best to believe it; he is much too frightened to question it. When he is told that this same God has, in the past, commanded his followers to "slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass," and punished them for non-compliance; the natural result is that he regards acts such as this, not as atrocities in themselves, but as acts evidently praiseworthy in certain circumstances. When Christians talk of German atrocities as due to German "atheism"; I think we might do more than merely rebut the falsehood; there is, at any rate, a good case for carrying the war into the Christians' camp, and pointing out the high probability of a casual connection between the strictly *religious* education given in Germany and the callousness which has marked the conduct of the War by that nation.

Bible-reading is thus calculated to uproot in young people both intellectual honesty and common humanity, the former by the fearful penalty denounced on unbelief, the latter by the atrocious conduct set forth as directly commanded by God. In the case of Anglican families, the undermining of intellectual honesty is aided by the teaching of the Catechism, in which the child is informed that his godfathers and godmothers at his baptism promised that he should "believe all the articles of the Christian faith," and that he is bound to believe as they promised for him. The influence of the Catechism is, however, secondary; it is, at any rate, not put forward as a divinely inspired document, as the Bible is.

It may well be wondered how any so brought up contrive to escape from this bondage, and to regain a measure of intellectual freedom. Many, perhaps most, never do. That some do is, I think, due to the fact that the Church of England is, after all, a bungler at its business. It makes the mistake of trying to influence the children chiefly, if not entirely, by word and precept. Now, words are the vehicle of thought, and thought can never be wholly divorced from reason. With the best will in the world, one can never quite believe what is flatly self-contradictory. That is why, among Protestants at any rate, a shade of unreality always attaches to the dogma of the Incarnation. You cannot, when it is put to you coldly in so many words, quite believe that Jesus

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Christ is "perfect God, and perfect man." "Perfect God" implies omnipotence and omniscience; "perfect man," on the other hand, implies a man's limitations, infirmities, inabilities—everything, in fact, that the notion of God *excludes*. To set the young mind *thinking* about such things is, from the Church's point of view, a fatal mistake; but it is the inevitable result, if the child is intelligent, of teaching religion mainly by word and precept. The Catholic Church knows better. There, the forces of unreason are backed up by sensuous appeals, by vestments and pictures, banners and processions, the smell of incense and the music of Gregorian chants and hymns, and not least, by the hypnotic power of *repetition*. I was once in a Catholic Church, where I observed that a great part of the service consisted of the words of the "Ave Maria," repeated over and over and over at break-neck pace, half by the priest and half by the congregation. I understood at once; it was sheer mesmerism. Give me leave to bring up a child on that sort of thing, and I will undertake to make him believe that the earth is flat and the moon made of Cheshire cheese.

In spite of the comparative clumsiness of the Protestant method, its effect can be relied on to last *as long as the belief in hell is unimpaired*. But let that belief be unimpaired—say by an indiscreet admission on the part of a pastor or teacher that "it ain't so"—and the slippery slope of Rationalism is reached. If that goes, the rest is in jeopardy, and the result will depend merely on the proportions of habit and reason, inertia and originality, in the individual's composition. He may become merely indifferent; he may try to make sense out of his religion, and compromise on a sort of "liberal Christianity"; or he may pass out of this stage into genuine Freethought. Cases of this last are, unfortunately, a minority.

Even when this happy issue is reached, the individual's development will have been retarded, his time will have been wasted, and his intellect may have suffered appreciable harm, from the involuntary pilgrimage he has made through the backwoods of superstition. After acquiring the habit for many years of believing certain things as a *duty*, it takes a strong counter-effort to accustom oneself to reasoning and weighing evidence. The faculty of reasoned judgment should be encouraged from the first. Deliberately to warp it, as our religious educators do, is a crime against mankind, the enormity of which is in no way diminished by the fact that a few of the victims are able, with toil and trouble, to straighten the warped faculty again in after life.

The only consistent position for a Freethinker to adopt is that the child, if it is to enter fully into its civic heritage of intellectual liberty, has a right to be protected against indoctrination with a particular hypothesis about the universe, until it is of an age to judge of such matters for itself. The difficulty is that so many parents—most parents, very likely—are of an opposite opinion. Holding, definitely or vaguely, some religious opinion themselves, they consider that they have a natural right to dose their children with it. Even parents who are indifferent to religion hold that it is "the thing" to have it taught to children. In the face of this "damned compact majority," as Ibsen has it, it is to be feared that a frontal attack on such parental tyranny over the rights of the child would be fore-doomed to failure. The only way to combat it is to *make Freethinkers*. But, in the meantime, in practical educational politics, we can at least insist that, if parents and clergy must do this dirty thing to the children's minds, they shall do it without help from the State, in their own time, on their own premises, and at their own expense; and that in the people's schools, at any rate, only such teaching shall be given as is by common consent necessary for the common good, and to make each child an intelligent citizen of a free country.

ROBERT ARCH.

Tales of Our Times.

I.

THE boys in Dame Europa's school have now got thoroughly out of hand.[1] It all started by those two bullies Fritz and Carl knocking two of the smaller boys—quite little chaps—on the head, and appropriating their belongings, whereupon John Bull and the other big boys set upon the offenders with all their might But Fritz and Carl, besides being openly helped by one or two of the smaller boys, and secretly helped by some other little sneaks among them, have proved themselves much stronger than had been expected; so the fight rages with ever increasing ferocity, and poor old Dame Europa is at the end of her wits—which were never very bright at the best of times.

Every day, when school closes, the boys, barely waiting for the conclusion of Prayers, rush pell mell into the playground and fall upon each other like tigers. All the rules of fair fighting are disregarded, and hitting below the belt, blows delivered from behind the back, kicking, tripping up, and even biting are resorted to. To make matters worse some of the village boys have joined the fray, and the boys of U.S.A. (Uncle Sam's Academy), a big school some distance away on the other side of the village duck-pond, are getting ready to join in.

However, terribly sad though it all is, it yet presents an element of humour. This is furnished by an old gentleman named Benedict, who lives next door to the school, in an old house surrounded by a garden with high walls called The Vatican. Occasionally the old gentleman, mounting a step ladder, peers over his wall into the playground, and calls out in distressful tones, "Now, boys, this is very wrong. Stop this fight at once, please, and be friends again. The noise you make every day is really very disturbing to me. Shake hands with the others, and don't bear them any ill-will."

But as the old gentleman never has a word of blame for Fritz and Carl for their disgraceful conduct in bullying and robbing the little boys, his admonitions are received with contempt by all except Fritz and Carl themselves, who are known to be rather favourites of his. They take off their caps respectfully to old Benedict when he addresses the combatants, and thank him for his advice, but they go on fighting all the same.

So the old gentleman continues periodically to peer over the wall and plaintively call out, "Now, boys, boys," etc., thus furnishing that saving element of comedy with which even the saddest and most tragic situations are sometimes blessed.

II.

The small craft, Humanity, lay becalmed and motionless on the deep and placid ocean of Existence. The people in the boat wore a restless and anxious look as they gazed at the unbroken horizon all around them. "We must move," they all were thinking. "We must move onward, and find out whether this awful ocean has any shore. If we remain motionless we shall go mad and perish. *Humanity must progress.*"

Some Priests spoke first. "Put up a sail," they said.

"But there is no wind," said the others. "What is the use of a sail?"

[1] See "Tales of Our Times" in the *Freethinker* of March 24, 1912.

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"We will pray to God," said the priests. "He will send a wind in answer to our prayers, and then humanity will progress."

So they put up a sail, and the Priests started praying for a wind. But though they prayed for a long time and grew weary over it, not a breath stirred, and humanity made not an inch of progress.

Next spoke the Metaphysicians—men with solemn, dreamy faces, and an absent-minded air. They used long words and pronounced them with sonorous emphasis, as though trying to make sound take the place of meaning.

"The only way to make humanity progress," said they, "is to take cognizance of the Infinite and the Absolute. We must ascertain the properties of the Thing-in-Itself and make use of them. Now we have found out that this ocean of Existence on which we float is the Thing-in-Itself, and we have discovered two of its properties which, if rightly applied, will bring about the progress of Humanity. Firstly, Existence has the property of flowing from a higher to a lower level; and, secondly, its Pressure is proportionate to its distance from the surface. Now, let there be two openings made in the boat at different heights, and let the lower opening be in the stern of the boat. In accordance with the first principle the waters of Existence will enter at the higher opening and pass out at the lower, while, in accordance with the second principle, they will exert greater Pressure in passing out than they do in entering, and this excess of Pressure, acting against the waters of Existence outside, will propel our boat forward."

This suggestion was promptly acted on, but no sooner were the two openings made than the waters of the ocean of Existence poured in at both of them, and it was only by quickly plugging up the openings and vigorously baling out the rapidly filling boat that poor Humanity was saved from being swamped.

"We quite anticipated this result," said another group of men who called themselves Deductive Philosophers, and who always spoke with an air of complete finality and certitude. "The Metaphysicians reason from wrong premises, and are therefore bound to reach erroneous conclusions. Now we, reasoning on the Deductive Method from *a priori* premises, have discovered that the moving principle of Existence is not Pressure but Tension, and this Tension, if properly applied, is sure to effect the progress of Humanity. Let two masts be erected of equal height, and let a pulley be fixed to the top of the front mast. Then let a rope be attached to the top of the other mast, taken over the pulley, and fastened to a heavy weight hanging vertically. Now, Tension has the property of exerting a pull *from* the point of attachment *toward* the point where the force is exerted, so it is obvious that in this case the pull of Tension will be in a forward direction, and will cause our boat to move forward in a straight line with uniform velocity for an indefinite period."

This reasoning, delivered with the complete cocksureness which always characterized the utterances of these philosophers, carried immediate conviction to most of their hearers, and their directions were eagerly carried out. But alas! the predicted result did not follow, and, as before, Humanity progressed not a single inch.

Meanwhile, some quiet, thoughtful-looking men had been engaged near the prow of the boat dipping pieces of flat wood into the water and moving them steadily and carefully, now in one direction, now in another, and observing the results. Presently they noticed that the prow of the boat stirred a little as the boards were pushed this way or that. No one had paid much attention to these men so far, and they had spoken little with the others, but one of them now stood up and spoke, with the light of victory in his eyes.

"You have been proceeding on a wrong assumption, my friends," said he, "an assumption which is as false in theory as it is futile in practice. You have been trying to get Movement out of Rest—to create Progress out of Stagnation. You have been expecting that some imaginary God who answers prayer or some imaginary principle of Existence will do the work of progress for us, while we sit down lazily and look on. The principle of progress is not Prayer, nor Pressure, nor Tension, but *action on the part of ourselves*. If we want movement, we ourselves must supply its motive power. Now make you some instruments called oars, the use of which we will teach you, and we can promise that, provided you exert yourselves in the use of them, Humanity will progress, and its advance will be in exact proportion to the strength and efficiency of your exertions."

This advice, though not quite so agreeable and encouraging as that of the others, was eventually acted on, and the promise of the Scientists was amply fulfilled. Thus it was discovered that the Progress of Humanity can only be achieved by Human Effort.

A. E. MADDOCK

New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

VIII.—ON THE WAY TO THE CROSS.

You remember how, as a boy, the Wonder-worker had trod the road with Joseph and Mary to the city of Jerusalem. It was a place with high walls round it; and just outside it was a hill where olive-trees grew in gardens, and another hill called Calvary, with a round top like a man's skull.

Day by day Jesus approached this city. At nights he would lodge in any house where the folk were friendly; and, even if he found it uncomfortable, he would not change to another. One or two of his Delegates would go on in front and fix where he might stay.

"Master," said his messengers one day, "not a single house in yonder village will have you to-night."

"Why?"

"Because they say you are a Jew going to your Jerusalem, and they will not deal with Jews.

The village was in the country or province of Samaria, where the people were a mixed race—only Jewish in part. Hundreds of years ago the King of Assyria had taken away many thousands of the Israelites, and brought in strange tribes in their place. The Jews scowled at these neighbours, and when the Samaritans (as they were now called) built a temple of their own, the men of Jerusalem were more bitter than ever.[1]

Fisherman John and fishermen James were very angry.

"Call down fire from heaven to burn the village and the villagers," they cried.

"No, no," said Jesus; "I came to save men's lives, not to destroy. We will go to another village."

As they toiled across the stony hill to reach some other night-shelter, a man ran up saying—

"Lord, let me be a follower. Wherever you go I will go."

"Ah," replied Jesus, with a sigh, as he looked back on the village which had cast him off, "foxes have holes in the earth, and birds have nests, but I have no where to lay my head."

[1] About 150 Samaritans lived at Nablous in the early years of the twentieth century—the last members of the Samaritan race. They had a High Priest and a synagogue.

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However, in spite of the hard life of the pioneer, his band of followers grew, and he made a plan for sending out seventy forerunners who should go on in front, two and two, to preach the kingdom and to drive out the jinn. To them, as to the Twelve, he gave marching orders as to carrying no wallet or money, and shaking the dust from their feet, and so on.

After a while the seventy returned with a glowing account of their deeds.

"Master," they said, "we found your name was a powerful spell! When we bade demons come out of the sick and the mad, out the jinn came!"

"Yes, of course," answered Jesus. "I knew it would be so; and I saw the Prince of the Air—that evil and cunning Satan who tempted me in the wilderness—fall like a flash of lightning, for his power is being taken from him. My friends, you will do other extraordinary feats".....

The seventy forerunners and the Twelve Apostles waited, breathless, to hear the news.

"You will tread poison-snakes under foot; you will tread vile scorpions to death, and you will receive no harm from their poison or their stings. But, beware! Do not become proud of your power over jinn. Rather be glad that you are my comrades in the new Kingdom, and that your names are written in the book of Heaven."

The Delegates and the seventy forerunners smiled for joy to think that their names were entered in the book of life—everlasting heavenly life. And any humble fisherman, shepherd, ploughman, tanner, coppersmith, beggar, or slave might join the Kingdom.

A lecturer salaamed to Jesus one day. He was a man who stood up in pulpits to talk, in a learned way, about the Law of Moses, and what to do or not do on the Sabbath, and how to eat and drink, and how to fast, and how to say prayers, and how a thousand other things. Such lecturers were called Scribes, or Writers of the Law; or you could call them Grammar Men, and Holy Clerks.[1]

"Master," asked the scribe, "what shall I do to get everlasting life?"

"Well, you are a holy clerk; you know the Law; what does it say about life?"

"It says," replied the lawyer, "we should love God, and love our neighbour."

"Very good; that is the way of life."

"Ah, but, Master, who is my neighbour?"

"Who is your neighbour? Well, let me tell you a little tale," said Jesus. "You know the road that runs through the valley, between rocky hills, from Jerusalem to Jericho city?"

"I do."

"A man was travelling along that road when a gang of robbers sprang out from a hiding-place, set upon him, beat him cruelly, stripped his clothes off, and went away with clothes, money, and all, leaving him half dead. Presently, a priest of the Temple of God came by; and when he caught sight of the poor wounded traveller, he guessed there were robbers about, and had no mind to stop; and he kept the other side of the road, and hastened out of the place of danger. Then came along a Levite, an attendant in the Holy Temple of God. He approached the wounded man, looked on him, and passed by on the other side. A third man came that way,—a Samaritan merchant, with a camel, or ass. When he saw the unfortunate traveller, his heart was touched with pity. He went to him, mixed olive-oil and wine in the palm of his hand, and gently moistened the poor fellow's bruises, bound up his wounds with bandages, hoisted him on the beast, and so brought him some miles further on to a roadside caravan shelter. There he laid him on a bed, and took care of him during the night. Next daybreak, when he must go off on his business, the Samaritan gave two silver coins to the inn-keeper, and said, 'Look after this poor fellow till I pass this way again; and if you go to more expense, I will repay you.' Now, my good Scribe and learned Lecturer, which of the three was neighbour unto him that fell among thieves?"

"The merciful Samaritan, no doubt."

"Very well; now you go and do likewise."

This did not mean that Jesus always wanted people to be *doing* things, even merciful and useful things; he thought that *listening* was sometimes good, too. For instance, he dined at the house of a village dame, named Martha. She was a bustling woman, full of pride in her pots, pans, cookery, wash-basins for guests, well-arranged seats, and all the rest; and her cheeks were red with her hard labour in waiting on the company. For the Twelve Apostles had good appetites. But Martha's sister Mary sat on the ground at Jesus feet, listening eagerly to his talk of life, and the Kingdom, and crosses, and good Samaritans.

"Master," exclaimed Martha, vexed, "you do not seem to mind my sister leaving me to do all the work!"

"Martha, Martha," said Jesus, with good humour, "you are fearfully anxious about many things, and worry without reason. But one thing is needful, and that is to find what really matters, and what does not matter. And Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

It was about this time that one of his companions asked him to teach the folk of the new kingdom a new prayer. He then repeated what has ever since been called the "Lord's Prayer,"[1] which ran something like this:—

> Father dear in heaven,
> With respect we say your name;
> Let the Kingdom come soon;
> And we, poor simple folk, will do your bidding here quite as truly as it is done by the folk in heaven.
> Give us bread every day, for every day we hunger.
> Wipe out our debts to you, and we will forgive our neighbours their little debts to us.
> Don't let the trials of life be too cruel for us, for the world is a hard place for the poor;
> And save us from the evil things that tempt us.

"It is quite easy to get gifts from God," added Jesus. "You just knock at the door, and he opens; perhaps not at once, but he will if you keep knocking."

The prayers of the common people were short. The prayers of the Lecturers and the Pharisee prigs were long and loud. A common man—a shepherd or fish-pickler—would often go to his meal with hands unwashed; but the same man might have a great, good heart, like the Samaritan who showed mercy.

A Pharisee once asked Jesus to dine with him, and other Lecturers and Writers sat at the table. Horror of horrors! The Master of the Jinn did not wash his hands before eating. Catching sight of the Pharisee's scornful glance, Jesus said,—

"You Pharisees make the outside of the pot nice and clean; but inside the pot is a beastly mess. You march about in pious style, boasting of the Tenth Parts that you give from your stores to the use of God and his priests. You even give a tenth part of the wretched little herbs in your kitchen-garden plots; and yet you do not move a hand to help a neighbour. You make-believes! You hypocrites! Woe unto you, lawyers!"

A shout of rage arose from the lawyers, learned Lecturers, holy Clerks, and pious synagogue men!

[1] Greek, *grammateis*.

[1] The *Our Father*, or, in Latin, *Paternoster*.

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But the common folk listened gladly to the pioneer of the Kingdom.

* * * *

If you would hear a little more about prayer, let me tell of a famous Greek and of two English poets.

Socrates and his friends rested one summer morning under a spreading plane-tree on the bank of the Ilyssus stream; and the waters ran cool. Here they talked of man's Thoughts and man's Speech, and other things of interest. And at the end they rose to go home to Athens, and Socrates prayed thus to the Gods of the Woods and Open Air:—

> Beloved Pan, and all ye other Gods who haunt this place, give me beauty of the inward soul, and may the outward and inward man be one. May I reckon the Wise to be the Wealthy; and may I have such a quantity of gold as a temperate man, and he only, can bear and carry.[1]

We may be sure Socrates did not want much gold.

In our Shakespeare's play of *Coriolanus* we have a scene before the city of Rome. This Roman general, Coriolanus, is about to lay the city waste with fire and sword, though, in doing so, he will be injuring his own kith and kin. His mother, his wife, and his young son, kneel before him, and pray him to show mercy. Their tears move his heart from anger to pity, and the women's prayer does what armies could not do. Coriolanus spares Rome, and says to his mother and wife:—

> Ladies, you deserve
> To have a temple built you: all the swords
> In Italy, and her confederate arms,
> Could not have made this peace.
>
> (*Act V, scene 3*).

It was a prayer from human lips to the human heart.

> Then every man of every clime
> That prays in his distress,
> Prays to the human form divine,
> Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.
>
> For mercy has a human heart,
> Pity a human face,
> And love the human form divine,
> And Peace the human dress.

The two verses just repeated are from the *Songs of Innocence*, by the poet-artist, William Blake, who lived in a humble lodging near the Strand, London, and died there in 1827.

F. J. GOULD.

Correspondence.

THE TWO STRUGGLES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Lately there has been quite an epidemic of protesting. Let me protest against the latest protestations. I have had to rub my eyes on reading the last few issues of the *Freethinker*. Surely Major Russell and young Colquhoun have been playing Rip van Winkle when it is necessary at this time of day to explain to them that the survival of the fittest does not necessarily mean the survival of the best.

I think Mr. Warren may safely be left to defend himself, but the letter of young Colquhoun illustrates clearly the purport of Mr. Thorn's admirable articles—that virile and independent thought is a very rare quality.

Why, in the name of common sense—merely because their works are widely known—should I, or anyone else, accept, unquestionably, what Spencer or Huxley has said? The "Unknowable" and the "Agnostic" tangles were created by these two writers. When I was a boy, I thought something of Spencer's little brochure on "Education"; but, as the father of a family, I can think of most of it only with amusement, and pity for Spencer's small knowledge of life. And although Mr. Colquhoun asks: "Who is Mr. Arthur Kitson?" (that stunt is getting a bit stale now, Oscar Wilde with "Where is Liverpool?" and Shaw with "Who is Hall Caine?" to one of whose books G. B. Shaw wrote a preface, have worn the wheeze thin), I am sure the writer on the gold currency would have little difficulty in disposing of the economic fallacies of Herbert Spencer. It is hard that, in the *Freethinker*, one has to state that it is not *who* a man is, but what he *says* that matters.

Oh, to the devil with all your so-called "laws," divine, human, and "natural," and all your philosophy, which seems only "the losing of oneself by method." When Mark Antony said: "Judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason," he demonstrated that Shakespeare had not studied biology; for, as Cunninghame Graham points out, it is the possession of reason that makes a man inferior to the beasts!

If it is fated that "We must turn this fair world into a hell more awful than anything dreamt of by Dante," and "So long as unrestricted multiplication goes on the struggle will continue," then let us, in the name of Malthus, realize our doom. But it is all confounded nonsense. The biological struggle for existence is totally different from the mad, *artificial*, scramble for food which persists only because men have not the wit to manage their affairs sensibly, and are side-tracked by all manner of "reasoning" on biology, government, law, eugenics, two in a family, science, Dr. Saleeby, and all the other "flowers that bloom in the spring!"

Never mind the dead opinions of dead philosophers, or the exploded political economy of the Freethought God and his earthly representative, Dr. Binnie Dunlop. Nature is bountiful, and, as Mr. Warren says, there is abundance for all—if only we had a little sense.

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[1] Jowett's *Plato*. Dialogue "Phædrus."

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